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HEGEMONIC NEGOTIATION IN CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE POLITICS

To Honor and Obey: Hegemonic Negotiation in Contemporary Marriage Politics

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
2013

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Abstract

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This longitudinal and empirical study of the field of marriage politics prioritizes discourse in understanding the influence of hegemony on movement framing. I do so by evaluating how a specific construct – the hegemonic marriage ethic – contours framing decisions of three social movements: the traditional marriage movement (TMM), the Marriage Movement (MM), and the marriage equality movement (MEM). My research combines feminist discourse analysis and corpus linguistics methods to evaluate four corpora – *The Washington Post* headlines (1985-2007), interviews with leaders of 19 social movement organizations (SMOs), extensive movement organization documents, and a reference corpus constructed from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) spanning the years 1990-2012 (Davies 2008-).

Three main theoretical tenets guide my research: 1) feminist and queer critiques of marriage identify hetero-patriarchal foundations of the hegemonic marriage ethic; 2) the theory of cultural hegemony highlights the importance of a discursive focus; and 3) social movement framing theory provides scope conditions for assessing how shifts or changes in hegemonic constructions become relevant for framing decision-making.

My research theorizes *negotiation* as a tool for movements to discursively engage hegemony. The concept of negotiation counters often over-simplified depictions of social movements' mindless hegemonic acceptance or rejection. In this empirical marriage case, the dialogic nature of framing necessitates interdiscursive framing strategies for dealing with the problem or promise of hegemony. I also argue that better understanding of how movements negotiate the hegemonic marriage ethic reveals significant implications for issues of sexual citizenship.

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Acknowledgments

I worked on this dissertation for the greater part of my married life. While the result of my labor serves as a critique of the public manifestations of marriage, I must still come to the conclusion that committed love-based partnerships truly do provide each of us lucky enough to fall into such an arrangement with a high degree of support, sustenance, and stability. My husband, Michael Davis, deserves all the praise that I can bestow for the role he played in making sure I got this dissertation done. If marriage were to go away tomorrow, I still would plan to walk through the rest of my life with him.

The last year of my writing and research has been challenging, first, for the obvious reasons associated with the home stretch of a dissertation. But also, second, because in my case I fulfilled the old adage, “First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes a baby in a baby carriage.” I am so blessed to have my precocious and brilliant daughter, Emmeline Lucy, in my life. Because writing meant reluctant time away from her, she deserves acknowledgement for being my number one motivator. I also have great thanks for my family – Jerry and Linda Cockrell, Paula Davis, Evelyn Button, and Fannie Hutton – for not only cheering me on from the sidelines, but also for awesomely interacting with Emme on a regular basis so that I could have focused time to think. I am truly blessed to have such an amazing support network.

I would also like to thank the members of the Emory University community who helped me along this journey, including my advisor, Beth Reingold, and my committee members – Holloway Sparks, Martha Fineman, and Regina Werum. Department cohort members Alyssa Levy and Erin Tunney were always particularly quick to commiserate, and I will always cherish their friendships. Finally, my Emory University experience will always be positively painted with the spirit of the lovely Berky Abreu, whose guidance was gracious and very much appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social movement organizations face a balancing act between organizing for social change and continual discipline by hegemonic discursive powers, or “common sense” values of the American cultural majority (Gramsci 1971). In organizing for social change, movements are attempting to influence the boundaries of what is generally conceivable or to promote new ways of thinking not established in “common-sense” discourse. Yet on a more fundamental level, social movements are the product of discourse as well (Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012). Discourse functions as “room for maneuver” for social movements (Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012) – it defines the boundaries of what can be thought of and communicated, and thus restricts and enables specific perspectives. Social movement organizations observe, strategically react to, and contribute to discourse. The very realities of social movements, and of the perspectives and frames that they deploy, are at least partially shaped by hegemony (Steinberg 1999).

Researchers often analyze social change strategies of movements from the perspective of collective action framing. Yet, social movement research tends to shy away from rigorous analysis of discursive influence. Baumgartner and Ullrich (2012, 7), for example, state: “Framing processes are often investigated at the movement level and then placed in relation to selected macro level phenomena, solely relying on the plausibility of the established connection” (Ferree et al. 2002; Gamson 1998; Gusfield 1996; Neidhart 1994; Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow 2008). Such analysis ignores that social movements are contoured by specific social – namely discursive – conditions (Spillmann 1995; Wuthnow 1989; Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012).

Additionally, much social movement research suffers from bias toward the concept of the rational actor (Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012). Conceptualizing culture as something interpreted and strategically used by rational social movement actors makes framing become an outcome-oriented variable (Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012). Widening one’s analytical vision to consider that movements are the product of discourse problematizes the possibility of movement representatives acting in a truly rational, unconstrained manner (Steinberg 1999; Sandberg 2006;

Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012). Placing framing decisions within the contexts of discursive fields (Steinberg 1999) shifts analytical attention away from determinations of movement “success” to the conditions that make certain frames have a greater likelihood of being selected because of their cultural or discursive roots (Baumgartner and Ullrich 2012).

Given these shortcomings of social movement framing research, I look to a specific empirical case to explore the promise of discursive approaches to social movement framing research. The puzzle presented by the empirical case of hegemonic marriage is driven by the fact that the United States has long ascribed to a marriage ideal marked by hierarchical gender norms and heteronormativity. This common-sense notion of marriage is associated with powerful symbolic representations such as the white wedding and marital identities of husband and wife. Hegemonic marriage is also maintained through coercive disciplinary power wherein the state provides benefits to (overwhelmingly) heterosexual, married couples and engages in strategies to police people living in unmarried, alternative arrangements to marriage as non-normative or deviant. Even despite this strong, culturally “common-sense” nature of marriage, more and more people are foregoing such marriages and a hotly contested discursive field of marriage politics has emerged involving at least three different social movements – the traditional marriage movement (TMM), the Marriage Movement (MM), and the marriage equality movement (MEM). My primary research question, therefore, asks:

How does hegemonic discourse contour collective action framing of social movement organizations (SMOs) active in the contemporary field of marriage politics?

My research indicates that the framing choices of such marriage movements – their vocabulary, symbols, and meanings – are created in relation to each other, and in relation to core tenets of hegemonic marriage (Steinberg 1999). Consider the following thought experiments. Certain discursive conditions, for instance, may lead social movements to more fully engage heteronormative rather than patriarchal aspects of hegemonic marriage. Or, perhaps at other times and under different discursive conditions, the opposite would be true. A third possibility is that

movement organizations will not engage hegemonic marriage at all, rather taking marriage at its common-sense face value. This could occur because movement actors are embedded in hegemonic discourse as well, and nothing about a particular moment in time leads them to question the dominant worldview. In these contingencies, I presume that social movement agents use discursive repertoires to collectively diagnose problems and discern prognoses for change which can support or challenge hegemonic discourse, or perhaps do both. Diagnoses and prognoses can shift across time and contexts, which illustrates the need for a comparative, longitudinal study.

An additional, and equally important, contribution of this research is greater understanding of the implications of hegemony on sexual citizenship and gender equality. Social movement organizations do not participate in white weddings and assume the public identities of husband and wife – *people* negotiate hegemony on their own terms and do those things. Yet, the degree to which SMOs uphold hegemonic marriage and the degree to which hegemonic marriage has a hold on SMOs says a lot about the power of hegemony in those everyday negotiations. Despite whether people uphold hegemonic marriage or challenge it with their romantic and sexual choices, Americans still cannot escape the fact that relationships within and outside the hegemonic marriage construct tend to be cast in terms relating to gender and gender identity – nurturing wives are good, single-mothers are bad; heterosexual couples are foundational to society, gay couples threaten it. Individuals hear those messages, internalize them as they will, and personally deal with the ramifications of their choices. Yet on a larger scale, implications of the powerful influence of hegemony must be understood with regard to citizenship. Coercive tactics deployed by hegemonic marriage are strongly rooted in perceptions of the functions of marriage for the state. Non-normative sexual relationships and romantic couplings, therefore, are not merely different from marriage – that difference actually can serve as a marker or justification for being treated as second-class citizens. In examining the empirical case of contemporary hegemonic marriage, I hope to not only gain new insights relating to marriage and sexual

citizenship, but also to look for opportunities to make similar applications to other gender equality issues influenced by hegemonic constructions.

Theoretical Introduction to Hegemonic Marriage

There are many ways to be unmarried: single, cohabitating, divorced, domestic partnership, civil union, polyamorous relationship, or even something along the lines of the Facebook quip “It’s Complicated.” While nearly 90 percent of Americans will eventually marry (Cherlin 2010), at any given moment in time a significant percentage of the populace is living in some type of non-married relationship. In fact, unmarried households were 45 percent of all U.S. households in 2010 (Lofquist et al. 2012). Statistics certainly suggest increasing family diversity in the United States, yet marriage is still the “straight and narrow” (pun intended) yardstick by which “alternative” family arrangements are judged and often found wanting or deviant.

A disconnect between cultural preeminence of marriage and realities of Americans’ romantic lives is shaped by and reflected in a more than two-decade long political and discursive battleground around the meaning and practice of marriage. Debates rage about entitlement to the state-sanctioned relationship and heated ideological arguments about the meaning and purpose of marriage continue. Yet, battles aside, federal and state governments have funded initiatives supporting marriage since at least 2006 (Cherlin 2010; Heise 2012). Talk about marriage also laments the death of the marital union as a critical social institution and simultaneously makes arguments for expanded access to marriage because of the unique benefits that the institution can confer. One could even reasonably listen to marriage discourse and take away the message that Americans are living in a unique marital moment where the very definition of the institution is up for grabs.

Even despite the complicated field of contemporary marriage politics, the idea of marriage as an ideal form for an intimate relationship still permeates American culture. This ideal is described by Heise (2012) as “marital hegemony.” In this research project I explore the possibility that Americans are experiencing heightened discourse and negotiation around the

hegemonic nature of marriage as we know it or have imagined it since the “good old days” (however defined). My research explores how this puzzle is possible – how conceptions of marriage stability and contestation can co-exist, and the role that hegemony plays in perpetuating this dilemma. Hegemonic marriage (or, marriage as hegemonic) is a universalizing, common-sense construct that the vast majority of Americans use to locate relationships as either adhering to or deviating from a particular normative construction (Smith 1993). I draw on Gramsci’s (1971) term of cultural hegemony and Heise’s (2012) notion of “marital hegemony,” to argue that the strong “common-sense” nature of marriage is a result of its hegemonic socio-political positioning. Hegemonic marriage prescribes what *should be* by setting up oppositional categories, cognitive shortcuts, or interpretive frames that we all draw on when trying to understand social life (Schram 2000, 3).

I define hegemonic marriage as a discursive common-sense construction of marriage – a traditional, heterosexual union wherein the marital bond confers legitimacy over a procreative and economic unit. The imagined traditional family at the heart of hegemonic marriage is succinctly described:

Formed through a combination of marital and blood ties, ideal families consist of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children. Such families have a specific authority structure; namely, a father-head earning an adequate family wage, a stay-at-home wife, and children. ... Assuming a relatively fixed sexual division of labor, wherein women’s roles are defined as primarily in the home and men’s in the public world of work, the traditional family ideal also assumes the separation of work and family. ... It is organized not around a biological core, but a state-sanctioned, heterosexual marriage that confers legitimacy not only on the family structure itself but on children born into it (Collins 1998, 62-63).

In understanding and constructing hegemonic marriage, gender-differentiated categories—male and female, mother and father, husband and wife—make for easily accessible and simple

cognitive cataloguing (Schram 2000, 3). If marriage requires two people, heteronormativity tells us the most common-sense marriage composition is a male and a female. Patriarchy then asserts that males and females have innate characteristics that prescribe distinct gender roles. Such differentiations embed within hegemonic marriage and help shape popular representations of marriage as a *common-sense* heterosexual, procreative union between a man and a woman, marked by traditionalist notions of appropriate gender roles. The extension of hegemonic marriage through discourse reinforces its naturalness: heterosexuality, traditional gender roles, and the institution of marriage are viewed as natural, innate, and critical to the routine functioning of society.

The idea of hegemonic marriage is not new. Smith, for example, introduced SNAF – the Standard North American Family – in 1993 as an ideological code affecting discourse. Echoing very similar sentiments as the definition by Collins offered above, evaluate SNAF as:

... a conception of the family as a legally married couple sharing a household. The adult male is in paid employment; his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household. The adult female may also earn an income, but her primary responsibility is to the care of husband, household, and children. Adult male and female may be parents (in whatever legal sense) of children also resident in the household (Smith 1993, 52).

An additional classic example of the power of the traditional, nuclear family is George Murdock's ethnographic research of family and social structure dating to the 1940s. Murdock argued that he was able to detect the married nuclear family's distinctive form, even when "ethnographic descriptions contradicted it" (Smith 1993). In other words, even when the married, nuclear family was not the "prevailing form" it remained the "basic unit from which more complex familial forms are compounded" (Murdock 1949, 2). It is "always recognizable" (Murdock 1949, 2). Murdock's research, as with Abramovitz's (1988) historical analysis of US social welfare policy, suggests that hegemonic notions of marriage and the family are inextricably linked.

The fact that most Americans agree, at least in word if not in action, suggests that hegemonic marriage continues to draw its power from such recognizable values of dominant sexual and gendered identities – heteronormative and patriarchal values – which play a role in structuring the “common sense” values of the American cultural majority (Gramsci 1971). As Heise (2012) argues, however, the fact of a cultural concordance (Condit 1994) positing the heterosexual, traditional, nuclear married family as an ideal form does not preclude resistance to this form of hegemony.

Marital hegemony, like any hegemonic social construction, is maintained primarily through two channels, coercion and legitimation (Heise 2012). With regard to marriage, coercion occurs by state intervention into the private lives of citizens in order to regulate and control intimate relationships. Federal marriage promotion programs are an obvious example, but more broadly applicable interventions include financial benefits, medical insurance, tax cuts and other privileges available solely to married partners (Heise 2012; Ingraham 1999). The state withholds benefits from individuals and couples who do not conform to the state-sanctioned marital relationship, such as people living in the unmarried ways that I introduced at the beginnings of this chapter. The second aspect of hegemony – legitimation – works through symbolically representing marriage as publicly celebrated and the marital identity as socially validated. Examples of legitimation include the white wedding (Heise 2012), public identities of husband and wife (Heyn 1997), and the wedding ring. While these aspects of hegemony operate through channels of discursive power, resistance is still necessary to the functioning of hegemonic marriage. As Foucault (1980, 142) argued, eventually there is no “power without resistances” (Heise 2012). In trying to maintain a position of dominance, tactics like coercion and legitimation lose their effectiveness if there is no opposition.

The tricky part of hegemony, however, is that too much resistance can lead to transformation. Language, hegemony, framing – all are processes. People discursively engage with each other, from varying positions of dominance and marginality, to bolster, challenge, reify,

or contest constructed regimes of meaning. Hegemony, thus, is never complete. The best hope for marginalized challengers of hegemonic constructions is to replace current hegemony with a new formulation. That is, to replace current dominant constructions with new common-sense understandings. Gramsci (1971) argues that the potential of counter-hegemony, then, is not to eradicate hegemony, but rather to displace regressive hegemonic systems with progressive ones (Ives 2006).

Key social agents in hegemonic and counter-hegemonic constructions are social movements. With regard to hegemonic marriage, common-sense understandings occur when the meanings and implications of social constructions about marriage find consensus among the masses. Consensus involves consent, which is “historically” caused by the “prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (Gramsci 1971, 12). Gramsci sets off “historically” to reference the systemic nature of dominance. Common-sense hegemonic positioning does not occur over-night, nor is it easy, or perhaps even possible, for *individuals* situated in marginal positions to challenge the prestige or confidence of the dominant group (Cloud 1997). Recall that because marriage is the ideal cultural yardstick by which to measure relationships, people pursuing “alternatives” to marriage are at greater risk of marginalization and labeling as deviant. This underscores the need for research addressing attempts to change hegemony not at the individual level, but rather at the social movement organizational level.

My research combines the methods of feminist discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to evaluate four types of evidence – a textual corpus of *The Washington Post* headlines (1985-2007), three movement-specific corpora consisting of interviews with leaders of 19 social movement organizations (SMOs), five extensive web corpora of select movement organization documents, and a reference corpus constructed from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) spanning the years 1990-2012 (Davies 2008-). The multi-method approach allows me to link textual and linguistic analysis of popular media and movement-specific corpora

with critical social analysis. Linking discursive and social factors contributes to greater understanding of social movement framing decisions in the face of hegemonic constructs (Marling 2010).

Simply stated, the interconnectedness of hegemony and social movement framing is still poorly understood in current research. Researchers too often use cultural hegemony as a synonym for dominance or power, without problematizing the fact that hegemony, by nature of being a *process*, is always in flux. This research is able to focus a longitudinal, empirical study of hegemony, and as such provides important insights into its central puzzle – implications of the fact that hegemonic constructs simultaneously exist as both stable and contested. I argue throughout this project that prioritizing and paying special attention to discourse is critical to understanding how hegemony affects movement framing. My treatment of discourse, however, is not over-simplified. I do not theorize hegemonic contestation as a social site for pro- and anti-discourses and expect movement adherents to file neatly into correct lines. Instead, my research suggests that framing choices at various times sample from seemingly disparate discourses to deal with the problem or promise of hegemony (depending on one's perspective). Shorthand for such discursive sampling is *interdiscursivity*. This means that hegemonic negotiation can get messy and that actors may at times have odd bedfellows.

My research reveals that social movements truly *negotiate* hegemony. Movements neither dig in their heels for a mindless, unwavering defense, nor do they lash out in a totally radical revolution or rejection of hegemony. Instead, negotiation is a discursive tool for movements – a way in which they read the hegemonic terrain, identify threads that speak to their core beliefs or their strategic senses, and determine how to incorporate their hegemonic understandings into framing decisions in order to relate to targets, and to each other, perhaps, most effectively.

There are two main contributions that I make with this research project. First, pursuing greater understanding of hegemony is not merely an academic curiosity. Hegemonic marriage has

tangible and empirical effects on real lives. Berlant (2002), for example, states that American culture has the tendency to equate sexual and reproductive immorality with “un-American” activity that is in need of regulation. Alternatives to marriage, or ways of being unmarried, are often cast in the language of immorality, and thus suggest the possibility of greater exposure to disciplinary processes of power (Foucault 1980). The implication of equivocating “American” identity with sexual morality (and potentially, adherence to hegemonic marriage) makes this research project well positioned to address issues of sexual citizenship and queer equality through the perspective of social movement framing and hegemony.

Second, my research reveals that hegemonic forces likely affect the framing decisions of all social movement organizations, regardless of the field of contention. While I expect the insights gleaned here to apply to many cases, I am especially hopeful that my research can cast greater understanding of the contours of hegemonic power for any number of social movement struggles relating to gender equality. Lessons learned here about the interdiscursive negotiation of hegemony apply to gender equality issues because of the use of hegemonic tactics of disciplinary power like coercion and legitimation (Foucault 1980; Heise 2012).

The remainder of this chapter will introduce the cast of characters in order to provide greater understanding of movement characteristics. I evaluate three social movements currently operating as specific grassroots efforts in the field of marriage politics in the United States: the traditional marriage movement (TMM), the Marriage Movement (MM), and the marriage equality movement (MEM). The traditional marriage movement feverishly works to promote traditionalist “family values” in all aspects of American political and cultural life, often including the promotion of conservative politics and Biblically based definitions of appropriate family formations (Janssen 2001). The Marriage Movement prides itself on its bipartisan efforts to strengthen the institution of marriage. Some in the MM encourage research-based family skills education as a means of achieving its policymaking goals (Institute for American Values 2004). Lastly, the marriage equality movement is focused on same-sex marriage access and recognition

of diversity in family forms (LAMBDA Legal Defense and Education Fund 2007; The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2007). Please look to Appendix A for a list SMOs that participated in interviews.

The Movements

I chose to include the traditional marriage movement (TMM), the Marriage Movement (MM), and the marriage equality movement (MEM) because I had a high degree of confidence that their collective action framing efforts are concurrent within the same field of marriage politics. Preliminary readings of movement literature also indicated that the movements had distinct master frames. A master frame includes ideas that function to direct the attention of movement adherents. While ideological positions like Judeo-Christian beliefs or conservative political principles tend to be established and specific, a master frame is a general assemblage of ideas in a movement that provides scaffolding upon which later movements can build (Oliver and Johnston 2000). As my research progressed it became apparent that having distinct master frames was an important criterion because it set the stage for me to examine the role of interdiscursivity in hegemonic negotiation. Master frames are like umbrellas – they are rooted in specific ideological discourses but they intend to be broad enough to allow people to come together and oppose or support a range of social developments. If, for instance, the movements all had the same master frame, then they would be much more likely to all be deploying the same discourses, lessening the possibility that they would borrow, sample, appropriate, or co-opt discourses from each other in their framing decisions.

I also initially considered, but later rejected, including a fourth movement – the Alternatives to Marriage Project, which has since been renamed Unmarried Equality. I chose not to include Unmarried Equality because at the time I was selecting my cases the movement did not offer the breadth of secondary movement literature that the other three cases provided. Because of the movement’s commitment to “fight discrimination on the basis of marital status”

(*Philanthropy News Digest* 2002), however, I discuss what Unmarried Equality analytically offers as a counterweight to MEM framing in Chapter 5.

It may appear as if the movement organizations I chose neatly span a political ideological spectrum: the conventional family values positions of the TMM represents the conservative right, the bipartisan marriage strengthening positions of the MM represents the political middle, and the rights-based claims of the MEM represents the left. While this ordering may seem intuitive, I caution against forging such political alliances. To assume that a traditional perspective is necessarily conservative and a LGBT rights perspective is necessarily liberal puts the proverbial cart before the horse. Such an assumption presumes political ideological affinity prior to empirically identifying relevant ideological factors. To do so will cloud one's judgment and risks mischaracterizing the nature of hegemonic marriage and the framing work done within movement organizations.

This highlights an important methodological issue. I interviewed individuals representing nineteen unique movement organizations. While I asked each interviewee to comment on whether and how they saw their organization fitting into a larger social movement, at times I still had to make judgment calls about where I think organizations fit. Additionally, this research also involves analysis of hundreds of pages of secondary sources. In the course of analyzing such materials, I made further judgment calls. In the following movement synopses, I try to clarify the core characteristics that helped shape my decision-making.

The Traditional Marriage Movement (TMM). Christian religious beliefs and natural law drive the traditional view of marriage in the United States. In this view, marriage was first a covenant akin to Christ's covenant with the community of the faithful, and thus an unbreakable bond. Traditional expectations of marriage include commitment to a lifelong, monogamous relationship in which children will be born and raised. Within the marriage relationship, traditional marriage dictates a division of gender roles as well. This hierarchal ordering posits the man/husband as the authority and head of household, and the woman/wife as caretaker of house

and home, complementary in every regard to her husband. Thus, I generally regard the TMM conception of traditional marriage as closely aligned with the main gendered hierarchical and heteronormative tenets of hegemonic marriage.

Consider, for example, the common law concept of coverture. Common law premises were congruent with natural law (Corwin 1955), and extrapolated from Christian religious doctrine that the husband and wife are one person legally represented by the husband. This harkens back to the book of Genesis, which suggests that the husband and wife are “one flesh.” As evidence of married couples’ legal solidarity, coverture was the reason why wives took husbands’ surnames. A union of names represented transfer of wives’ free-held property to husbands under marriage. This naming practice was exclusive to England and English colonies for nearly 400 years before it spread to other European nations (Erickson 2005). While coverture is now defunct, the traditional view still holds the husband as head of the family, and such cultural naming practices persist. Hierarchical ordering of the marital relationship sets forth a relational structure wherein the subjectivities of marital partners define their relationship with each other: husband and wife, breadwinner and caretaker, protector and protected, independent and dependent (Shanley 2004).

Adherents to traditional marriage often point to the ubiquity of the marriage institution as proof of its inherent righteousness. Legal historian John Witte, for example, argues that through most of its history in the West, marriage has been a material institution for giving expression to natural sexual needs and tendencies, a contractual institution requiring social control, a public institution for the common good, and a religious institution sanctioned by God (Witte 1997; Browning and Marquardt 2006). While marriage varies considerably across cultural contexts, traditionalists often find reason to dismiss other marriage forms as non-normative, in terms of both frequency and value. For adherents to TMM, what is common sense is what is conventional and time-honored. Elshtain, for example, states “marriage has always involved men and women and this has served as a *prima facie* fact of the matter” (2006, xii). Such a comment underscores

the presumed natural heteronormativity of the marriage union and serves as an argument against same-sex marriage, for example, namely because heterosexual marriage has *always been* that way.

TMM adherents likely see themselves as participants in a cultural battle over ideas and values that they view as foundational to the functioning of society. At a minimum, the TMM argues that the sole definition of marriage is a union between one man and one woman. Same-sex marriage is largely responsible for the current mobilization within the movement, but that is not the only issue that may catch their attention. Not only homosexuality, but also abortion, parenting, abstinence education, and the sexual revolution are generally viewed as issues of concern within the traditional marriage movement.

Most adherents in the TMM are christianists – those who attempt to employ political and legal means to impose a particular set of values, beliefs or behavior on society. I use the term “christianist,” conceived by *The Atlantic* editor Andrew Sullivan (2006), not to disparage the faith connection in the TMM, but rather to avoid the political ideological trappings of the term “Religious Right.” Christianists may mobilize in political ways, but regardless of their party affiliation, they tend to hold their vision of marriage as supremely moral or right (Scanzoni 2010).

Traditionalists also tend to couple religiosity and sexuality – marriage is a natural manifestation of the physical sexual urges of men and women, a socially sanctioned site for procreation, and a place for individuals to be exposed in communion and unconditional love with a partner of the opposite sex. Scanzoni (2010) argues that, when we cut to the chase, christianists within the TMM are fundamentally concerned with sexuality. Arguments for saving marriage do not generate solely out of changing conditions relating to same-sex unions, despite the dominance of gay marriage battle rhetoric. Marriage needs saving, rather, because of the long-term effects of broader sexual liberalization. In a brilliant turn of wordsmithing, Scanzoni explains, “[T]he christianists’ view of sexuality is inseparable from their views of keeping women in their

supposedly proper place – linking the two is as old as the Garden of Eden. Remove sexuality and women from the mix, and the christianist agenda droops rather limp and flaccid” (2012, xxi).

Traditionalists point to factors including the onset of no-fault divorce laws and an expanding welfare state during the 1960s to explain dramatic changes in both the roles of women and sexual expression (Wilson 2002). The problem with marriage is not that cultural attitudes have shifted, necessarily, but that such shifts have weakened the status of marriage as a social institution. Movement adherents do not presume that bolstering traditional marriage will automatically make all marriages happy or will prevent people from engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage. They do argue, however, that strengthening traditional marriage cements critical elements of society that allow for all of the other social institutions to do their work.

Thus, much activism within the TMM is a response to changing social norms governing sexuality in the United States over the past 50 years. The sexual revolution set the stage for the emergence of loosely organized activists to fight the insidious effects of cultural sex saturation and a turn away from social control offered by marriage. While I describe the movement that emerged as the TMM and many of the movement participants as christianists, the movement has been known by a variety of other names: the Moral Majority, the Religious Right, the New Christian Right, and the pro-family movement. The movement has had great success in incorporating its values in the politics of the Republican Party, but that is not to say that all members identify as socially conservative. Similarly, while the movement is a self-proclaimed Christian movement, not all Christians identify with an agenda of traditional marriage promotion (Fetner 2006) and not all movement supporters are Christian.

Fetner (2006) attributes the movement’s emergence and success to its evangelical Christian roots. From the 1930s to the 1960s, Christian evangelicals withdrew from elements of immoral secular society and forged their own alternative social networks. Secularism, while not thought of as a specific threat to marriage *per se*, threatened moral teachings that evangelicals viewed as foundational. Some of the longer-lived pro-family organizations actually trace their

roots back to organized campaigns against sexual content in popular media, such as the American Family Association.

As organizations like these were built, networks emerged among Bible retreats, ministries, churches, and Christian media, allowing evangelicals to amass resources and membership in the development of a nascent social movement. The movement continued to gain momentum and catapulted to the national stage when Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority in 1979. Initially reluctant to enter the political realm, Falwell looked to the success of small-scale evangelical activism as evidence that his plans to meld an evangelical Christian agenda with party politics would work (Fetner 2006). The rest, as they say, is history.

Initially quiet in the 1990s but becoming much more vocal since 2003 are TMM arguments against same-sex marriage. In the eyes of traditionalists, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (440 Mass. 309, 798 N.E.2d 941 Mass. 2003) paved the way for states to redefine marriage as something other than a heterosexual union between one man and one woman. This legal change, often discussed in terms of judicial activism, highlighted traditionalists' sense of false security provided by the passage of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (P.L. 104-199 1996). As such, discourse within the TMM dramatically shifted to fight the emerging same-sex marriage threat. My analysis in chapter 6 confirms and expands on this shift. A quick glance at the websites of prominent pro-family organizations like the American Family Association, the Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, the Liberty Counsel, the National Organization for Marriage, and others, shows the rhetorical saturation of arguments against same-sex marriage. While glimpses and glimmers of other marriage threats exist, messages about issues like no-fault divorce, out-of-wedlock childbearing, sexual media content, women's roles, prostitution, and pornography are much less common.

West (2007) argues that same-sex marriage may strike fear in the hearts of pro-family advocates because it subverts what they see as the natural order of things, the inherent "natural"

institution of marriage as governed by natural law. The natural law understanding of marriage dictates that marriage is revealed to us “through the exercise of our natural reason in contemplation of what our nature requires” and is signified by sexual opposites coming together “in a union blessed by God and state both, *so as to* produce, nurture, and raise children” (West 2007, 5; emphasis in original). In this view, marriage is not a construction of society, but the foundation on which the state rests and, as such, a precondition for the existence of the state itself. Same-sex marriage is therefore a giant threat for traditionalists because the redefinition of legal marriage as involving anything other than a heterosexual, procreative union is, on the one hand, not natural, and on the other hand is non-obligatory. It is non-obligatory because legitimizing same-sex unions strips the marriage institution of its inherence and hegemony. If the institution is no longer natural, the state should not be necessarily obligated to recognize it. Additionally, legalizing same-sex marriage shifts the definition of marriage away from the purview of nature and God, and into the hands of policymakers and the state. Leaving the definition to the whims of humans, then, means that marriage cannot serve as a foundation of society. The institution becomes undeniably contingent (West 2007) – and, thus, deniably hegemonic.

Even though hegemony’s suggestive sheen of universality makes it appear common-sense, the fact that it relies on the consent of the masses to sustain itself makes hegemony necessarily contingent. Contingency is a hallmark of hegemony, important on two fronts. First, in a descriptive sense, contingency suggests that the “truth” or “being” of any object or concept is by its nature theoretically and discursively context-dependent (Townshend 2004; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). While a hegemonic marriage construct may exist in the contemporary American context, the meanings of marriage are dynamic and it is possible that a construct of a different sort existed in past times or currently exists in different cultures. Second, hegemony entails an “unending interplay of ‘contingent decisions’ between the ‘ethical’ (‘ought’) and the ‘normative’ (‘is’)” (Townshend 2004, 277; Laclau 1990). This struggle brings to light the messy differences

between what hegemonic marriage tells us marriage ought to be and how Americans choose to structure their romantic lives.

The contingency of marriage is an important factor in evaluating how the TMM and other movements negotiate hegemonic marriage. Contingency is particularly threatening to movements, like the TMM, that have a stake in maintaining hegemony. If marriage is deprived its core foundations, then it is impossible to connect its maintenance to larger social goals. Contingency is a primary reason why the TMM finds same-sex marriage so dangerous. Thinking of contingency differently, however, also hints at why the MEM may also find elements of hegemonic marriage to be compelling. Through negotiating hegemonic marriage, the MEM is able to identify those elements that can potentially pay the biggest dividends with regard to the movement's goals. For example, the MEM hopes that challenging marriage's heteronormative imperative will nullify its procreative foundations, and open space for same-sex relationships to enter into the institution. Challenging traditional gender norms, however, is less likely to be effective as a negotiation strategy because the inherency argument is weaker. Distinct gender roles are not as foundational to the marriage relationship as using the institution as a socially sanctioned site for reproducing and propagating the species.

The Marriage Movement (MM). The Marriage Movement (MM) emerged out of a 1990s centrist neo-family values movement. Marking a shift away from divisive family values debates of the 1980s, the 1990s centrist neo-family values movement posited that marriage was no longer contentious, but rather a consensus issue (Smart Marriages 2000; Stacey 2001). Promoting heterosexual marriage was its primary goal, and the budding movement looked to successes in policy arenas as evidence of marriage's universal appeal. For example, the inclusion of marriage in 1996 welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, had widespread support among both Republicans and Democrats (Ooms 2001; Ness 2002). The preamble to the 1996 Act had four parts, three of which dealt with marriage and only one of which explicitly addressed poverty. The marriage components of the

Preamble were: 1) to promote marriage, 2) to encourage the formation of two-parent families, and 3) to reduce out-of-wedlock births (P.L. 104-193, Sec. 101(10) 1996). With legislation like the PRWORA, the neo-family values movement proclaimed “family values” no longer to be a rallying cry for the Republican Party alone. Marriage suddenly seemed to be on everyone’s agenda (Stacey 2001).

In 2000, the MM was born, complete with an organizational document, *A Statement of Principles*, including over one hundred signatories described as a “who’s who of new-family values crusaders” (Stacey 2001, 26). The document proclaimed the emergence of a new social movement designed to strengthen marriage. This new social movement, according to the *Statement*, comprised a broad base:

We are teachers and scholars, marriage counselors and marriage educators. We are judges, divorce lawyers, and legal reformers. We are clinicians, service providers, policy analysts, social workers, women’s leaders, religious leaders, and advocates for responsible fatherhood. We are people of faith, asking God’s blessing in the great task before us. We are agnostics and humanists, committed to moral and spiritual progress. We are women and men, liberals and conservatives, of different races and ethnic groups. We come together to pursue a common goal. We come together for a marriage movement (CMFCE, IAV and RCFP 2000, 3).

Conservatives and liberals alike lauded the release of the document. Governor George Bush and Laura Bush released the statement: “We commend the men and women of The Marriage Movement who have heard the call to strengthen this vital institution. Each of us must commit to restoring a pro-marriage culture in America” (Stacey 2001, 27). Vice-President Al Gore and Tipper Gore stated, “Fighting together against the forces that undermine family values, and creating a national culture that nurtures and encourages marriage and good family life, must be at the heart of this great nation’s public policy” (Stacey 2001, 27).

The *Statement of Principles* pointed to a number of factors in American society that created the need for a new social movement, including high divorce rates, high rates of unwed childbearing, and marriage decline's negative effects on civil society. At the core of many of these factors was an explicit interest in the well-being of children. For example, the *Statement* argued:

When marriages fail, children suffer... Children suffer when marriages between parents do not take place, when spouses fail to create a "good-enough" family bond. We recognize that there are abusive marriages that should end in separation or divorce. We firmly believe that every family raising children deserves respect and support. Yet at the same time, we cannot forget that not every family form is equally likely to protect children's well-being (CMFCE, IAV and RCFP 2000, 3).

While one could argue that the TMM relies on the filtering power of a sexuality-run-amok master frame, the MM, on the other hand, is interested in the well-being of children. Deployment of the morality and sexuality master frame allowed the TMM to morph and to address both the effects of sexual liberalization on marriage (out-of-wedlock childbearing, divorce, and cohabitation, for example) and more recently, the issue of same-sex marriage. Likewise, the focus on child well-being in the MM is general enough to attract a wide array of movement adherents, and provides cover for a broad array of movement activities.

MM adherents often bemoan the shortsighted way in which society deals with issues of family breakdown, trying to ameliorate the effects instead of proactively addressing the causes. Diane Sollee of Smart Marriages stated in a press release about the *Statement of Principles* document: "Our current policies are based on acceptance of family breakdown and are focused on dealing with the aftermath and fallout. This statement leads the way to positive, preventable supports for marriage" (Smart Marriages 2000). Like much assessment-based literature emerging in the social sciences and human services in the 1990s, "positive, preventable supports for

marriage” turn out to be those grounded in academic literature about what types of actions best strengthen marriage relationships.

A research focus in the movement continues today. Many of the key organizational players in the movement, the Institute for American Values, the National Marriage Project, the Administration for Children and Families, and others, continuously involve themselves in generating new research to address marriage-related questions. The National Marriage Project, for example, annually publishes a report called *The State of our Unions*, while the Institute for American Values sponsors research through its Center for Marriage and Families.

The degree of the movement’s “grassroots” characterization is somewhat contentious, however, even among movement adherents. The MM is a loose coalition. In a document titled *What Next for the Marriage Movement?* published in 2004, adherents put forth this explanation for the status of the movement:

We are a diffuse, diverse, multi-faceted movement, bringing together conservatives and liberals, religious and nonreligious people, activists and scholars. Moreover, there is no national headquarters. There is no central committee. No one person or group is in charge. Much of the vitality and creativity of our movement – much of the strength of any genuine social movement – flows from this diversity and decentralization.

But this strength can also be a weakness. Particularly now. This current period of crisis and opportunity – this vivid and precarious marriage moment that we live in clearly calls us to a greater unity of action. It calls us to coordinate more effectively at the regional and national levels. It calls us to invest more intellectual and material resources into identifying and shaping key national issues. It requires us to begin to speak in one voice to the nation as a whole. The time we live in requires our movement to become a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts (Institute for American Values 2004, 59).

The diffuse nature of the MM leads some adherents to question whether it is a cohesive social movement at all, or perhaps an umbrella covering a number of activities by social activists pursuing only loosely related agendas. Some see the MM as merely a coalition of organizations committed to strengthening social values supporting marriage. Others point out that a distinct social movement, one that emerged from a split among marriage therapists regarding whether laypeople can teach marriage education, is often lumped into the MM. This other movement is a skills-based *marriage education movement* committed to improving individuals' chances for success in marriage relationships. A third complicating factor to describing the MM as a grassroots effort is the involvement of the federal government in marriage promotion and responsible fatherhood programs.

Some organizations within the MM are often conflated with traditionalists or with conservative politics. Because of the diverse membership of the movement, it may be difficult for the average person to recognize the difference between a clergy person working to strengthen marriage in order to optimize outcomes for children, for example, and a faith-based organization working to defend the institution of marriage from elements of sexual liberalization. Indeed, there can be considerable overlap, and the social transformation language of some MM organizations further complicates making such distinctions. Confusion regarding the distinction between the MM and the TMM are understandable, and my general default criteria in placing a movement organization in one camp or the other is the organization's apparent deference to specific master frames. Evidence of the organization capitulating to concerns over child well-being tends to make me weigh it in favor of the MM. I additionally test my assumptions by checking the signatories to the *Statement of Principles* for the MM.

Recent divisions in the MM over the issue of same-sex marriage further muddle its distinction from the TMM. Formal documents of the MM do not take a stand on the issue of same-sex marriage:

Our mission statement is not intended to endorse or reject particular public policy proposals regarding same-sex unions. Instead, we seek here to express as clearly as possible the broad social change goal to which we in the marriage movement are committed. How best to achieve that goal when it comes to public policies for same-sex unions poses issues on which people of goodwill can disagree, on which we in the marriage movement currently hold diverse views, and about which we believe that we, and the nation as a whole, should have civil and serious discussion (Institute for American Values 2004, 62).

Some organizational leaders within the movement, however, did eventually choose unfavorable positions relating to marriage equality (Rauch 2007). That may now be changing.

David Blankenhorn, the founder of the Institute for American Values, provided high-profile testimony in favor of the 2008 California ballot initiative, Proposition 8. Unlike those in the TMM who reject same-sex marriage as a violation of natural law, Blankenhorn took a child-centered position:

Marriage is the planet's only institution whose core purpose is to unite the biological, social and legal components of parenthood into one lasting bond. Marriage says to a child: The man and the woman whose sexual union made you will also be there to love and raise you. In this sense, marriage is a gift that society bestows on its children.

At the level of first principles, gay marriage effaces that gift. No same-sex couple, married or not, can ever under any circumstances combine biological, social and legal parenthood into one bond. For this and other reasons, gay marriage has become a significant contributor to marriage's continuing deinstitutionalization, by which I mean marriage's steady transformation in both law and custom from a structured institution with clear public purposes to the state's licensing of private relationships that are privately defined (Blankenhorn 2012).

Even with this position on the deinstitutionalization of marriage, however, Blankenhorn is changing his oppositional tune against same-sex marriage. In 2012 he stated:

Instead of fighting gay marriage, I'd like to help build new coalitions bringing together gays who want to strengthen marriage with straight people who want to do the same. For example, once we accept gay marriage, might we also agree that marrying before having children is a vital cultural value that all of us should do more to embrace? (Blankenhorn 2012).

This call for a consensus is not Blankenhorn's alone – it suggests on the one hand a significant new direction for core adherents of the MM, and on the other hand presents an opportunity to mend rifts that plagued the movement in the past.

The marriage education movement does not see the issue of same-sex marriage to be a big deal. Ever committed to diversity, the movement emerged because of a split within the professional ranks of marriage and family therapists in the 1990s. Smart Marriages, a coalition for marriage, family, and couples education, was a leader in marriage education circles until September 2010, when its work was supplanted by the development of a new organization, the National Association for Relationship and Marriage Education (NARME). An example of the disinterested position of the marriage education movement toward same-sex marriage is apparent in the title of a Smart Marriage Listserv Archive entry from February 2004, “Broken Marriages, Not Gay Nuptials, Pose Risk to Kids.”.

The marriage education movement includes for-profit organizations developing relationship skills curricula, individuals pursuing certification in a dizzying array of relationship programs, non-profits hoping to provide marriage-strengthening services to their communities, faith leaders, policymakers, and more. The focus of the movement is not to change public values about marriage, but rather to change how people behave in relationships. They want to challenge romanticized, individualistic myths about relationships – the illusion of a Prince Charming out there who will sweep the waiting damsel off her feet. They want to contest the idea that should

Prince Charming turn out to be a frog, the Princess has grounds to dump him and move on to the next Prince. The marriage education movement wants to teach that relationships take work, and that by injecting specific skills sets into a relationship there is a greater possibility for achieving a happy ever after. And of course, the primary reason that successful relationships matter is for the well-being of children.

The federal government is the final element in the MM mix. The continued trajectory of welfare reform is responsible for its inclusion. The 1996 reform legislation abolished welfare as an entitlement through the creation of TANF, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. The legislation also included unfunded mandates to promote marriage. With TANF block grants set to expire in 2002, President Bush decided to take on an explicit family formation agenda by forming the Healthy Marriage Initiative (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center 2010).

Reauthorization of TANF in 2006 earmarked \$100 million per year over a 5-year period for Healthy Marriage Demonstration grants and \$50 million per year over a 5-year period for Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration grants (Roulet 2009). The Claims Resolution Act of 2010 continued funding of \$150 million in each of five years for healthy marriage promotion and responsible fatherhood (H.R. 4783—111th Congress 2010).

In the grand scheme of things, only a handful of communities and organizations received federal dollars under the block grant programs, but the language of “healthy marriage” promotion signified an important policy shift. Marriage suddenly mattered, and pushing it was supposedly an appropriate use of public funds. This was not without controversy, however. The inclusion of marriage promotion funds in welfare legislation seemed to force a particular family form on poor women, an observation that brought great ire by a number of scholars (Coltrane 2001; Mink 2002; Fineman, Mink and Smith 2003; Harris and Parisi 2005) and opposition activists (Solot and Miller 2002).

The main policy goal coming out of voluntary marriage promotion programming is the formation and maintenance of “healthy marriages.” The term “healthy marriages” is bantered

around so often that it has become somewhat of a buzzword in the MM generally. The mission of the Administration for Children and Families, for instance, and its conceptualization of “healthy marriage” dovetail into the master frame of child well-being. The goal of federal healthy marriage initiatives is to ensure optimal outcomes for children, preferably such that more children will be raised by their own two biological, married parents in low-conflict households. The provision of federal funding also likely bolsters the work of the MM and potentially helps the movement pursue its objectives.

The MM is complex, but I feel comfortable referring to the movement in the singular despite its divergent nature because the movement’s original founding document, *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles*, includes signatories representative of all three movement elements. When choosing interview participants, I tried to sample from all aspects of the movement. Because governmental marriage programming seems generally to align with the marriage skills orientation of the marriage education movement, I tend to consider them coterminous. The Institute for American Values, the National Marriage Project, and allied organizations comprise the other main segment of the movement. This branch does not put much faith in marriage education efforts, but rather holds that the movement must work to change public values and perceptions to fight the deinstitutionalization of marriage. Both branches, however, regard marriage as the optimal social institution for assuring the well-being of children.

The Marriage Equality Movement (MEM). The TMM describes marriage as the union between one man and one woman, and argues that, for the most part, it has always been that way. Marriage equality advocates take a different tack. Evan Wolfson, founder and architect of the MEM, explains marriage as “what we use to describe a specific relationship of love and dedication to another person” (Wolfson 2004, 3). Such a definition sparks controversy. Traditionalist opponents claim the movement is trying to *redefine* marriage. The MEM, on the other hand, is quick to argue that is not their goal. Marriage equality advocates stress inherent instability within the institution of marriage across time and contexts as well as universal

elements of committed relationships – nurturance, care, and responsibility of partners for one another. Movement adherents object to the modified nature of “same-sex marriage,” and rather agitate for one thing only – marriage, non-modified.

Wolfson’s book, *Why Marriage Matters*, is a key primer for the MEM. In the introduction Wolfson points to a number of examples of the social instability of marriage. He describes social conventions that compel people to marry, understandings of marriage as dynastic or property arrangements, the absence of marriage as a Catholic sacrament for the Church’s first thousand years, and the American prohibition of interracial marriage. His conclusion, however, acknowledges that there has been a general trend toward inclusion and equality in marriage (Wolfson 2004). Such an observation sets the stage for the rights-based master frame that has come to dominate arguments in favor of “marriage equality,” “freedom to marry,” and “relationship recognition.”

While Wolfson may seem to have the status of a cult of personality, his influence is not without merit. Prior to founding Freedom to Marry, Wolfson worked as the marriage project director for Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund. It was while at Lambda Legal that Wolfson served as co-counsel on the historic 1996 Hawaii case, *Baehr v. Miike* (950 P.2d 1234 1996; Freedom to Marry 2013b). Gay rights activism existed long before that landmark decision arguing that gays and lesbians should not be prevented from entering into marriage. Many in the MEM, however, accurately note that the 1993 *Baehr v. Lewin* (74 Haw. 530, 852 P.2d 44 1993) Hawaii decision was the starting point for the contemporary MEM. The movement is more specific and targeted than gay or LGBT rights movements were in the past, although that is not to say that same-sex marriage claims only first surfaced in the 1990s. In 1971, for example, the Minnesota Supreme Court denied the petition of a gay couple to marry. Other states similarly denied couples marriage rights. Such denials, Wolfson argues, were not surprising because they came at “the dawn of the gay civil rights movement, before America had a chance to realize that

gay families are found in every county, gay people in every profession, gay individuals in nearly everyone's family, workplace, or social circle" (Wolfson 2004, 28).

In the initial *Baehr* case, the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was a matter of equal protection law. The ruling did not order the state to issue marriage licenses for the petitioning couples, but it did establish that the state must have a "compelling state interest" to discriminate against gay couples with regard to marriage (74 Haw. 530, 852 P.2d 44 1993). Following the ruling, Lambda Legal and other gay rights organizations, as well as politicians, business leaders, celebrities, faith organizations, and more, signed a *Marriage Resolution*. The text of the resolution stated:

Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice, Resolved—the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage (Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, para. 6).

The Resolution, with its mandates about human rights, serves as a premier example of the rights-based master frame that shapes current marriage equality activism.

The 1993 and 1996 Hawaii legal decisions rippled out from the islands to mainland United States as lawmakers and others worried about potential political, moral, and social impacts of the ruling. Policymakers scrambled to protect and defend the institution of heterosexual marriage, first with the passage of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996. DOMA has two provisions. The first defines marriage for federal purposes as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife" (P.L. 104-100 1996). The second provision permits states to choose not to recognize same-sex marriages performed in or recognized by other states (Brandzel 2005). A proliferation of state versions of the Act followed often referred to as mini-DOMAs, as well as state-level constitutional bans on same-sex marriage beginning in 2004. State

constitutional actions followed President Bush's May 2003 proposal for a Federal Marriage Amendment (Brandzel 2005).

Fighting such opposition to same-sex marriage occurred at the same time as increasing investments in marriage equality activism and the growth of MEM organizations, both at the state and national levels. While early setbacks are notable, the movement also enjoyed important successes, including Vermont's 1999 recognition of civil unions (*Baker v. State*, 744 A.2d 864 Vt. 1999) and the 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision *Goodridge v. Department of Health* (440 Mass. 309, 798 N.E.2d 941 Mass. 2003) that effectively legalized same-sex marriage in the state.

The choice of the MEM to place all of the proverbial gay rights eggs in the same-sex marriage basket was controversial to some. Writing two years post the *Goodridge* decision, Josephson (2005) pointed out that Americans generally supported same-sex marriage less than other gay rights initiatives like nondiscrimination in employment. As the marriage equality frame grew in strength, dissent from the goal of same-sex marriage for some within the queer community is more difficult than ever before.

At the heart of the civil rights master frame is a question of citizenship rights. Adherents often cite the Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* (388 U.S. 1 1967) which struck down bans on interracial marriage as evidence that same-sex couples can access equal status as citizens through the institution of marriage. Nancy Cott explained this point with respect to same-sex marriage, "The exclusion of same-sex partners from free choice in marriage stigmatizes their relationship, and reinforces a caste supremacy of heterosexuality over homosexuality just as laws banning marriage across the color line exhibited and reinforced white supremacy" (2000, 216).

While movement adherents often couch arguments for same-sex marriage in discussions of material benefits for same-sex couples (as one can see in the oft-cited 1997 General Accounting Office report detailing over 1,000 instances of marriage benefits and responsibilities in federal code), the ability to access material benefits is not the whole picture. Same-sex

marriage advocates also argue that their denial of marriage rights constitutes unequal status as citizens (U.S. General Accounting Office 1997; Josephson 2005).

Not all members of the queer community are behind the push for same-sex marriage as a route to achieve equal citizenship rights, however. Phelan (2001) argues that the marriage quest merely creates a set of exclusionary practices wherein only individuals who are most able to conform to expectations of the heterosexual marital relationship – those in long-term, committed relationships, perhaps raising children – are likely to enjoy equality benefits. Non-normative members of the queer community will continue to experience marginalization. A passage from Lynn Huffer in the *HuffPost Gay Voices Blog* characterizes the nature of this debate:

But same-sex marriage to the exclusion of other issues is a narrow vision of politics and an impoverished vision of love. ...

We hear all the time about the benefits of state-sanctioned marriage, but we seldom hear about its harms. In promoting the matrimonial ideal above all others, the marriage-equality movement produces new categories of discrimination, sanctifying "good" gays and lesbians and legitimizing some relationships at the expense of others. Those others -- the new deviants, the new abnormal -- have all but disappeared from our political landscape (Huffer 2012).

While the civil rights master frame seems to have a stronghold within the MEM, these internal debates cannot be dismissed. Additionally, as more Americans express support for same-sex marriage, powerful forces within the MEM are tweaking the relationship recognition frame away from citizenship and equality to focus more on commitment and responsibility. State-sanctioned, formal and legal marriage rights are still the goal, but the movement is stressing that adherents should talk about marriage differently. Third Way, a centrist Washington think tank, launched the *Commitment Campaign* in 2011. They posit that reframing same-sex marriage in commitment terminology is the key to swaying the "middle" (Laser, Erickson and Kessler 2009). Similarly, Freedom to Marry launched the *Why Marriage Matters* campaign in 2012 for the same

purpose. *Why Marriage Matters* states, “Marriage matters to gay people in similar ways that it matters to everyone. Gay and lesbian couples want to get married to make a lifetime commitment to the person they love and to protect their families” (Freedom to Marry 2013c). This reframing likely moves the resolution of internal debates further away, and may actually capitulate to hegemonic marriage by tacitly accepting gendered hierarchical aspects of marriage at face value. Now it is not enough to say that citizenship rights should be equal, but that same-sex relationships are similar to everyone else’s. A way to challenge hegemonic marriage would be for the MEM to clarify how their relationships *differ* from the marriage relationships of the “middle,” but doing so would likely not be strategic. In this instance, what is not said may be just as relevant as the collective frames deployed by the movement. It will be interesting to see if the MEM movement chooses to answer new calls for consensus from the MM base.

Chapter Analytic Strategy

This chapter gave a brief introduction to the central research question of this study: How does hegemonic discourse contour collective action framing of social movement organizations active in the contemporary field of marriage politics? My hope is that this research will contribute empirical and theoretical insights into the implications of hegemony on social movement framing and sexual citizenship, and particularly a greater feminist understanding of how hegemony operates within fields of contention relating to gender equality.

Subsequent chapters follow an analytical strategy that moves from a theoretical discussion of literature and methodology to a sustained discussion of the three movements, supplemented by newspaper textual analysis. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of the three main theoretical tenets of this project. First, I evaluate feminist and queer critiques of marriage to gain insight into the hetero-patriarchal foundations of hegemonic marriage, and to lay the foundation for applying my research to issues of sexual citizenship. Second, I explore the theory of cultural hegemony to theorize its connection with discourse. Finally, I look to social movement framing theory to elucidate the assumptions I make regarding

how power shifts or changes in hegemonic constructions become relevant for framing decision-making. Chapter 3 gives the methodological framework of this study. The chapter makes an argument for a multi-method framework combining feminist critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic analysis.

Chapter 4 begins critical discourse analysis by evaluating marriage coverage in *The Washington Post* from 1985 to 2007. The point of the analysis is to determine the contextual parameters of hegemonic marriage across time – to identify relevant social-cultural markers that potentially influence popular and social movement discourse about marriage. Chapters 5 through 7 are all movement-specific analyses that cumulatively explore how hegemonic discourse contours SMO collective action framing related to the field of marriage politics. Finally, chapter 8 connects themes across the comparative analysis and speaks to the analytical contributions of this research project. In this chapter, I explore potential applications of hegemonic framing insights on social movement research more generally, as well as the specific, empirical implications of hegemonic marriage and movement framing on sexual citizenship and queer equality.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore central theories used to understand hegemonic marriage, as well as other relevant theories that may speak to how hegemonic discourse contours collective action framing within social movement organizations. The generation of movement messages in the field of marriage politics relates to the intersection of three theoretical terrains: critical – feminist and queer – critiques of marriage, hegemony, and social movement framing.

Feminist and Queer Critiques

Feminist marriage researchers tend to describe marriage using terminology characterized by change, shifts, and transformation. From Heyn's examination of the historical transformation of women from yoke mates to capital-W Wives (1997), to Coontz's pronouncement that love did marriage in (2005), feminist historians have painstakingly documented the factors that brought Americans to see marriage as the bedrock of society, and then to (virtually instantaneously) begin lamenting the institution's demise and the "good old days" of marriage and family life. Yet, despite the thoroughly socially constructed nature of the marriage institution and varying degrees of adherence to its expectations and responsibilities, when we speak of marriage today it is not typically modified. We do not routinely use legal classifications like civil marriage or religious marriage, sociological typologies like traditional marriage or egalitarian marriage (Haas 1980), or psychological labels like vitalized marriage and harmonious marriage (Olson and Fowers 1993). No, when Americans talk about marriage, we say *marriage*, and we assume that everyone knows what we are talking about.

There have been notable shifts, however, in how Americans experience marriage. Beginning in the 1960s, new trends in divorce, more women employed outside the home, and greater access to reliable birth control changed many Americans' understandings of what constituted marriage *in practice*. In particular, Americans began to move away from staid interpretations of rigid gender roles in separate marital spheres toward more women's

empowerment (Yamin 2012). Still today, however, when we talk about marriage casually and colloquially, we tend to evoke the traditional institution. Overwhelmingly, we speak of marriage as a heterosexual union, with a man and a woman taking on separate roles and responsibilities, perhaps in separate social spheres. We speak of marriage as a lifelong commitment and obligation to a partner whom we select based on mutual feelings of affection. We speak of marriage as an economic and social unit that organizes how we financially provide for ourselves and for whatever number of children that we choose to raise within the confines of the marital relationship. Feminist historians, however, remind us that this very basic understanding of marriage that we all seem to collectively hold together has not always been the same.

Marriage is a transformed institution (Coontz 1997). Changes in the past 50 years are largely the result of a new marriage system that has been evolving since the eighteenth century when people began to adopt two radical provisions: that love should be the fundamental reason for marriage, and that young people should be free to choose their own marriage partners on the basis of love. As this change proceeded from radical to mainstream, Americans added to nineteenth century conceptions of romantic, love-based marriage a new focus on sexual liberalization and transformed gender roles (Coontz 2005). This twentieth century emphasis on personal sexual choice, coupled with love-based private relationships, was not without important implications. A love-based institution made possible the reality of no-fault divorce. Emotional nurturance and satisfaction as hallmarks of marriage made the legal consequences of illegitimacy for children seem inhumane, and opened space for sexual relationships outside the marriage institution. Beliefs that maintaining quality relationships trump the economic functions of marriage opened doors for liberalized gender roles and same-sex marriage (Coontz 2005).

While love-based marriage created revolutionary changes in how Americans organize and practice their intimate relationships, the revolution was a long time coming. It took at least 150 years for love to conquer marriage. Coontz (2005, 307) identifies four impediments that “kept people from pushing the new values about love and self-fulfillment to their ultimate

conclusion: that people could construct meaningful lives outside marriage and that not everything in society had to be organized through and around married couples.” To varying degrees, these impediments still linger within hegemonic marriage and play a key role in its maintenance. The factors include: 1) belief in innate differences between men and women, including the belief that women had no sexual desires; 2) the ability of community members, employers, and government to regulate behavior and sanction nonconformity; 3) the combination of unreliable birth control and rigid illegitimacy penalties; and 4) women’s legal and economic dependence on men, and rigid gender roles within the domestic sphere (Coontz 2005).

Feminist responses tend to focus on the assumption of separate spheres for men and women leading to unequal gender roles within the institution of marriage. “The personal is political,” a key phrase coming out of the radical feminist movement of the 1960s captures the essence of feminist critiques of marriage: “that there were political and hierarchical dimensions to private life that needed to be viewed through a lens of inequality” (Yamin 2012, 90).

The 1960s saw an upsurge in feminist challenges to the obligation to marry. The challenges rejected many prior understandings of what constituted a traditional marriage in favor of women’s empowerment. In particular, women took on their dependency care role with a thorough critique of women’s roles in the home (Yamin 2012). Radical feminist rhetoric spanned the gamut of describing marriage as a caste system (Hayden and King 1965; Baxandall and Gordon 2000, 21) to wives as slaves (Kearon and Mehrhof 1973) or chattel (Millett 2000, 33). Radical feminist backlash pushed against the unequal value and limited recognition of women’s work within the home, and saw the institution of marriage as restricting women’s fulfillment of their freedom and equality. The logical response for radical feminists was women abandoning the responsibility to marry. Liberal feminists of the same time period, however, saw marriage reform as a better path. Yet for all, critiques set forth were tied to exploring, challenging, and reforming gender norms (Yamin 2012).

From a feminist perspective, the concept of marriage cannot be separated from the concept of citizenship (Cott 2000). The historical gendered hierarchy of traditional marriage forms means that the identity of a married person has been a public and publicly sanctioned identity since the nation's inception. As such, the social construction and maintenance of gender roles aligned with the hegemonic marital model deemed to best serve the interest of the state—generally a heterosexual partnership between one man and one woman—is inextricably linked to gendered, raced, and classed citizenship values and expectations of the public identities of husband and wife. The public identities of husband and wife are often understood to primarily represent white, middle-class, and property-owning norms. Women, people of color, poor people, and sexual minorities are all affected differently by the contours of such public identities, with public representation and expression of citizenship within the institution of marriage variously protecting the interests of certain classes of citizens.

Marriage politics, then, can be viewed as bounded by public rules established by political bodies to “stabilize the essential activities of sex and labor and their consequences, children and property” (Cott 2000: 6). Treatment of the marriage institution in policymaking is reflective of shifting patterns in the politicization of marriage itself – often along explicitly gendered, raced, and classist lines (Smith 2001). Yet, marriage politics are not a product of political systems or public actors alone. While some would point to legislative acts such as the passage of the Defense of Marriage Act and the inclusion of pro-nuclear family provisions in welfare reform legislation as examples of the primary role of the state in promoting traditionalist forms of heterosexual marriage, we must understand that *how we talk* about marriage matters.

Hegemonic marriage – or, controlling discourse about marriage – is marked by moral conservatism (Smith 2001). Brown makes the argument that such conservatism is manifested in the “hyperbolic assertion” of “family values” in order to mark feminism and homosexuality as “unnatural and themselves a sign of the unraveling of a sound moral-political order” (1995: 139). This hegemonic moral-political order shapes gendered cultural narrations surrounding the

institution of marriage and attempts to compress “national life into ...apparatuses of intimacy” against which non-normative sexual identities are then manipulated through various avenues of marriage politics and policymaking (Berlant 2002: 179). The hegemony of marriage is supported “by the state, the church, and (negative) public representations of other types of relationships” (Van Every 1995, 52; Finlay, Clarke, and Wilkinson 2003).

If hegemonic marriage negatively sanctions public representations of other types of (non-heterosexual) relationships, it also presumes that “apparatuses of intimacy” entail the union of a man and a woman. By choosing to enter into such a union, some feminists historically argued that women are complicit with their dominance. For example, Atkinson (1974) argued that marriage requires women to acquiesce to a subordinated role. Firestone (1979) posited that married women are falsely conscious, and unthinkingly allow men to feed on women’s emotional strength. Pateman (1988, 2) disparaged marriage as an unjust contract in which men’s dominance is bolstered by their unfettered sexual access to women. Rosa (1994) and Hagan (1993) both criticized marriage as a way of institutionally separating women from each other in a way akin to colonization.

These historical feminist perspectives suggest that the institution of marriage oppresses women through a number of ways. But the (until recently universal) heterosexual imperative of marriage also oppresses LGBTQI people through their exclusion from an institution that confers legal privileges and benefits to those within the marriage relationship and symbolically shapes collective understandings of citizenship. This highlights a predicament for critical reformers: whether to reject marriage out-of-hand because it is part of a patriarchal system, or to argue for greater access to the institution to rectify the wrongs of excluding sexual minorities (Ferguson 2007). Ferguson (1998, 51) argues that this predicament is a false choice, and that a better way to think of marriage is as a morally risky institution: “Calling the institution morally risky means that individuals are morally permitted to engage in it through their own choice, but that

supporting it or expanding it will not automatically lead to a morally desirable state of affairs, and engaging in it may indeed lead to a worse situation in certain contexts.”

The source of marriage’s oppressive potential lies with its relationship to state power, national identity and citizenship. National identity is dependent on the fabrication of ways to identify and connect each member of society to other members (Ferguson 2007). The hyperbolic assertion of family values (Brown 1995) and opposition to same-sex marriage is related to perceptions that American national identity – the “American way of life” – is threatened. Ferguson (2007, 39) argues that American national identity is “portrayed as so dependent on our intimate and reproductive choices that private life must be made a public political issue, and wrong choices here are seen to undermine our national identity.” Such a construction posits that relationships formed outside the heterosexual marriage norm are so chaotic and disorderly as to weaken the nation (Berlant 2002; Ferguson 2007). Heteronormative marriage imperatives politically discredit gay and lesbian marriages as illegitimate, and thus foreclose the possibility of accessing marriage-related citizenship rights for individuals with non-normative sexual identities (Chambers 2001). As Fineman argues, “marriage is and always has been an exclusionary institution” (2004, 78).

The heterosexual family is a key regulatory function for the state for two reasons. First, it takes the problem of complicated networks of chosen and biological kinship, organizes obligations created by biological reproduction, and sets the standard for state recognition of legitimate kinship (Ferguson 2007). Second, in the heterosexual married norm and ideal, “the father and husband acts as male protector, head of household, and potential citizen soldier, and the mother and wife acts as primary caregiver, nurturer, and wifely dependent protected by and subordinate to the husband and father” (Ferguson 2007, 43). Compare this to the symbolic image of a lesbian or gay man whose:

...sexual orientation toward a lover is nonreproductive and who by their nature is not a full, or proper, citizen in this reproductive role. That is, even if they happen to be parents,

they do not directly, or no longer, fulfill the bifurcated reproductive function as male protectors or as female caregivers in a complementary relation with the biological reproducer of the opposite gender. Any children they do produce are done in a way accidental to their homosexual nature, which is seen to flout the natural and proper function of sexuality in a well-ordered state. Hence homosexuals are a problem, and a bad example to heterosexuals of a lifestyle portrayed as not fully mature, as pleasure seeking and obligation free. Rather than meeting the obligations to produce and care for the future generation, they are seen as those who break or undermine responsible heterosexual marriages. Iris Young (2003) has argued that the modern nation-state has the symbolic role of male protector of its citizen dependents. Such a symbolic role would be undermined if gay marriage were allowed to challenge the symbolic gender roles of traditional heterosexual marriage (Ferguson 2007, 44-45).

It is a key function of hegemonic marriage to present the husband-wife bond as the normative sexual expression that best serves the interest of the state. This demarcation is inherently heteronormative, in that it relies on the institutional force of marriage – the legal rights and responsibilities and all that they entail – to promote heterosexual standards of identity within the marriage union. Berlant and Warner offer a definition of heteronormativity that emphasizes the privileged nature of heterosexuality emanating from “structures of understanding” and “practical orientations” (1998, 548). Such a definition tells us that focusing on common-sense understandings of marriage, as with the discursive nature of hegemony, will help us understand the role that we all play in constructing identities within and outside of the marriage institution (Grindstaff 2008).

Judicial victories for marriage equality advocates have notably marked a developmental shift in the institution of marriage. The Supreme Court established a *right* to marriage in the 1967 anti-miscegenation case *Loving v. Virginia*. Following that legal reasoning, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court further asserted that the right to marriage was a foundational concept of

equality in the 2003 landmark case *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* that legalized same-sex marriage in that state. However, the Massachusetts court also argued that the *Goodridge* decision would not redefine marriage, but rather stated that the ability of same-sex couples to “embrace marriage’s solemn obligations of exclusivity, mutual support, and commitment to one another is a testament to the enduring place of marriage in our laws and in the human spirit” (*Goodridge* 2003, 965). In terms of how we talk about marriage, then, it is uncertain whether same-sex marriage, even in all of its *same sex-ness*, challenges hegemonic marriage to its full potential. In fact, many of the most prominent arguments for same-sex marriage focus on the socially redeeming qualities of the marriage institution rather than challenging them (Yamin 2012).

Even within the marriage equality movement, discourse aligned with the *Goodridge* decision uncritically accepts that same-sex couples will embrace the traditional concept of marriage entwined with American national identity. While the homosexual nature of same-sex relationships will certainly challenge some aspects of heteronormative marriage constructions, what ends will they achieve? There are several possibilities. On the one hand, choosing to enter marriage could undermine the stereotypes of same-sex people as selfishly committed to their own sexual pleasure and immature because of their lack of social responsibility in intimate relationships. On the other hand, however, there is the moral risk that same-sex marriages will reproduce patriarchal relationships wherein one partner risks their equality and freedom once they become overly dependent on the other partner (Ferguson 2007). Both of these possibilities are not particularly counter-hegemonic. Same-sex couples may gain some foothold against stereotypes, but do so without questioning larger marital relationship structures that shape sexual citizenship through hetero-patriarchal norms.

Discursive acquiescence to hegemonic marriage is a point of contention among scholars and activists within queer communities. Grindstaff (2008), for example, argues that marriage equality debates, and modern discourse about sexuality more generally, conflates “same-sex”

relations to male homosexuality by prioritizing the relationships and choices of gay men at the expense of pursuing greater knowledge of lesbian, bisexual or queer relationships. The risk is that such a discursive reduction ignores political alliances between lesbians, transsexuals, transgender persons, bisexuals and gay men and disregards each group's unique sexual identity and experiences with heteronormative power. Others are sympathetic to feminist arguments against marriage and believe that same-sex marriage critiques should occur conjointly and focus on oppressive elements of the institution (Wise and Stanley 2004; Bevacqua 2004). Still others think that feminist analyses of same-sex and heterosexual marriages are neither comparable nor compatible to/with queer analyses (Peel and Harding 2004). In this camp, one view is that that heterosexism is a distinct form of oppression not related to heteropatriarchy, and so feminist analysis does not apply (Calhoun 2000). Another common argument is that inequality prevalent in heterosexual marriage is less evident in gay and lesbian households. As such, same-sex couples should be the gold standard for how to transform marriage (Chan et al. 1998; Dunne 1997; Golombok et al. 1983).

There also remains the very real risk that discursively aligning with hegemonic marriage will consign lesbians, gays, and queer people who cannot or chose not to marry to social non-recognition. There are those who see queer identities as liminal or border-dwellers, not quite mainstream and not quite outsiders, who risk bolstering processes of othering by buying into the straight institution of marriage. Phelan (2001), for example, states that marriage is historically a reproductive enterprise (echoing Michael Warner's term, "reproculture"), and argues that same-sex marriage risks othering childless lesbians (i.e., wives, but not mothers) and those who have sex outside of monogamous relationships. Warner (1999) argues that marriage is always an act of selective legitimacy, and points to early principles of the gay rights movement to highlight the risks of shedding queer identity to enter the "normal" institution of marriage. These early principles include: calling attention to the mythology that idealizes marriage; recognizing diverse intimate relations as worthy of protection and respect; cultivating all kinds of intimacy and public

life; resisting attempts to measure queer life by the standards of straight culture; and resisting the notion that the state should be able to confer legitimacy on some kinds of consensual sex but not others (Warner 1999, 88).

Ferguson (2007, 53) looks to research by Vaid (1995) and Lehr (1999) to argue that true counterhegemonic potential of the marriage equality movement could come in the form of discursively supporting a “radical democratic vision of queer family values.” Such a democratic vision should include discursive support of many legal options to support chosen gender and sexual relational rights, including transgender and intersexual rights, civil unions/domestic partnerships, and parental and adoption rights of non-biologically related caregivers. This “chosen kin” approach should entail support for a range of queer choices, including non-familial and non-sexual relationships, non-monogamous sexual lifestyles, and celibacy (Ferguson 2007). Such a vision would challenge the hetero-patriarchal nature of hegemonic marriage primarily by contesting the power of the state to determine the legitimacy of different types of kinship and to encourage gendered hierarchies among legitimate kinship identities. The impacts for queer communities could be profound, as well as for heterosexual people who choose to live as unmarried.

Despite such a suggestion for counterhegemonic potential, it remains to be seen whether the marriage equality movement will choose a path to secure legal marriage rights at the expense of a broader, counter-hegemonic discursive critique of marriage. At this point, we know that the same-sex marriage train has certainly left the station, but this study reveals that a radical democratic vision of queer family values is not a movement priority. So even though non-normative sexual identities may well be on their way to being the norm *in practice* (think: single mothers, cohabitating couples, same-sex families raising children, Mr. Moms, grandparents as primary caregivers, childless-by-choice couples, and more), Americans do not tend to talk about marriage as if it is debatable, oppressive, contingent, or merely contractual. Discursively, marriage is marriage, and increasingly, as the Supreme Court and marriage equality activists tell

us, it is a right. Marriage is an institution that we construct as meaningful, foundational, and critical. But why is there disconnect between talk and practice?

Heyn (1997) offers the concept of memes to shed some light on the discursive staying power of the traditional institution of marriage. Memes were first introduced by Richard Dawkins in 1976 as cultural replicators, the cultural equivalent of genes. Once passed down, the ideas and ideals have staying power as they are inherited ways of thinking – they “infect our consciousness the way viruses infect our bodies, propagating, mutating, and becoming resistant to uprooting” (Heyn 1997, 82). Heyn offers memes as a way of understanding why the public identity of Wife has so much staying power in American society:

Yet we send this sexually experienced modern woman to the altar the way we sent her virginal, voteless, and homebound great grandmother: with revelry and relief, and the vague, romantic prayer that if she has chosen Mr. Right right, she will, sure enough, live happily ever after. The odds are against it. But as a culture we continue to support, with our hopes, our silence, and our denial of crucial new realities, a relentlessly dewy-eyed picture of marriage (Heyn 1997, xii-xiii).

Heyn argues that the Wife, and I extrapolate that marriage itself, is “an idea too great, on a scale too grand to be easily lost” (1997, 84). Even though reality does not match up with the myth, it is a tale we keep telling ourselves, our neighbors, family, and children so that the memes keep propagating and will not let go. This study adds to this evocative explication the ability to examine how social movements negotiate the staying power of hegemonic memes.

Hegemony

I use the term hegemonic marriage to represent a conflux of popular marriage representations and memes. My conception of hegemonic marriage reflects previous theoretical examinations of the staying power of traditionalist notions of marriage and the family (Abramovitz 1988; Heise 2012; Smith 1993). Hegemonic marriage embraces a common sense definition of marriage assuming a heterosexual union wherein the marital bond institutionally

confers legitimacy over a procreative and economic unit. Discursively speaking, messages, representations, and the cultural work that goes on to create this common sense notion of marriage also play an important part in creating subjectivities associated with marriage. The common sense definition is that marriage is for straight people. The common sense characterization tells us that marriage is the appropriate institution for parenting. The common sense meaning reinforces the social and political practice of viewing the husband and wife as an economic unit.

When I refer to marriage constructs as *common sense*, I am referring to the convergence of popular understandings of marriage – memes propagated and internalized – and their institutionalization (Heyn 1997). Hegemonic marriage may operate as a dominant norm, but it only achieves such dominance through the practice and consent of the masses – the powerful and subordinate alike.

To think of marriage as common sense is also to think of the social concept in terms of aggregates. Raymond Williams (1977) describes the practice of hegemony as a “structure of feeling,” a dynamic sense of reality that for many people takes on the sheen of something absolute because it is difficult to challenge the nature of hegemonic concepts in one’s own life. While a generalized understanding of marriage exists, we know that the realities of Americans’ romantic lives show that the hegemonic ideal and actual practices do not necessarily align completely. The consent required to formulate hegemony does not foreclose the possibility of some dissent. We may not notice individualized dissent, however, in the din and hustle of hegemonic messaging (not to mention the influence of the multi-billion-dollar-a-year wedding industrial complex, but that is for another dissertation).

Condit (1994) refers to such an understanding of hegemony as one of concordance. The establishment of dominance does not emanate from a centralized position of power, say with policymakers, but rather from messages or viewpoints heard repeatedly in a pluralist society. Hall underscores the polyvocality of players in a hegemonic field by arguing that hegemony is not the

“struggle between already constituted blocs – them over there and us over here – battling like mastodons on a field” (1989, 51). Hegemony, rather, is a constant struggle over issues, identities, and positions that are never fixed, and always open to the shaping powers of discourse (Clair 1993). Nor is hegemony about the mere identification of one authoritarian group in power, primarily because the subject positions that define dominance are, in and of themselves, subject to discursive effects as well and are continuously constructed (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Because hegemony is simultaneously dominant and yet constantly in flux, an important goal of this research project is to better understand how this seeming paradox of hegemony plays out empirically.

Despite the challenges of plurality and dominance, Gramsci’s (1971) original conception of hegemony as force by consent remains useful for this project. Understanding hegemony as consent granted by the masses to some general direction in social life (Clair 1998) allows space to evaluate critically the common-sense messages that achieve hegemonic positioning, as well as the shifting positions, issues, and identities at work in the production of such messages. One criterion necessary for hegemony is that messages must have something universal, or at least generalizable, in them in order for a wide variety of groups to identify with them (Condit 1994). Marriage, for instance, is often described as something that exists in practically every human culture across the course of human history.

Hegemonic marriage is a discursive construct, and social agents endeavor to influence it through the exercise of discursive power. Power works through relational social identities in systems of superordination and subordination (Foucault 1980; Sørensen and Torfing 2001), and is relevant to the 21st century marriage battleground. Religious, political, media and social movement organizations all employ typologies, metaphors, and narratives in their discursive construction of marriage. These discursive tactics tend to institutionalize particular meanings at the local level. In other words, such organizations attempt to identify endogenous factors relating

to marriage within specific communities. The goal is to transform and generalize such factors through the exercise of discursive power (Sørensen and Torfing 2001).

I evaluate hegemony as part of an embedded model that involves both disciplinary power and consent. Disciplinary power (Foucault 1975) refers to actions that enforce the dictates of hegemonic marriage, whether those forces are social or political in origin. Social pressures might include those that compel people to adhere to particular principles bolstered by hegemonic marriage, such as edicts that marriage is the appropriate site for child-bearing. Political examples of disciplinary power are laws that reinforce elements of hegemonic marriage, such as prohibitions on same-sex marriage or family caps in welfare policy. I argue that social movement organizations face a balancing act between how to best to effect social change and negotiate hegemonic disciplinary power. SMOs face such a balancing act because they are tasked with crafting frames that resonate with their targets. Both movement adherents and targets, however, are embedded in and shaped by hegemony. Negotiating hegemonic disciplinary power requires that movements be attuned to the constant flux of hegemony; to the hegemonic positioning of movement adherents, targets, and opposition; and to discourses that makes such hegemonic positions seem fixed.

Social Movement Framing

A generalized definition of framing is a process of meaning-making. The term *frame* represents interpretative schemata whereby individuals locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences in their lives and in the larger world (Snow et al. 1986). Snow and Benford define framing as the work that social movements do to “frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists” (1988, 198). The sets of beliefs and meanings that emerge in framing are not random, nor are they static. Moreover, movement framers are not constructing meaning in isolation. Rather, movement adherents, targets, and opposition engage in framing within social movement fields marked by power.

Issue framing is “an explicitly *political* phenomenon” (Jacoby 2000; emphasis in original). The embeddedness of social movement organizations within broader fields of political and cultural contention affects their framing decisions. Social movement fields, then, are likely to be composed of movement organizations and opposition, as well as adherents, potential targets, external elites, and others. A variety of political and cultural phenomena influences collective action framing, depending on the field of contention under consideration (Lounsbury, Ventresca, and Hirsch 2003).

Because SMOs are embedded within broader political and cultural processes, a struggle for power marks the relationship between dominant discourses in culture and movement framing decisions (Fantasia and Hirsch 1995). An important assumption for my research is that the cultural discursive context created and maintained by hegemonic marriage bounds what is possible for movement framing alignment or resistance. Hegemonic marriage dictates the terms of what is common sense for understanding typical definitions of the institution of marriage and roles of marriage partners. Additionally, while hegemonic marriage gathers strength from its apparent continuity, shifts and fissures in hegemony are identifiable when studied over time. By paying attention to shifts in discursive contexts, this research offers insight into the processes that movement actors undergo in marriage messaging decisions.

While political and cultural processes can act to constrain and limit the range of strategic framing available to SMOs, such conditions may also allow for the development of new alternatives, and movement reactions to hegemonic marriage variously open up and foreclose framing opportunities. SMOs, however, construct frames for expressive as well as strategic reasons, a fact that explains why social movements at times adopt frames at odds with strategies to maximize the distribution of organizational resources. This tendency may be indicative of framing rigidity. Framing rigidity happens in environments where achieving ideological alignment between the movement organization and socio-political constructs, like hegemonic marriage, is perhaps more important to the movement organization than considerations of

movement outcomes. Similarly, movements can also exhibit framing rigidity in terms of their resistance to hegemonic constructs. In either case, the movement organization is exhibiting highly principled, potentially irrational, behavior that flies in the face of relevant factors in the movement's field of contention (Reese and Newcombe 2003).

Because frames, whether expressive or strategic, are identifiable and measurable, there is a tendency to treat them as static artifacts. For any given frame, however, there is variability regarding the degree of consensual agreement among framing participants. It is perhaps misleading to speak of *the* movement framing. Identifying framing as an internal process of contention is much more realistic (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Because activists are capable of reading different things from both hegemonic discourse and frames created by other organizations within the field of contention, meanings are susceptible to change over the course of any period of contentious action or activism (Steinberg 1999). This is why the term "negotiate" is so useful in the analysis of how hegemony shapes social movement framing.

Snow and his colleagues underscored the analytical problem of static frames over two decades ago, describing the tendency of researchers to treat movement adherents' willingness to participate as based on a "single, time-bound, rational decision" (Snow et al. 1986, 466). While my research does not analyze movement participation per se, similar analytical risks arise from an over-simplified understanding of the nature of collective action frames. First, static analysis underestimates the level of human agency in framing processes. Rarely do movements choose one frame for all time in a completely rational manner. There may be instances where movement framers misread or misunderstand the field of contention (Goffman 1974). Alternatively, movement adherents may choose expressive frames that fly in the face of rational decision-making. Second, such reductions overlook the embedded nature of movement activity. Frames change with developments in movement organizations or along with socio-political factors emerging from the field of contention. Framing decisions, like movement participation itself, are likely subject to a process of continuous reformulation and reassessment. Framing decisions are

both collective and ongoing. It is difficult to grasp this dynamic nature when using analyses that abstract frames from movement fields (Snow et al. 1986). As such, it is important to recognize framing as a continual process, perhaps even without a terminal beginning and end, given that framing decisions are part of larger discursive contexts.

A great deal of movement framing work happens among individuals in the movement, in small encounters where people are able to work through subtle nuances and sources of contention. These processes are indicative of the interactive meaning-making that happens in framing, and show that movement participants are not passive receivers of discourse. Movement participants are shaped by hegemonic discourse, but they nevertheless make choices when crafting their own messages. Giddens (1979) suggests framing devices useful in assessing the products of such interactions in organizational framing, particularly in relation to questions of hegemony. These framing devices are tactics most often used by those closely aligned with a hegemonic construct to assert the construct's naturalness, and to create the illusion that it is beyond contestation. As such, in the course of this research, these framing tactics deploy differently across the movements depending on the context and other dialogic factors. For instance, MM adherents primarily adhere to tenets of hegemonic marriage, but that assumption likely may not hold true in every instance. Because of the disconnect between Americans' romantic lives and the marriage ideal, adherents within the MM – particularly those aligned with the marriage skills movement – may at times argue that relationship education applies equally to *all* relationships, regardless of marital status. Other actors within the TMM may find that downplaying the universality of skills-based education is beneficial, and ramp up discourse surrounding claims that marriage between two biological parents provides the best outcomes for children. Giddens (1979) says that such tactics are strategic, and appear in three forms: accepting dominant interests, disguising contradictions, and reification (Clair 1998). I explain these strategies in more detail in the following paragraphs, and return to them in later chapters.

Acquiescing to dominant interests reinforces the universality of hegemonic marriage for all people, regardless of others' experiences with marginalization. For example, women may accept patriarchal gender norms within hegemonic marriage because dominant movement frames suggest that such divisions are natural. LGBT individuals may accept their inability to receive domestic partner benefits with a sigh and an "oh well" because benefit policies explicitly exclude them. This tactic presents dominant interests as universal, and when subordinated groups resign themselves to accepting such declarations, they contribute to the consensus culture of hegemony. Sometimes acceptance of the dominant constructs can be partial, as well. An organization may selectively choose to challenge particular aspects of hegemonic marriage while accepting the universality of other parts. An example of partial consent may be the willingness of some within the MM to engage the possibility of healthy same-sex marriages (a challenge to hegemonic marriage) while promoting the idea that children experience the best outcomes when raised in a family with their own two biological parents (acquiescence to a universalizing aspect of hegemonic marriage).

The second tactic for those concerned with maintaining dominance is disguising contradictions (Clair 1998) within the hegemonic construct in question. When individuals accept such contradictions, they contribute to the power of hegemonic marriage. An example is the tension between hegemonic descriptions of marriage as universal, time-tested, and discernible in every culture in every corner of the earth with the reality of polygamous marriages and non-recognition of marriage rites within religious or political arenas throughout history.

The final tactic for securing dominance is reification (Clair 1998). Reification gives a sense of material permanence to concepts that are otherwise abstract and hard to identify. Mumby (1987) uses the example of hierarchy to exemplify reification. Hierarchy is a construction granted a sense of permanence in hegemonic marriage. Husbands/fathers are the heads of the household; parents are in charge of the children; and the state regulates the benefits and privileges conferred within the marital relationship. Those that adhere closely to hegemonic marriage might react to

attempts to alter family formations with rejoinders of the impossibility of change; that to travel down such a road risks diluting the meaning of marriage, damaging children, or undermining the nation-state. An example of a counterhegemonic challenge is the position of “beyond marriage” activists who argue that all family forms, regardless of how they are constituted, deserve equal recognition – even those families with no men or children present.

Such tactics of dominance are not compelled by specific hegemonic constructions, nor are they time-bound in their effectiveness. Rather, the tactics are successful partly because they are discursive and operate through the interactive means of language and framing. Actors in discursive contexts engage through language because it is a mechanism to achieve coherent structures in socio-political arenas. The same is true regarding hegemony.

In recognition of the process-based nature of hegemony, this research does not identify a discrete moment in time, isolate hegemony, and then extrapolate framing implications from a fixed point. Rather, I evaluate hegemonic marriage by paying attention to the patterns of dominance that shapes it, and how such power influences movement framing decisions. The longitudinal and comparative nature of my research acknowledges that shifts in hegemony across time and contexts are expected. Likewise, the actual end-results of movement action are immaterial to the process-based question of how hegemony shapes movement collective action framing activities. I focus on how framing decisions are open to appropriation and interpretation when faced with elements of discursive power (Steinberg 1999) over time, an approach particularly suited to the method of feminist critical discourse and corpus linguistic analysis that I discuss in the following chapter.

In this literature review, I isolate three theoretical strands that provide important insights into my central research question. I characterize hegemonic marriage as a hetero-patriarchal construct, maintained by gendered discourses of power that police kinship relations with descriptors of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Feminist and queer critiques provide useful, descriptive tools for identifying and recognizing social power in action. Because a primary

assumption of CDA is that power deals with relations between social groups, I look to social movement framing and hegemonic theory as a way to assess the dialogic functioning of social power in the field of marriage politics.

My research project also offers reciprocal insights for those who study feminist/queer critiques of marriage, hegemony, and social movement framing. Namely, my research offers an important theoretical “out” to over-simplifications and false choices. SMO choices are not merely to effect social change or succumb to disciplinary power; to acquiesce to hegemony or radically reject it; nor to support marriage as a means to rectify the historical exclusion of gays and lesbians or to admonish it because the institution oppresses women. My research reveals, rather, the while hegemony is maintained through tactics of dominance, it is not impermeable. Just as resistance is constant, so are SMO processes of hegemonic negotiation.

The following chapter addresses methodological issues surrounding my mixed methods approach of feminist critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic analysis. As I work through this method in subsequent chapters, I hope that I will be able to achieve two goals: a clearer understanding of the relationship between hegemonic marriage and sexual citizenship, and empirically-driven insights into the role that cultural hegemony plays in social movement communication and framing.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This project uses a mixed methods approach, combining feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistic analysis. CDA is primarily interested in analyzing discursive dimensions of power and resulting injustices and inequality (van Dijk 1993). Feminist CDA assesses the discourse dimensions of power through an intentional gendered lens (Lehonten 2007; Lazar 2005; Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). Because the project of feminist critical discourse analysis is inherently political, I add corpus linguistic analysis to correct for potential criticisms of bias and lack of generalizability. Corpus linguistic analysis allows me to approach text without preconceived notions regarding semantic content.

The core of critical discourse analysis is explanation and critique of how dominant discourses influence socially shared knowledge, including facilitating the formation of specific social representations (van Dijk 1993). The social representation that I am most interested in is the traditional marriage institution. Evaluating the institution's cultural hegemony with an eye toward dominance requires critique of its symbolic representations, its sustaining processes, and public identities created within it. I look to feminist and queer critiques of marriage to provide a foundation for thinking about dominance in the context of marriage. Semantic or discursive moves aimed at facilitating the formation or change of social attitudes either "contest, reproduce, or participate in relations of ruling" (Naples 2003, 91). Incorporating feminist and queer critiques of marriage helps to satisfy the political goals of CDA while enabling me to focus on both spoken discursive relations and those that are left unsaid.

According to van Dijk (1993), once a researcher adequately understands the nature of social power and dominance, they then begin to formulate ideas about how discourse contributes to the reproduction of social power. A primary assumption of critical discourse research is that power deals with properties of relations between social groups. Van Dijk (1993, 254) explains, "while focusing on social power, we ignore purely personal power, unless enacted as an

individual realization of group power, that is, by individuals as group members.” I argue that social movement organizations demonstrate the relationship between discourse and the functioning of social power in the field of marriage politics.

Recall that while individual acts are part of the larger fabric of hegemonic discourse, the crux of the battle over marriage actually occurs in the work of social institutions, both in terms of those that supplant traditional functions of marriage (i.e., national corporations providing domestic partner benefits, regardless of marital status) as well as those who engage in marriage battles on the national political stage. I focus on social movements at the expense of other institutions like religious organizations or political parties, for example, because movements discursively work to alter existing understandings of marriage with collective action frames.

I also acknowledge that CDA challenges researchers to recognize that words have particular historical, social and political meanings (McGregor 2003). Words are never neutral (Fiske 1994), but rather are politicized. Words reflect the interests of those who speak, and the speakers heard typically have the social power of groups or institutions behind them. Such speakers play a crucial role in shaping issues and in setting the boundaries of legitimate discourse (Henry and Tator 2002), often writ large as “self-evident truths” (McGregor 2003) or common sense (Gramsci 1971). It is at this point where discourse and the theoretical tenets of hegemony intersect.

Successful discourse analysis depends on the cultural competence of the analyst, meaning that the researcher should have considerable knowledge of the field in focus. The ideal situation is to read broadly from many genres and texts so as to consider numerous possibilities (Jensen 2012; Neumann 2001). Because I cannot study everything (Foucault 1972), I make choices about which texts to include, how much attention I pay to them in textual and interpretive analysis, the depth of my coding, and which ones to pull out as examples worthy of close examination in *this* text. Throughout this project, I strive to be transparent about my choices, to read as widely as I

can, and to approach texts in as many different ways as I can imagine, thus minimizing my bias and maximizing the veracity of my conclusions.

CDA proceeds by focusing on the function of a text as a linking mechanism between underlying power structures in society and discursive practices such as the rules and norms used to produce, receive and interpret textual messages (McGregor 2003; Alvermann *et al.* 1997). The text is something happening in a larger social context; it is not an isolated artifact. Readers and listeners, in return, interpret and act upon the text depending on their own rules, norms, and ideological positioning. Hegemonic messaging goes unchallenged if the reader or listener fails to critically analyze how power and dominance function in the transmission of the message. Because discourse involves power and is historical – meaning that it is connected to the past and current contexts – it can be interpreted variously by people with different social and power positions (McGregor 2003). While there is no “right” interpretation of discourse, therefore, CDA can help provide tools to determine which interpretations are more plausible or adequate (Fairclough 2001; Wodak and Ludwig 1999). In the following sections, I elaborate on the promise of combining a feminist version of CDA with corpus linguistic analysis to address the question of how hegemony contours social movement framing decisions using a large volume of movement-specific data, elite perspectives of movement leaders through interview data, and textual analysis of popular media.

Feminist CDA Theory and Methodology

The types of questions asked in CDA relate to the position or positioning of texts, assessments of whose interests are served or negated, and the consequences of positioning (Janks 1997). According to Fairclough’s (1989, 1995) model for CDA, there are three interrelated processes of analysis which are tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse. The first process regards the object of analysis, including verbal, visual, or verbal and visual texts. Understanding the object of analysis requires description in the form of text analysis. The second analytical dimension evaluates how an object is produced and received by human subjects,

including writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing. This requires interpretation, or processing analysis. The third process of analysis looks at governing socio-historical conditions, requiring explanation or social analysis (Janks 1997, 329).

Three-dimensionally conceptualizing these three interrelated processes of analysis and elements of discourse is useful. Fairclough offers the model in Figure 1, which should be read as embedded boxes, not concentric circles. Because of their interdependent nature, focusing on any one box is an arbitrary decision, and will necessarily lead to inconclusive assumptions. Text, such as a headline, is only the first level of a basic three-tiered model of CDA (Fairclough 1992). The second level of the model, interpretation or discursive practice, is the production and consumption of texts. Discursive practice is comprised of rules, norms, and conventions used to produce, receive, and interpret messages presented in texts. The final level is social practice, or the larger social characteristics in which discourse operates. This model is suggestive of the socially embedded character of discourse. CDA connects across all three levels, but does not specify a “correct” analytical starting point (Wodak 2008; Marling 2010). Rather, the analyst must move between boxes, and after examining one, reinsert it back into its interconnected place while examining the nature of those intersections (Janks 1997).

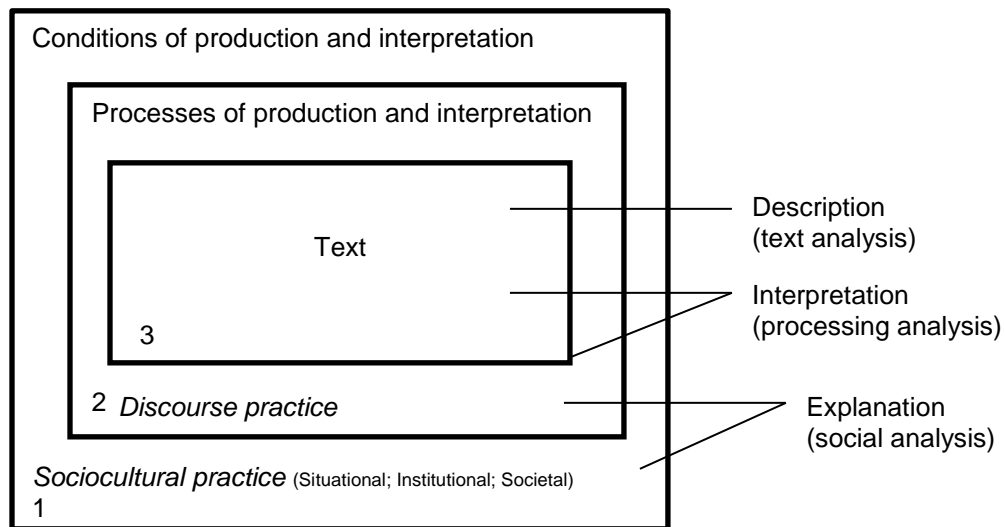


Figure 1. Fairclough's dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 98; Janks 1997, 330).

Janks (1997), for example, uses this model as a literal technique for conducting CDA. When working with a text, the analyst actually draws large boxes and records analytic comments in each one. The benefit of this technique is that it enables her to “work with the different types of analysis simultaneously rather than sequentially and facilitates the drawing of linking lines across the boxes to stress interconnections” (Janks 1997, 330). While I initially rely on textual coding and corpus linguistic analysis to assess interconnected elements of discourse, I too turn to this elementary technique in each of the movement analysis chapters, as well as chapter 8, as a way of visually testing my analytical results writ large on the field of marriage politics.

So what is *feminist* about feminist discourse analysis (CDA)? Take hegemonic marriage as an initial point of departure, and recall that hegemonic discourse about marriage overwhelmingly assumes traditionalist constructions marked by hetero-patriarchy. Hierarchal ordering within traditional relationships sets forth a relational structure wherein the subjectivities of marital partners created or assumed (husband and wife, breadwinner and caretaker, independent and dependent) define each other (Shanley 2004). In this sense, how we talk about marriage helps to create the gendered roles that people choose to play in marital relationships. Feminist critical discourse analysts, therefore, find Butler’s (1990) concept of performativity to be useful, although feminist CDA tends to be skeptical of beliefs that everything is located in discourse. Rather, feminist CDA attempts to connect the textual elements of discourse with social analysis of the material aspects of identity and power relations (Lehtonen 2007).

Moreover, feminist CDA is more than adding feminism and stirring in CDA research frameworks. It understands gender as fluid, continuously constructed as a range of masculinities and femininities, and partly shaped by discourse (Lehtonen 2007; Lazar 2005; Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). Keeping the gendered and discursive nature of power in mind, I evaluate local (popular media), institutional (organizational discourse – interviews and documents) and societal domains (nodal discourses) to describe, interpret and explain gendered discursive relations and social practices relating to hegemonic marriage (Fairclough 2003; Brooks

2011). Nodal discourses highlight the embedded nature of discourse, as explained by Foucault's (1980) famous example of a book as a node within a network. The words in a book, much like the language used in social movement framing, have meaning because the message is connected to a larger web of knowledge and ideas. My local analysis, therefore, begins with identification of specific textual features and moves to establish connections and classifications relevant to marriage and the subjectivities created within it. Institutional and societal domain analysis further suggests how hegemonic marriage, through alignment with nodal discourses relating to hetero-patriarchy, became and remains more salient and dominant than others conceptions of intimate relationships (for example, the abolishment of marriage in favor of contractually based unions or "beyond marriage" discourses that equally value all forms of intimate relationships).

Feminist CDA is notable because of its rich and nuanced understanding of the complexity of power in sustaining a hierarchically gendered social order (Lazar 2005). The subjectivities that emerge in marriage, namely the Wife (Heyn 1997) and husband, are "socio-historically contingent, stylized representations" (Lazar 2005, 143). Butler (1990:33) might argue that they are cultural performances, in this sense that they gain meaning through a set of repeated semiotic acts "within a highly rigid regulatory frame" – i.e., sanctioned by the state – "that congeal over time ... to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being." This application of performativity to the construction of marriage highly parallels my repeated description of the common-sense nature of hegemonic marriage. Social criticism of the discursive elements that make such performances seem natural helps us see how taken-for-granted assumptions of gender and power relations in marriage get (re)produced, negotiated and contested (Lazar 2005).

Corpus Linguistics (CL) Theory and Methodology

CDA historically worked by approaching a single or small number of texts. On the basis of that text(s), claims about the use of language and the social practice of power were made. A common criticism, however, is that results may lack in representativeness (McEnery and Hardie 2012; Mautner 2009). When texts are manually evaluated using CDA, relationships between

words in text are not typically statistically calculated and frequency thresholds are not provided (Baker et al. 2008; Piper 2000; Sotillo and Wang-Gempp 2004). Because analysis is manual, researchers tend to work with small corpora (e.g., 25,000; Clark 2007) and may miss or disregard strong non-adjacent co-occurring words (collocates) or include insignificant collocates in analysis (Baker et al. 2008). Using small corpora also risks containing frequencies that are too small to be reliable, using a corpus that is not representative (Meinhof and Richardson 1994; Stubbs 1997; Baker et al. 2008) or using a biased corpus (Magalhaes 2006; Baker et al. 2008).

A number of researchers have begun to move toward integrating CDA with corpus linguistic (CL) analysis (Mautner 2009; Koller and Mautner 2004; Baker 2006; and Orpin 2005). This research follows suit. In reaction to criticisms launched by Sharrock and Anderson (1981) and Widdowson (1995, 1996) that CDA practitioners analyze data in such a way as to prove correct the analyst's preconceptions, as well as by Fowler (1996, 8) that texts studied in CDA tend to be "fragmentary and exemplifactory," Stubbs (1997) suggested that CDA studies should compare features found in texts with norms in language identified using a large body of data. Using a large corpus allows researchers to make reliable generalizations about typical language use (Orpin 2005). Orpin explains that the CDA methodology can be made more reliable:

...through the use of random sampling, the analysis of large bodies of data (rather than merely short or fragmentary texts), and by comparing features found in text samples with language norms highlighted by the use of a large corpus. Furthermore, by using collocational tools as well as concordances to provide semantic profiles of words, a fuller and more reliable picture of their meanings and associations is built up. This is crucial to CDA, which firmly espouses the view that the choice of one word rather than another can encode a speaker's ideological stance towards what they are talking about (Orpin 2005, 40).

Corpus linguistic methods correct for the criticisms of bias and generalizability by allowing the researcher to approach text without any preconceived notions regarding semantic

content. There are notable subjective elements to CL analysis as well – determining which texts to include in the corpus, what is to be analyzed, and what corpus-based processes to apply (Baker et al. 2008). My CL analysis begins with examination of relative frequencies, and I turn to the CL techniques of keyness, collocates, word clusters, and concordances to identify significant lexical patterns in the corpora. I conduct CL analysis using two online tools, *Textalyser* and *AntConc*.

Computer-assisted corpus analysis enables me to search for insights at the structural level of language that would not otherwise be apparent without an inordinate amount of tedious counting and categorizing. *AntConc* “selects, sorts, matches, counts and calculates” (Hunston and Frances 2000, 15), and sheds light on structural patterns with potential lexical importance (i.e., the most frequent 3-word combinations, words that tend to appear immediately to the right or left of a search node in the discourse, etc.). Qualitative CDA techniques helps guide my choice of which search nodes to use in corpus analysis (Römer and Wulff 2010; Barlow 2004). Being qualitatively engaged first means that I am not grasping search terms out of thin air and hoping for the best. Descriptive textual analysis enables my analytic approach to be more systematic.

Keyness is a value of log-likelihood or Chi-square statistics, and provides an indicator of a keyword’s importance as a content descriptor (Gabrielatos and Marchi 2011; Biber et al. 2007). Baker et al. (2008, 278) and Scott (1999) describe the purpose of keyness is to “point towards the ‘aboutness’ of a text or homogenous corpus, that is, its topic and the central elements of its content.” *AntConc* uses a calculation of log-likelihood (LL) to determine if a word’s frequency in the text when compared to the reference corpus is at a level of statistical significance so as not to occur at that level of frequency by chance. In all comparisons, the cut-off point for statistical significance is $LL=6.63$ (Gabrielatos and Marchi 2011). There are drawbacks with using keyness as a calculation of statistical significance, however. The main problem is that tests of statistical significance are dependent on the sample size – even very weak relationships can be significant in large sample sizes, and insignificant relationships may seem apparent in small sample sizes when

the relationship is actually quite strong. As such, it is important to take Keyword analysis with a grain of salt, and to not use it as a definitive tool.

Collocation is “the above-chance frequent co-occurrences of two words within a pre-determined span” (Baker et al. 2008). The analytical search span I use is 5L to 5R (five words to the left and five to the right) (Sinclair 1991; Baker et al. 2008). Using *AntConc*, I can see which words tend to collocate, or commonly co-occur, on either side of the search term (the *node*).

Collocation uses a statistical score based on Mutual Information (MI). This score measures the probability that the collocate and the node word occur near each other, relative to how many times they appear in the text as a whole (DECTE, para. 2).

Mutual Information (MI) is based on three measures: the frequency of the node, collocates, and the collocation (Baker et al. 2008). Collocates of a node contribute to its meaning (Nattinger and DeCarrico 1992, Baker et al. 2008). After determining statistically significant collocates, I turn to concordance analysis to get a sense of nodes’ semantic meanings. There are two relevant concepts to keep in mind as extensions of collocation: semantic preference and semantic prosody (Baker et al. 2008). Semantic preference is the relation between a node and a set of semantically related words (Stubbs 2001; Baker et al. 2008). For example, the two-word cluster *rights for* tends to prefer a set of words or word phrases related to identity groups (same-sex couples, women, interracial couples, African-Americans, gays and lesbians etc.). Discourse prosody looks beyond adjacent words or co-texts (Stubbs 2001). Stubbs (2001, 65) provides the example of the lemma *cause*, which “occurs overwhelmingly often with words for unpleasant events” (Baker et al. 2008, 278).

Finally cluster analysis then takes collocation one step further to give insights into word patterning. It takes the specified node as the starting point, and then extracts word-sequences of a pre-defined size and groups them together in terms of frequencies of occurrence (Römer and Wulff 2010). Cluster analysis typically works as a mechanism to confirm that insights gleaned from collocation and concordance analysis are significant.

Throughout CL analysis, I return frequently to examine concordances. Concordance – every instance of a particular search word with its co-text – helps bring focus to in-depth grammatical and semantic categorization of expressions (Lukač 2011). Barnbrook describes the main purpose of concordance: “The concordance provides a simple way of placing each word back in its original context, so that the details of its use and behavior can be properly examined” (1996, 65; Römer and Wulff 2010). Concordances are displayed in KWIC (key word in context) format, with the search word in the middle of the screen and additional content to both the left and the right (Römer and Wulff 2010). Concordance lines can also be sorted in order to examine different patterns of the same word/cluster. Because concordance analysis allows for careful examination of language features in co-text, it is the perfect CL tool to enhance critical discourse analysis (Baker et al. 2008). Examining concordances creates an opportunity for in-depth interpretative analysis necessary in CDA. Baker et al. (2008, 279) states, “The examination of expanded concordances (or whole texts when needed) can help the analyst infer contextual elements in order to sufficiently recreate the context” (Brown and Yule 1982). Discursive interpretation is particularly useful here if concordance analysis follows a close descriptive, textual reading so that the researcher is familiar with the context under scrutiny.

Combining CDA and CL: Research Design

This study uses four types of evidence – a textual corpus of *Washington Post* headlines (1985-2007), three movement-specific corpora consisting of interviews with leaders of 19 social movement organizations (SMOs), five extensive web corpora of select movement organization documents, and a reference corpora constructed from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) spanning the years 1990 – 2012 (Davies 2008-). I evaluate all evidence with a method informed by feminist critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic analysis (Marling 2010; Lazar 2005; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). I focus on the lexical framing of marriage and how SMOs attune to and (re)contextualize elements of hegemonic marriage in their collective action framing. Framing processes are not detachable from discourse. Discursive fields of action

surrounding marriage both constrain and provide opportunities to policy makers and movement actors alike.

My analysis follows three stages. First, in chapter 4 I trace the thematic distribution of texts where the word *marriage* is used in *The Washington Post* headlines in a twenty-two year period. While I recognize that the use of the word *marriage* is insufficient to fully address the empirical, ideological, and practical meanings associated with the marital institution, I do believe that the representational uses of the iconic word can provide insight into recent constructions and salience of hegemonic marriage, as well as historical moments in which hegemonic tenets are in flux.

Second, in chapters 5, 6 and 7 I get to the heart of my analysis by evaluating the exercise of hegemonic marriage and its influence on social movement framing. I conduct movement specific analysis in three ways—a close descriptive analysis of web content and interview transcripts, interpretative analysis based on prognostic and diagnostic frame coding of interviews with movement leaders, and corpus linguistic analysis of hundreds of pages of movement documents all intended for consumption/viewing by movement targets and adherents. These steps build on and connect with each other. A multi-layered approach allows me to evaluate dimensions of discourse relating to marriage (Fairclough 1995, Janks 1997), including what is said and what is left unsaid, at different temporal and contextual points for each of the movements. Chapter 5 addresses the marriage equality movement (MEM), as well as the position of “beyond marriage.” For the MEM I use a web corpora made up of texts from Freedom to Marry and the Human Rights Campaign. I also assess interview data from leaders of these two organizations, as well as Marriage Equality U.S.A. and Create Equality. For the “beyond marriage” position, I analyze interview data from a representative of the Family Equality Council and CL analysis of an SMO named Unmarried Equality. Chapter 6 looks at the traditional marriage movement by evaluating web corpora made up of texts from the American Family Association and Concerned Women for America, as well as interview data from SMO leaders

associated with these organizations as well as the Liberty Counsel, the Marriage Law Project, and the National Organization for Marriage. Chapter 7 follows the same method by assessing web corpora of the Institute for American Values and Smart Marriages, and interview data from leaders of these organizations as well as the National Marriage Project, the Wedded Bliss Foundation, the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood, The Dibble Institute, the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, and the Administration for Children and Families. Finally, in chapter 8, I critically link movement-specific analysis with the broader context of the field of marriage politics and hegemony (Marling 2010). I analytically link the linguistic and the social by considering gender to be an “omni-relevant category” in studies of hegemonic marriage (Lazar 2005, 3; Marling 2010). The implication of centering marriage is that I am able to fully examine how hegemonic negotiation of marriage implicates issues of sexual citizenship (Lazar 2005, 10; Marling 2010).

Analytical Procedure

Keeping in mind the three-dimensional nature of CDA analysis, and the fact that there is no one “right” starting point, I use this section to map out my analytical progression. I move back and forth across discursive dimensions and processes. I begin first with textual analysis and coding of newspaper headlines to establish the context of hegemonic marriage and the field of marriage politics. Second, I move to a descriptive textual analysis of key SMO web corpora and the movement interview corpora. I initially approach all texts in an uncritical and undiscerning manner (Huckin 1997). In addition to my close reading, I employ simple word frequencies calculated using *Textalyser* to group text into content areas or content themes. This information, in combination with punctuating events identified with newspaper analysis, helps give shape to the movements and their framing decisions.

Third, I proceed to an interpretive discourse analysis of the interview corpora. I code the interview transcripts using Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT) qualitative analysis software maintained by the Qualitative Data Analysis Program (QDAP) at the University of

Massachusetts-Amherst. The fact that I am working alone and cannot use inter-rater reliability to assess my coding is an additional justification for combining CL methods with CDA in order to guard against the effects of my reflexivity in the research process. I code content by assigning diagnostic and prognostic codes. Diagnostic codes answer two questions – what is marriage, and what are the problems facing marriage. Prognostic codes ask the *why* and *how* questions – why marriage should be addressed, and how it should be addressed. I then return to coded passages to assess gendered discursive messages. I code these passages according to elements of the hegemonic marriage including gender-based exercise of power, heteronormativity, authority structure, and biological children.

Fourth, I return to web corpora for CL analysis. While word frequencies are a good entry point into text analysis, they do not provide insight into what terms are important or unusually frequent. I use *AntConc* to learn more. CL tools employed include keyness, collocation, word clusters, and concordance analysis. Keyness identifies words with an unusual frequency in comparison with another reference corpus (Gabrielatos and Marchi 2011; Scott 1997). As such, the reference corpus I use is a 3-grams sample of data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The reference corpus consists of 1,000,000 words, and is made up of randomly selected 3-word sub-sequences from the COCA. COCA includes 450 million words of text representing the years 1990-2012, and is equally divided among different types of texts, including spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts (Davies 2008-).

Lastly, I turn to the social practice stage of Fairclough's (1995) model and engage in critical analysis within and across movements. I do this by conceptually mapping each movement and on Fairclough's model using Jank's (1997) simple embedded-boxes technique. I then turn once again to the COCA in order to test my conclusions about hegemonic marriage and the public identities created within it against a large portion of the 450 million word corpus – I exclude fiction discourse, but include spoken, newspaper, magazine, and academic discourse. This provides me a fair degree of certainty that my conclusions are not based on personal reflexive

bias toward the movements, but rather that the gendered negotiations of hegemonic marriage that I identify are also apparent in the very lexical structure of American language.

Newspaper headline textual analysis. The initial texts I use to determine contextual parameters of hegemonic marriage across time are *The Washington Post* headlines from 1985 to 2007. I use *The Post* because of its orientation toward federal-level political coverage. This is an appropriate focus since in the field of marriage politics the targets of various SMOs are often national-level policymakers. Examples include TMM support of a Federal Marriage Amendment; MM encouragement of Bush-era marriage and fatherhood initiatives; and MEM opposition to state-level anti-same sex marriage ballot referenda, to name a few. All of these stories received coverage in *The Post*. The newspaper also has an inside-the-beltway reputation, focusing on national level politics at the expense of popular culture “fluff” often featured in other major newspapers (Smolkin 2005).

Additionally, while this project is interested in *marriage* framing, I cannot ignore the fact that the same-sex marriage debate dominates recent discourse about marriage. As such, I use controversy over same-sex marriage debates to help guide the parameters of my inquiry. The starting point of my analysis is 1985, eight years prior to the landmark Hawaii same-sex marriage decision in *Baehr v. Lewin*. Beginning analysis in 1985, and giving an ample window of 15 years for the same-sex debate to mature, helps me identify potential discursive socio-political effects pertaining to marriage both prior to same-sex marriage controversy as well as after the specter of same-sex marriage came into focus.

I use four steps to analyze data from *The Post*. First, I limit analysis to *The Post* headlines extracted from the LexisNexis Academic Universe database using the following search term: “marriage AND NOT obit!” with the time constraints of January 1, 1985 to December 31, 2007. This search term collects all articles including the word “marriage,” but excludes obituaries. While it is true that this search term may exclude some discussions of *unions*, I believe the terms still yield a great deal of specificity surrounding marriage. I am confident that the very large

number of relevant headlines (over 1,000 articles) from 1985 to 2007 will be sufficient for making observations about the thematic distribution of marriage over time. Second, I code extracted headlines for subject matter (see Appendix B) in order to map the terrain of issues and debates surrounding marriage. I also note the section/location of articles within *The Post*. Third, I code headlines according to their perceived degree of adherence to hegemonic marriage in a variable termed the *Ethic Index*. I refer to these codes as an ethic to capture the “ought” of hegemonic marriage, the tenets that hegemony conveys as normal, good and right. This coding is solely a judgment call on my behalf, and I use it only to assist me in organizing potential shifts in the hegemonic marriage constructs. I code headlines that seem to align with the main tenets of hegemonic marriage as “1” (e.g., *The Washington Post*, “Church ‘Protect Marriage’ Day is Urged; Groups Backing Amendment Seek Focus on Sunday Before Senate Vote,” June 26, 2004). Headlines that seem oppositional to hegemonic marriage are coded “-1” (e.g., *The Washington Post*, “Benefits Extended to Unmarried Partners,” March 2, 1990), and those that have no obvious position vis-à-vis hegemonic marriage get a code of “0” (e.g., *The Washington Post*, “The Marriage Penalty,” May 28, 2007). Lastly, I conduct simple statistical calculations to determine trends across time, primarily based on word frequency counts. I use this data to evaluate punctuating events potentially relevant to shifts in movement framing.

Interview corpus textual and corpus analysis. I choose relevant movement participants for interviews by examining movement membership rosters, the Boards of Directors of various movement organizations, and signatories to movement mission statements, such as the Marriage Movement’s *A Statement of Principles*. I use two forms of nonprobability sampling in selecting interview participants: a positional strategy in which I select on a set of positions considered pertinent to the processes of study, and a reputational strategy in which I select interview participants according to their influence as identified by their peers. After transcribing the interviews, I employ a coding scheme and use *CAT* qualitative coding software to analyze across cases.

The interviews primarily revolve around a structure of open-ended questioning. The purpose of open-ended interviews is to assess the perspectives of the interviewee, and not to impose preconceived analytical explanations. I use a pre-determined interview guide – a list of questions or issues to explore in the course of the interview. There are two types of questions included in this guide (See Appendix C). First, I touch on the participant’s personal subjective perceptions of movement activities. These questions address issues such as the interviewee’s participation in the movement – their position, what attracted them to the movement, what they see as the movement’s main messages, *et cetera*. Second, I ask interviewees to classify movement framing contexts. I ask interviewees to comment on how they see their organization fitting into a larger movement. I ask them to reflect on organizational mission, as well as how the mission has changed across time. I request that they consider how the framing work done in their organization is in conversation with external agents, like policymakers, oppositional organizations, potential adherents, and more.

I intend both types of interview questions to solicit responses about the nature of the movement, the types of messaging the organization does, and how frames develop – including relevant actors in the framing process, both how and why frames may change over time, and how the work of other movement organizations influence the marriage politics field of protest. The purpose of the interview guide is to ensure that I obtain essentially the same information from people across and within movements. This approach also works to highlight potentially meaningful silences and omissions on the part of interviewees. Within this general typological scheme, the guide lays out a number of subject areas that I am free to explore or probe in order to illuminate my area of research interest. Under this schema, I maintain freedom and flexibility “to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style – but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined” (Patton 1980, 200).

With the interview transcript text, I compile three corpora to represent movement-specific interview content. I rely heavily on textual analysis of interview corpora to provide insights into framing processes and decision-making. I then code the corpora using diagnostic and prognostic coding in order to assess primary frames emanating from the movements. I also use this knowledge to give me a theoretically and contextually rich “starting point” to guide my web corpora CL analysis.

Prognostic and diagnostic frames are key external communication tools used by movement organizations. Cress and Snow (2000) characterize them as undervalued elements of movement success. SMOs are often responding to social factors that are not of their making. Nevertheless, while the organizations did not create the social situations, they still define them as problematic or worthy of action through the use of prognostic and diagnostic frames (Allen 2000). Cress and Snow succinctly define these terms:

Diagnostic framing is important because it problematizes and focuses attention on an issue, helps shape how that issue is perceived, and identifies who or what is culpable, thereby identifying the targets or sources of the outcomes sought; prognostic framing is important because it stipulates specific remedies or goals for the SMO to work toward and the means or tactics for achieving these objectives (Cress and Snow 2000, 1071).

Because the interview protocol I use is theory-driven, there is an important concern with making interpretive conclusions based on interview corpora: framing information from interviews is necessarily shaped by the format of the interview protocol offered to participants. The protocol is heavily weighted in terms of framing process questions because those are insights that cannot be gleaned by looking at movement texts as a whole. What I see on an SMO website, for example, is the final product of a framing process and not likely to be transparent about how messaging decisions were made to get from point A to point B.

As a way to confirm that interview data appropriately captures framing process data, I use *Textalyser* to identify the frequency of 5-word phrases within the interview corpus. I

constrain the search to return words that have a minimum of five characters in order to maximize content-rich words. I then group the phrases into semantic categories, including diagnostic and prognostic frames, and look at the average prominence score to determine the relevance of expressions within the categories. Prominence is a symmetrical statistical measure that looks for the co-occurrence of concepts together, such that a high score (closer to 100) denotes that they appear together often and rarely apart (Stuart 2012). Because the interview protocol puts constraints around the nature of the resulting interview text, my hypotheses is that the semantic categories with high prominence scores will be associated with movement processes and public policy – the types of questions asked in the interview – as well as with the dominant diagnostic or prognostic frame(s) – the “main ideas” of the framing process. My analytic results confirm this hypothesis (See Appendix D for an example from the MEM interview corpus). Nevertheless, the interview corpora do provide important insights into framing processes that are not otherwise available in web corpora.

Web corpus analysis. Using the Internet Archive (aka the “Wayback Machine”), I build three movement specific corpora consisting of movement documents posted online for movement adherent and movement target consumption. The Internet Archive includes over 240 billion archived web sites, beginning in 1996. The Archive is a service that allows people to visit archived versions of web sites by typing in the URL and selecting a date range. Results appear as circles on a calendar, with the size of the circle indicating the density of particular “snapshots” of a website at that point in time. For each year available, I randomly choose a snapshot within the largest cluster of snapshots available. I make random selections in the hopes of avoiding movement messaging bias. For example, many non-profit organizations conduct donor campaigns at the end of the calendar year, in the hopes of capitalizing on the interested public’s holiday generosity and desired tax deductions. Solely sampling in December could potentially lead to biased content in the corpora that is not representative of movement discourse as a whole.

Additionally, for each movement I include only one or two SMOs in the corpus, rather than trying to capture the entirety of the movement. A strict CL approach would prefer to build very large corpora, but because I am combining CDA and CL I need to retain the ability to do close descriptive textual analysis. I decided which organizations to include based on my prior knowledge of the movements, and insights that I gleaned from interview content. For each movement, I choose the following representative SMOs:

- Traditional marriage movement: American Family Association supplemented by Concerned Women for America(99,899 words)
- Marriage Movement: Institute for American Values (88,914 words)
- Marriage equality movement: Freedom to Marry supplemented by the Human Rights Campaign (27,312 words)

I conduct CL analysis on each movement before turning to social practices analysis to evaluate inter-movement and inter-textual factors. CL analysis begins with identification of keywords using keyness as a measure to assess terms' relative frequency in the web corpora as compared to the reference Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies 2008-). I use insights from keyword analysis to compare and assess the validity of nodes suggested by diagnostic and prognostic framing in the interview corpora. I then turn to concordance analysis. I use the lexical realities of the web corpora to test whether identified frames seem relevant at the structural level of SMO discourse. I finally proceed to collocation and cluster analysis, continuously referring back to concordances to facilitate in-text critical analysis.

Social practices analysis. The part of CDA that yields the most insight into the operation of power to form both hegemonic constructs and to facilitate or constrain social movement framing choices is social analysis. I use Janks's (1997) simple model of embedded boxes, derived from Fairclough (1995), to initially map conclusions from the other two levels of the model, textual analysis and discursive practice, drawing lines of interconnection and critically assessing

how the SMOs and their framing choices interact, or display degrees of interdiscursivity, in the field of marriage politics. Hegemonic discourse requires social actors in dialogue with and across one another to shape common-sense conceptions of marriage. When considering SMOs, movements may be differently impacted by discourse, but influence always occurs on a field of contention involving more than one movement. Looking to how SMOs interpret hegemonic discourse and manipulate it in movement messages provides important insight into the operationalization of hegemony on movement framing decisions. Because I am also interested in evaluating how power constructed by and embedded within such interactions is gendered, I turn to CL analysis of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) in Chapter 8 to assess whether my conclusions are fundamentally supported within the full semantic context of American discourse, from 1990 to 2012. I additionally sub-divide gender CL analysis into 5-year time periods and compare results to the punctuating events identified through newspaper headline analysis. Doing so gives additional credence to identified shifts in hegemonic discourse. Lastly, I triangulate CL analysis with close discourse analytic treatment of movement-specific documents that speak specifically to important discursive shifts. Selection of movement documents is theory driven, and informed by prior textual and CL analysis of the web corpora.

Feminist Researcher

Because this project focuses on discursive power, I must be cognizant of its effects on me as a researcher as well. Feminist methodology in general stresses a primary analytical imperative to recognize the intersubjective nature of social relations (Nencel 2005). Power is contextual. Cotterill (1992) explains, for example, that gendered dynamics may shape relations between the researcher and subjects of research in an interview situation. The same is true for race and sexual orientation, as well as for other markers of privilege. As such, I recognize that my interactions with research subjects are dynamic over the course of the research project. My social location vis-à-vis various movements and movement representatives shifts too.

Given that I rely on interview data to inform my knowledge of movement framing processes, I recognize the possibility of an “insider/outsider” perception among interview participants. As high-ranking representatives of their respective movement organizations, interviewees tended to discursively construct the movement as the “inside” and referred to media, academics, policymakers, and non-adherents as “outsiders” to be influenced. The implication here is a matter of framing. Information received in interviews is likely subject to framing as well. This presents a methodological challenge of assessing framing messages through the message-laden practice of interviewing.

I always keep in mind that interview recipients are individuals embedded within particular organizational and discursive contexts (Naples 2003). I am also cognizant of how “ruling relations are experienced and resisted in everyday life” (Naples 2003, 54). How interviewees chose to explain movement framing decisions can shed light on the social locations of movement adherents and how they fit into larger discursive frames of marriage. In the marriage equality movement, for instance, hesitation and careful wording on the part of interviewees regarding the contentious nature of a “civil rights” frame for same-sex marriage initiatives in African-American communities is indicative of how positions of marginality are not synonymous and can be contentious.

All interview participants undoubtedly made assumptions about my social location that may have affected their scope of interaction with me. For some in the marriage equality movement, for example, I am an outsider with regard to my sexual orientation. Despite that fact, many of the interviewees assumed that I was an ideological ally. Some marriage equality interviewees, then, assuming my empathetic positioning, passionately described those in the traditional marriage movement as not merely outsiders, but actual “opponents.” In some instances the traditionalists were even “the enemy.” Interestingly, the perception of me as an “ally” was not at all limited to marriage equality interviewees. The same categorizations flowed in the opposite direction as well, where the traditional marriage movement described the marriage equality

movement in parallel oppositional language, perhaps because of my non-judgmental and open posturing in the interview context. All interview participants tended to assume my ideological alignment with their causes. This is noteworthy because the insider/outsider status of interviewees shapes their perceptions of relationships within hegemonic marriage—perceptions that are then relayed to me as a potential ally. I am therefore cognizant of the potential influence of insider/outsider status as a mediator, or perhaps filter, on the transmission and perception of marriage framing.

I must also remain conscientious of my own relationship to hegemonic marriage, particularly with regard to my ability to critically analyze texts. I married at the age of 23, fully aware that the union would bestow upon me certain benefits and responsibilities. At the time, despite the fact that my mother-in-law was living with a same-sex partner, the idea of same-sex marriage was not on my radar. My personal beliefs evolved so that I became more critical of hegemonic marriage and more supportive of same-sex marriage. A confluence of factors led me to those conclusions, including the day-to-day reality of my own marriage, my relationship with my mother(s)-(in-law), and my academic research on marriage promotion in welfare reform. While noting those factors, my ideological journey is still underway. Belief systems can shape vision. For instance, while I tend toward ideological alignment with the equality movement's position, I do not want to dismiss or marginalize the positions of interviewees within the marriage movement or the traditional marriage movement. Each movement participant has a personal origin story regarding his or her positionality vis-à-vis hegemonic marriage. No one's origin story is better or more right than that of another. In my research, I am vigilant in separating out individuals' positions and those of the movements. The question is not who is right or wrong. The question is how movement framing decisions align with or contest hegemonic marriage and what that might mean for a nation marked by a wide array of family diversity.

CHAPTER 4: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *THE WASHINGTON POST* CORPUS

Critical discourse analysis is systematic, but does not prescribe a fixed approach. In moving through local, institutional and societal domains to describe, interpret and explain discursive relations and social practices, however, CDA does hazard one methodological imperative – the researcher must be deeply acquainted with social field/subject under investigation (Rogers 2004). My method, therefore, begins with identification of punctuating events potentially relevant to my analysis. Punctuating events are socio-political developments that likely influence hegemonic discourse about marriage through their widespread media coverage and popular appeal. Such influence may actually affect the content of marriage discourse – i.e., one could argue that controversy surrounding 1980s sitcom character Murphy Brown choosing to start a family without a husband played an important role in instigating renewed discourse about family values. The ability of a punctuating event to rise to prominence at a given time may also signify that hegemonic marriage is strengthening or weakening. Finally, paying attention to punctuating events prior to rigorously engaging CDA provides a basis for considering how some discourses become more salient and more dominant than others. These processes cannot occur in isolation, and it behooves the researcher to understand as much contextual information as possible.

As such, my goal in this chapter is to merely identify and explore potential punctuating events. Definitive conclusions are beyond the purview of this chapter. In my subsequent analysis in chapters 5 through 7, I keep these punctuating events in mind, and use them as an overlay to evaluate what CDA tells me. By systematically engaging with background information, I am better able to identify which punctuating events matter *most* for how movements ultimately negotiate hegemonic marriage.

The texts I use in this chapter to determine the contextual parameters of hegemonic marriage across time are *The Washington Post* headlines. Headlines, according to Allan (1998, 130-131), mediate the terms of the familiar by recognizing that “a news event can only ‘make

sense' to the viewer if she or he is able to situate it in relation to a range of pre-existing 'maps of meaning' (Hall *et al.* 1978) or forms of cultural knowledge about the nature of society." Such pre-existing "maps of meaning" are the schemata that connect a reader to pre-existing webs of power. Not only are headlines textual elements of discourse, but writers of headlines must also firmly grasp the discursive practices of the reader. Dor (2003) further explains this notion by describing headlines as "relevance optimizers." He argues that the construction of a successful headline requires "an understanding of the readers – their state-of-knowledge, their beliefs and expectation and their cognitive styles – no less than it requires an understanding of the story" (Dor 2003, 695). Headlines connect the content of a story to the worldviews, beliefs and expectations of the reader. Without such a connection, readers will find headlines irrelevant and will not continue investigating stories further. Assumptions made by headline authors, then, must have nuance and sophistication in order to tap into beliefs that will appeal to readers. Or, in other words, such assumptions must understand the discursive practices of hegemony.

The role of media in shaping attitudes about marriage is an under-researched and under-theorized topic. Generally, however, research by scholars like Iyengar and Kinder (1987) and McCombs and Shaw (1972) suggest that popular media do not necessarily change already-formed public opinion, but rather contribute to discourses about the saliency or importance of issues.

Cohen summarizes:

[T]he media possess the ability to alter an individual's concern over, or the priority given to, an issue. This process, called agenda setting, or public agenda setting, works in relation to the time and attention media outlets designate to an issue or event. The more attention given an issue, the more likely the public is to view the issue as having greater importance (Cohen 1999, 151; Iyengar and Kinder 1987).

Personal, or local, definitions of marriage, then, are most likely to emanate from one's personal lived experiences, the traditions of one's community or family, or perhaps from one's religious or spiritual upbringing. Those beliefs are not likely to be challenged through discursive channels.

Popular media, however, might affect the assessment of marriage as a common sense discursive construction. That is why, for instance, it is possible for high divorce rates to co-exist alongside crisis rhetoric regarding the status of marriage. While people may not necessarily align their personal behaviors with marriage as an ideal state, their ears may perk up and concerns escalate if popular media highlights erosion (or bolstering) of particular discursive elements of hegemonic marriage.

Media primes or mobilizes “evaluative frames or standards individuals use to assess an issue or event” (Cohen 1999, 151; Gitlin 1980; Iyengar 1991; Iyengar and Kinder 1987). When marriage-related topics capture media attention, they are not parlayed to the public in a completely neutral manner. Rather, just as public receivers of media messages are shaped by hegemonic forces, so are media producers. Media producers are likely affected not only by their own personal thoughts about marriage, but also by institutional, social, political and ideological factors. How media actors negotiate such dynamics in the production of media messages is a question for a different study, but it is important to remember such choices are not isolated nor contained. Media choices are relevant considerations in how individuals assess marriage, and as a corollary, to the processes of social power that contribute to hegemonic constructions.

Cohen also explains that “the media ... are generally not very comfortable in following what they consider to be long, drawn out stories or ‘old news’” (1999, 153). Thus, while marriage is ever-present, the scope of reporting about marriage is likely to chase new developments or perceived rifts in hegemonic discourse. Lulls in reporting followed by an increase in media interest likely signify an event or change with not only discursive impacts, but potential framing impacts within movements as well. Similarly, we can expect to find fewer and less active SMOs during times of minimal marriage reporting, and concomitantly, a swell of movement activity at times when public reporting on marriage is its highest.

It is also relevant to highlight that this step of my analysis solely evaluates headlines, and not the body of newspaper articles. I do this for a number of reasons. First, headlines reach a

wider audience than articles alone (Develotte and Rechniewski 2001). While people have limited time to read the entire newspaper, many people will at least glance at the headlines. They may also see headlines in other places as well – looking over the shoulder of a fellow commuter, on a blog, or in a post shared on Facebook, for example. Develotte and Rechniewski (2001) also argue that the impact of headlines is apt to be stronger than full articles because of a number of techniques used in headline writing, namely the use of puns, alliteration, the choice of emotive vocabulary and other rhetorical tactics. When a reader receives a textual message, they use their personal norms, rules, and worldview to process the message and decide how to handle it. The impact of headlines comes, in part, because newspaper writers anticipate what those mental shortcuts are likely to be when designing headlines. Movement leaders do the same when choosing movement frames.

Thematic Breakdown of Hegemonic Marriage

My textual analysis focuses on the years 1985-2007. To begin, I start with an assumption that hegemonic marriage predated 1985 – this random point in time is not the origin of marital hegemony. Two primary characteristics of contemporary hegemonic marriage are heteronormativity and hierarchal gender roles. Empirical evidence supports my assumption that marriage was popularly associated with these two characteristics in the mid-1980s, although many Americans were undoubtedly involved in processes of negotiation regarding those points. Changing trends in Americans' romantic lives – cohabitation, unmarried childbearing, higher rates of women in the workforce, and rising divorce rates – likely affected hegemonic marriage constructs. For example, while it is true that prior to 1990, 57.7% of American children lived with their biological, married parents (Popenoe 1993), divorce began to replace widowhood as the primary cause of single parenthood in the 1970s and divorce rates continued to increase in the early 1980s (Moore *et al.* 2002). Still, as changes in the structure of marriage escalated, the prevailing social opinion regarding such changes was one of disapproval. Looking to a study conducted in 1989 offers an interesting snapshot in time regarding social opinion about marriage

and changing attitudes toward family issues in the United States. The study found no significant changes in attitudes toward marriage between 1976 and 1986 (Thornton 1989). Similarly, despite a rapid increase in divorce acceptance during the early 1970s, the researcher found that shifts in attitudes did not extend past 1977 (Thornton 1989). Thornton concludes:

Although prescriptive social norms concerning a significant number of issues have weakened while the norm of tolerance has expanded, these trends do not represent an endorsement of previously proscribed values and behavior. More specifically, in the family arena the normative and attitudinal shifts toward tolerance of a broad range of behavior does not mean that there has been an increased endorsement of remaining single, getting divorced, remaining childless, or reversing the roles of women and men. ... [T]here were no significant shifts toward believing that remaining single, getting divorced, not having children, or reversing gender roles were positive goals to be achieved (Thornton 1989, 891).

If attitudes about marriage leveled off in the early 1980s such that, for the most part, Americans recognized hegemonic marriage as social good, how did discursive practices surrounding marriage change in subsequent years? In order to facilitate my later analysis of movement-specific framing processes in relation to perceived shifts in hegemonic marriage, I work to thematically position hegemonic marriage constructs vis-à-vis relevant punctuating events. These events are moments in social practice, the third level of the feminist discourse analysis model, that connect a social event or practice with a potential shift in the hegemonic concept emerging from discursive practices. In other words, these social events mark possible significant shifts in the negotiation of hegemonic marriage – for example, an event that propels movement away from disapproval toward acceptance or normalization of women in the workplace.

To identify punctuating events, I use simple word count frequencies in *The Washington Post* headlines to assess shifts in discourse about marriage (Stemler 2001). I use the most prevalent

words from each year to suggest the primary themes with regard to what was perceived as relevant in marriage. I can track such trends over time in order to determine at which point there may be a significant shift in amount of attention paid to particular notions associated with marriage. After determining frequencies, I can look to interview transcripts and other movement texts for lexical framing analysis – the identification of specific discourses and evaluation of the implications of movement framing and hegemonic marriage.

Figure 2 shows overall trends across years of the total number of marriage-related headlines.

Trend data can indicate saliency of hegemonic marriage constructs across time in that it highlights the degree of the discursive inclusion of marriage in popular media.

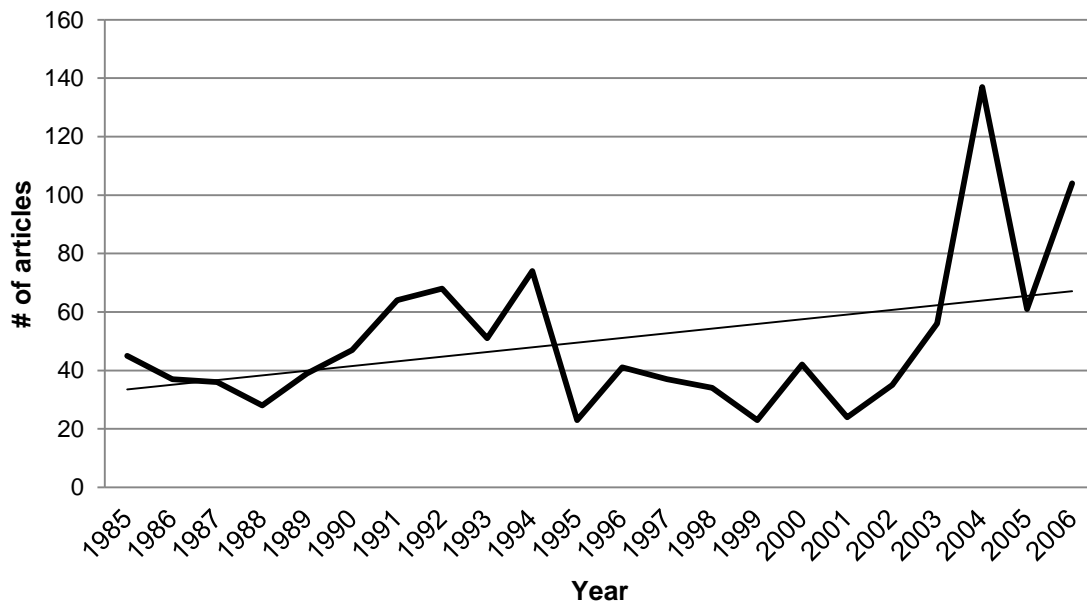


Figure 2. Number of marriage-related headlines by year with linear trend line

I used *Word Counter*, a free word frequency counter available online, to select the top 25 words from each year in my study, 1985 to 2007. I excluded small words like “the” and “it,” and chose to group root variations, or lemma, together (e.g., family and families list as fami*). I also excluded marriage and variations thereof (married, marry, marries, etc.) from the top-25 list because marriage was a keyword in my original LexisNexis Academic Universe search of *The Washington Post*. In addition to collecting top-25 word lists for all yearly headlines, I also created

lists for headlines reported in the First Section of *The Post*. Articles in the First Section most likely are pertinent news, as determined by newspaper editors. I then made a frequency list for each year with similar words grouped under one tagline. For instance, I used the tagline “gendered” to reflect any references to marriage partners in gendered ways, such as husband, wife, man, woman, bride, groom, etc. I used “policy” to capture words suggesting legislative or executive action, such as veto, GOP, senator, vote, and amendment. I reserve reporting on judicial action, however, as a separate code. Lastly, I identified the top two concepts or concept clusters for each year, as well as for First Section reporting by year, to indicate the top trends in marriage reporting.

I also give all 1,121 headlines subject codes. The actual total number of coded headlines is greater than 1,121, however, because some headlines relate to multiple subjects. For example, I coded the headline, “Family Values Groups Gear Up for Battle over Gay Marriage” (8/17/2003) as relating to both movements and same-sex marriage. Subject codes include movements, divorce, marriage demographics, and same-sex marriage, among others. See Table E.1-E.4 in Appendix E for a full list of subject codes.

Based on analysis of tagline frequencies, I identify the following trends:

- 1) There is a shift away from interest in reporting on divorce in 1994.
- 2) Children and marriage are a focus of reporting from 1988 to 1992.
- 3) Headlines first mention same-sex marriage in 1987, and momentum in reporting on same-sex marriage picks up in 1996. A considerable spike in reporting in 2003 continues throughout the mid-2000s.
- 4) Traditional values are a reporting issue in 1992.
- 5) Frequent policy language in headlines pertaining to marriage comes in vogue in 1996.
- 6) Headline reporting about welfare is pertinent in 2002.
- 7) Language about banning/prohibiting within the context of marriage is prevalent in 2006.

I use the tag cloud generator tool on *Many Eyes*, an online visualization tool created by IBM Research, as well as surveys of empirical literature to examine each of these trends in turn.

Trend #1: Reporting on divorce. *There is a shift away from interest in reporting on divorce in 1994.* Using the *Many Eyes* tool, I can say with certainty that the word *divorce* appeared 65 times in *The Post* headlines between 1985 and 1994. From 1995 to 2007, however, it only appeared 18 times. The highest incidence of the appearance of *divorce* came in 1989 with 12, which means that the sole year of 1989 represents two-thirds of all incidence of the inclusion of “divorce” in the next thirteen years combined. *Divorce* did not appear at all after 2002. However, not all divorce-related articles will appear in a simple word frequency count. The fact that all articles are coded by subject allows me to catch the headlines that are not captured by the *divorce* search node. Information in Table E.2 shows that the frequency of divorce stories reached their highest levels in the late 1980s, and then began to decline.

Research cited earlier by Thornton (1989) suggests that rising trends of divorce acceptance leveled off in the late 1970s. In addition to this attitudinal shift regarding divorce, McCrate (1992) reports behavioral change as well: the divorce rate itself leveled in the early 1980s, and actually fell slightly between the years 1979 to 1987. One interpretation of these changes may seem to support greater adherence to traditional tenets of hegemonic marriage. McCrate (1992), however, analyzes feminist arguments to complicate the picture. McCrate (1992) attributes two potential causes of attitudinal and behavioral movement away from divorce acceptance. First, women in the early 1980s were using their bargaining power and newly found freedoms from strict gender roles to form marriages more beneficial to them. McCrate (1992) describes this phenomenon as women finding “voice in” rather than “exit from” marriage. A second explanation proffered by the author is that the fallback position for women – available alternatives to marriage – significantly worsened. She points to trends such as decreases in public welfare assistance and smaller divorce settlements as examples of how the world outside of marriage looked less rosy in the 1980s.

Regardless of whether McCrate's two hypothesized causes are correct, they suggest that explanations for attitudinal and behavioral shifts away from divorce in the 1980s cannot be simply attributable to a strengthening of hegemonic marriage constructs. Liberalizing gender norms could have played a counter-intuitive role in lessening the likelihood of people, and particularly women, to terminate marriages. Because I am interested in discursive evidence of hegemonic marriage, I devised a systematic coding scheme to determine whether the content of headlines is supportive of or at odds with hegemonic marriage constructs. I termed this subject code the "ethic index." Using the ethic index code, I see that I coded 25 out of 39 divorce-related headlines, or 64 percent, as at odds with hegemonic marriage constructs during the time period 1985-1989. Examples of such headlines include: "Financing Divorce: Look at it as a Business Deal" (November 15, 1985; "Poverty Rise Laid to Weak Economy; Study Concludes that Family Dissolution is a Secondary Factor" (December 22, 1986); and "Link Between Youth Woes and Divorce Disputed; Book Rejects Arguments that Return to Traditional Family Would Reverse Troubling Trends" (October 30, 1987).

My suggests a discursive trend in the late 1980s to be more tolerant of divorce, to see it less as a fundamental shift to social relations, and to be less inclined to argue that divorce incites doomsday scenarios for children. That said, ethic index evidence alone is not sufficient to make a positive declaration of the discursive impact of any particular trend relating to divorce in the latter part of the 1980s. I am merely noting that evidence suggests a potential shift in discourse, and subsequent chapters will provide the evidence I need to make a claim about whether this shift matters in how social movement organizations negotiate marriage in their framing. SMO *perceptions* of shifts in hegemonic marriage and how they subsequently process those perceptions are the most important factors in hegemonic negotiation. By using feminist CDA and CL analysis, I will better understand if social movement actors perceived such shifts as having meaningful discursive implications for their framing decision-making.

Looking at the headlines, I am curious about potential punctuating events that may have affected the perception of divorce with relation hegemonic marriage. The late 1980s brought concerns about child visitation and dual parenting after divorce, as well as new horizons in family law such as the dilemmas of frozen embryos post-divorce. There was not a single, overwhelming event or issue pertaining to divorce, however, that dominated the headlines.

Despite the lack of clear punctuating events, there were two clusters of related topics pertaining to divorce. First, a number of articles detail demographic effects of divorce, such as a 1988 headline questioning whether a “return to traditional family” would reverse disturbing trends in society (“Link Between Youth Woes and Divorce Disputed; Book Rejects Arguments that Return to Traditional Family Would Reverse Troubling Trends,” 10/30/1988). Similarly, a 1991 article describes a “decline of the traditional family” (“Census Reveals Decline of the Traditional Family; Area Children in Fragmented Homes on Rise,” 6/15/1991). Demographic articles in the early 1990s often reference data from the Census, a potential punctuating event that provided new insights into the behaviors of Americans. New knowledge may have altered marriage attitudes and connections to hegemonic marriage. Articles such as these may be indicative of a building rift in hegemonic marriage, where tenuous acknowledgement that family forms were changing tested consensus opinions about the “traditional family.”

The early 1990s also indicated an increasing interest in responsible fatherhood and the prosecution of “deadbeat dads.” A 1991 article (“Putting a Face on Deadbeat Dads; National Group Uses Wanted Posters to Chase Billions in Non-Support, 5/29/1991) highlights the public relations efforts of a “national group” to chase non-support from absent parents. Other articles discuss an array of policies introduced to deal the problem of absent parents (read: fathers) and missing child support payments (e.g., “Catching Up with Absent Parents; new Assurance Plan Based on Enforcing Child Support Payments,” 4/5/1991). The focus on “deadbeat dads” seems to be part of a larger conversation about the effects of divorce on children and the role of fathers in parenting that I will address in the next section.

Trend #2: Reporting on children. *Children and marriage are a focus of reporting from 1988 to 1992.* A common reference in headlines dealing with marriage from 1988 to 1992 is children. Using the *Many Eyes* tool, I identify three sub-trends within headlines pertaining to children: the effects of divorce on children, an interest in the role of fatherhood, especially as it pertains to child support, and an increasing incidence of single motherhood by choice (including a specific focus on the black community). I will discuss each in turn.

First, while headlines seem to support a common assumption that divorce hurts children, not all of the headlines suggest the same conclusion. For example, “Divorce Doesn’t Always Hurt the Kids” (3/19/1989) obviously counters the popular association between divorce and child detriment. The article denies a correlation between divorce and child detriment - it does not clearly presume that the best place to raise a child is with his or her own two biological, married parents. Rather, the headline takes a more liberalized approach suggesting that in some instances ending a marriage may have minimal impact on child well-being.

Second, the focus on responsible fatherhood and the well-being of children echoes some of what I saw in divorce headlines’ portrayal of “deadbeat dads” and absent parents. Two types of headlines seem prominent here – those relaying statistical data from Census reports and those addressing child support. The aforementioned article about a “national group” chasing child support payments (“Putting a Face on Deadbeat Dads...,” 5/29/1991) references the early years of the responsible fatherhood movement, a movement later aligned with the Marriage Movement (MM). The responsible fatherhood movement dates to the late 1980s. There are two primary strands to the responsible fatherhood movement. One is a broad effort to encourage all fathers, regardless of marital status, to engage with their children. The second focuses on non-marital, low-income fathers. Programs within this strand often geared to minority fathers, and intended to provide skills necessary for non-custodial fathers to obtain jobs and enable them to pay child support. This movement aligned with the MM beginning in 2002 with the launch of the Healthy

Marriage Initiative by the Administration for Children and Families within the Department of Health and Human Services (Roberts 2006).

A third sub-trend concerning children is an increasing incidence of single parenting, especially by women. Headlines such as “Mothers-to-Be Not Rushing to the Altar; More Pregnant Women Opt to Stay Unmarried” (12/4/1991) and “When Baby Makes Two; Deciding to Have a Child Without a Husband” (11/12/1991) both indicate that women in the 1990s were beginning to see marriage as optional, and not part of the expected equation of starting a family. Some single-parent headlines are non-gender specific, such as “Single-Parent Families Increase; 54% of Black Children Live in Such Households, Study Finds” (2/16/1989), but such articles overwhelmingly reference race, particularly the demographic trend of single parenting in the black community. Another example of this trend is the article, “Nonmarital Births: As Rates Soar, Theories Abound; Levels Once Seen as Aberration Among Blacks have Become ‘Norm for the Entire Culture’” (1/22/1991), which once again does not specify gender, but rather sets nonmarital parenting as a cultural norm within black communities.

A concern with nonmarital childbearing in the black community is, of course, not newly emergent in the early 1990s. Black women, for example, historically were denied sexual autonomy, both in terms of their sexuality and fertility, as well as in their ability to enter into marriages and to choose “privatized motherhood as a stay-at-home occupation” (Collins 2000, 50). Roberts (1997) similarly argues that American society equates black females with perversion, or with sexualities constructed as inherently disorderly, dangerous, in need of monitoring by others. Those others, presumably, are white. Such an observation begs the question of whether the hegemonic marriage is also racially specific.

As with the other elements of hegemonic marriage – patriarchal gender norms and heteronormativity – one difficulty in assessing racial schemas within hegemonic marriage constructs is the hegemonic nature of whiteness itself. The sense among whites that they are non-raced is endemic to white culture (Dyer 2003). As such, headlines and discourse about marriage

may treat racial classifications as a given. That is why it is particularly important to pay attention to examples where race becomes relevant in marriage reporting. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) argue that cultural gulfs between white and black communities persist, and that such gulfs influence the behavioral choices of marginalized blacks. The authors state, “the more limited the options for approved participation in the cultural mainstream, the more refined and satisfying become the alternatives to those excluded from the approved norms” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 3). Such a statement implies that patterns and trends in black family formation may be cultural responses to problems of normalized, mainstream (and most likely white) processes of surveillance, segregation, and stereotyping. As such, the possibility of black nonmarital parenting as counterhegemonic resistance to hegemonic marriage may be relevant to the framing decisions of the movements under question in this study, or may provide a fruitful site of future research.

Trend #3: Reporting on same-sex marriage. *Headlines first mention same-sex marriage in 1987, and momentum in reporting on same-sex marriage picks up in 1996. A considerable spike in reporting in 2003 continues throughout the mid-2000s.* The third trend identifiable from frequency word counts relates to what I, and many of my interview participants, theorize as the primary discursive trend affecting the primacy of hegemonic marriage: the introduction of same-sex marriage. Of the 314 headlines coded “same-sex marriage,” I coded 40 percent of them with an ethic index of -1 (at odds with the hegemonic marriage), 10 percent were coded 0 (no discernible relationship to the hegemonic marriage ethic), and 50 percent were code 1 (supportive of hegemonic marriage). This evidence suggests a high degree of discursive tension regarding hegemonic marriage as it relates to same-sex marriage. Frequency counts show that the first reference to “gay marriage” occurs in 1987, but reporting momentum on same-sex relationships, unions, and marriages does not pick up until 1996. Most headlines from 1987 to 1992 appear to be reports on same-sex marriage attempts in the District of Columbia metro area. One example of early regional reporting is the headline, “Lesbian ‘Holy Union’ Moved from D.C. Church” (5/16/1990).

My prior assertion was that marriage politics initiated with fervor in 1993 with the *Baehr v. Lewin* Hawaii Supreme Court decision. The late 1980s and early 1990s, however, was not a period bereft of activism on behalf of same-sex marriage rights. In fact, attempts to gain legal recognition for same-sex marriage occurred in a number of states dating back to the 1970s (Eskridge 1996). While the D.C.-area attempts did enjoy coverage in *The Post*, they did not ripple out to affect cultural and political consciousness to the same degree that the Hawaii case did. This is evident in the newspaper reporting to a degree as well – none of the regional articles reported in the A or First Sections. Instead, they were relegated to the Metro or Editorial pages. The headline reporting on the *Baehr v. Lewin* decision on May 7, 1993, however, was the first-ever First Section article about gay marriage (“Ruling by Hawaii’s Supreme Court Opens the Way to Gay Marriages”).

The Hawaii decision prompted national attention largely because of the questions it brought concerning federalism. Namely, the case caused Americans to ask whether other states would be required to recognize the legitimacy of same-sex marriages performed in Hawaii because of the Constitution’s “Full Faith and Credit” clause (Kersch 1997). This question and debates surrounding it eventually led to the 1996 passage of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (Hull 2001), a precipitating event accounting for the spike in gay marriage reporting seen in 1996. In that year, I identify sixteen articles specifically devoted to the Defense of Marriage Act. Twelve of those articles, or 75 percent, are in the First Section. To get a sense of how much of a spike in gay marriage reporting occurred in 1996 and again in 2003, see Figure 3.

The year 2003 brought extensive interest in same-sex marriage. This year saw debate over the proposed Constitutional same-sex marriage ban, also known by proponents as the Federal Marriage Amendment. Coupled with this proposed ban was the landmark Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, where in a 6-3 decision Justices struck down the sodomy law in Texas. The decision essentially ruled that intimate, consensual sexual conduct was protected by substantive due process in the Fourteenth Amendment (539 U.S. 558 2003).

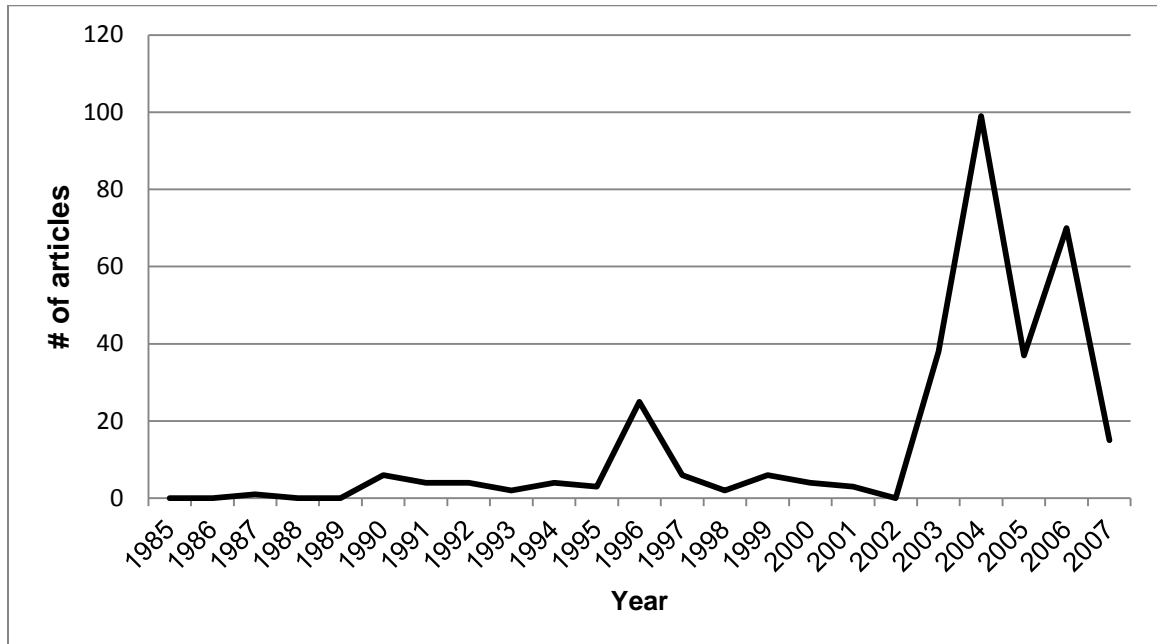


Figure 3: Same-sex marriage reporting, *The Washington Post*, 1985-2007

A third major event for gay rights activists was the March 2003 hearing of oral arguments in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case of *Goodrich v. Department of Public Health*. The *Goodrich* case ultimately established a right to same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. Headlines that indicate the importance of these three events include ones like the following: “Sodomy Ruling Fuels Battle over Gay Marriage” (7/31/2003), “Gay Marriage Looms as Issue; GOP Push for Amendment is Dilemma for Bush” (10/25/2003), and “Mass. Asked to Allow Same-Sex Marriages” (3/5/2003). Of course, these are but a few examples. Other key issues emerging in 2003 also included international activity in the same-sex marriage arena, including the legal endorsement of same-sex marriage in Canada. Undoubtedly, one of the most creative headlines of this study references this event: “Whoa! Canada!; Legal Marijuana. Gay Marriage. Peace. What the Heck’s Going on Up North, Eh?” (7/1/2003).

Taken together, 2003 was a monumental year for same-sex rights advocates and opponents alike. Unlike the passage of DOMA in 1996, the year 2003 showed that same-sex marriage advocates were making gains both internationally and domestically. Gains in

Massachusetts occurred despite the existence of DOMA, which many in the anti- same-sex marriage camp put stock in for a number of years as a sufficient barrier to same-sex marriage. Adam (2003), for example, argues that the rush of states to enact state-level Defense of Marriage Acts, or “mini-DOMAs,” after the 1996 federal legislation passed was an example of moral panic. Fifteen states had statutes prohibiting same-sex marriage by the end of 1996, and thirty-eight states in all passed statutes barring same-sex marriage or some broader prohibitions against same-sex relationships by 2004 (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2009). Returning to the argument that DOMA passage represented moral panic, Adam (2003) posits that an abatement of moral fervor typically follows hurried legislation made in response to such panics. Such abatement might be an explanation for the lull in reporting on same-sex marriage issues between 1997 and 2002. Additionally, empirical trends specifically relating to same-sex marriage rights in the international arena suggest that same-sex relationship recognition generally follows the establishment of human rights laws protecting against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Such human rights laws tend to follow the decriminalization of sodomy statutes penalizing sexual conduct between same-sex partners, particularly men (Adam 2003; Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel 1999; Waaldijk 2000).

I mention the empirical trends for two reasons. First, the unprecedented spike in reporting on gay marriage in 2003 could relate to a connection between the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision and the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment. While *Lawrence* was solely concerned with the decriminalization of intimate sexual behavior between consenting adults, it nonetheless had perceived implications on same-sex marriage. It is not possible to rely solely on *Lawrence* to make a constitutional case for same-sex marriage, but same-sex marriage advocates can look to the decision to make arguments that the state has substantive due process obligations to recognize such relationships (Ball 2004). Because of this perceived connection, if the sodomy decision sparked a sense of moral panic among opponents of same-sex marriage, or on the flip-side, if it bolstered a sense of rights entitlement among same-sex marriage proponents, then it might serve

to suggest an upswing in reporting on same-sex marriage issues because hegemonic marriage seemed particularly at risk.

Second, Adam (2003) suggests that movements may create moral or sex panic frames when they perceive weakening of the moral tenets that they hold most dear. Connection between moral panic framing and hegemony is important to consider. Without specifically identifying hegemonic marriage, Adam argues that asserting a moral panic frame requires empirically evaluating processes of hegemony formation. With regard to passage of DOMA, Adam describes decisions regarding granting legitimacy to same-sex relationships as struggles between “contending constituencies, wielding traditional and innovative rhetorics” (Adam 2003, 260). At stake in such struggles are understandings of concepts like race, gender, and sexuality, and what emerges in the end “pronounces on who is in control, who is the ‘other’” (Adam 2003, 261). Moral panic framing, therefore, may likely arise in situations of hegemonic transition, particularly when discourse around identities within and/or outside hegemonic marriage are discursively jockeying for some level of social position. In the following chapters, I pay close attention to whether movements deploy a moral panic frame with relation to same-sex marriage questions, including how contending constituencies construct the parameters of such a frame.

Trend #4: Reporting on traditional values. *Traditional values are a reporting issue in 1992.* “Traditional values” only appear in word frequency counts as one of the top yearly taglines during 1992. While one headline in 1992 suggests gay families as traditional – “Ozzie and Ozzie; What Americans Can Learn from Gay Families” (9/27/1992) – the majority of traditional family values articles seem driven by political reactions to a popular culture event: Vice President Dan Quayle’s attack on the loose morals of fictional sitcom character Murphy Brown. The controversy between Quayle and Candice Bergen the actress who portrayed Murphy Brown, amplified primarily because they occurred during an electoral season. Despite the fact that many Americans saw Quayle’s comments, and his pro-family values associates, as committing a major media faux

pas, family values arguments were not relegated to history's dustbin upon the election of President Bill Clinton (Stacey 1998).

Following Clinton's election, pro-family values rhetoric rebounded, primarily with the publication of a 1993 *Atlantic Magazine* article titled, "Dan Quayle was Right" (Stacey 1998). Activists in both TMM and the MM often laud the article, written by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, as a necessary spark to mobilize more interest in the preservation of marriage. For instance, one interview participant shared, "Barbara Whitehead's article in the *Atlantic Magazine* – are you aware of that? ... That got a buzz going in intellectual circles I would say, and it sort of ignited the debate" (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009). Headlines from *The Post* in early 1993 support the argument that Quayle's comments galvanized national discourse. Two headlines on opposing sides, for example, are "Quayle: Right on the Family" (3/24/1993) and "Why Dan Quayle is Still Wrong: Why the 'Two-Parent Paradigm' is No Guarantor of Happiness" (5/9/1993). Patricia Hill Collins (1998) hints at the impact of Quayle's comments when she states that the phrase "family values" appeared over 300 times in popular press headlines immediately following Quayle's speech.

In using feminist CDA, I must remain cognizant of the various guises in which pro-family values rhetoric may appear. Stacey (1996) argues that, for example, pro-family values rhetoric was evident in a number of policy actions of the mid-1990s. Such discourse ushered in the 1994 Republican Contract with America, as well as the 1996 passage of welfare reform intended to bolster two-parent married families (along with reductions in poverty, of course). Another pro-family policy example is the Family Reinforcement Act of 1996 that, through a number of mandates, had the goal of reinforcing "the central role of families in American Society" (US House of Representatives).

Trend #5: Reporting on policies. *Frequent policy language in headlines pertaining to marriage comes in vogue in 1996.* I mentioned a number of relevant policies thus far: DOMA, welfare reform, the Family Reinforcement Act, and the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment,

to name a few. Word frequency counts show an upswing in policy reporting beginning in 1996. The first three policies mentioned above occurred during that year. Stacey (1996) argues that pro-family policies of the mid-1990s were examples of reactions to a moral panic frame advanced by political elites. Historian Linda Gordon explains, “For at least 150 years, there have been periods of fear that ‘the family’ – meaning a popular image of what families were supposed to be like, by no means a correct recollection of any ‘traditional’ family – was in decline; and these fears have tended to escalate in periods of social stress” (1988, 3). Relevant social stressors leading up to the 1990s included economic and social transformations toward a postindustrial society, women working outside the home in unprecedented numbers, normalization of divorce, and the increasing prevalence of diverse and fluid family arrangements (Stacey 1996).

By the year 2000, political interest in children and families was at a 20-year high for policy makers, professionals, and the public. Moreover, this interest was not partisan (Bogenschneider 2000). In 1995, state legislators called family issues a “surefire vote winner” (State Legislative Leaders Foundation 1995). Additionally, Democrats rallied around a “Families First” banner in the 1996 presidential campaign, and both presidential hopefuls battled to be the family candidate (Bogenschneider 2000; Rosenberg and Limber 1996). This textual newspaper analysis enables me to identify the heightened period of pro-family policy as a potential punctuating event, but applying feminist CDA in the following chapters will help me discern whether this pro-family policy rally indeed reflected changes in hegemonic marriage. Again, remember that the point of this chapter is not to make definitive conclusions about shifts in hegemonic marriage because, frankly, not enough information is yet available. A shift in hegemony can only come about as the result of actors discursively engaging with each other, and CDA provides the insights I need to understand implications of the movement perception-hegemonic process link. For example, at this point pro-family policy positioning could be a shift back toward hegemonic marriage, or perhaps a moral panic reaction to changes away from it, including the perceived threat of same-sex marriage. Of course, it is also possible that pro-family

policy discourse was all political pandering and strategy with little real connection to how people discursively treated family or the role of marriage in society. Feminist CDA helps me untangle the influence of elite policy discourse in favor of state interventions in marriage from framing positions of movements and general pulse of the American public. The following trend, reporting on welfare, provides an in-depth look into factors relevant to one particular policy area.

Trend #6: Reporting on welfare. *Headline reporting about welfare is pertinent in 2002.*

Reporting on welfare and marriage trended in 2002, the year that marks the inception of President George W. Bush's Healthy Marriage Initiative. In his new administration, Bush appointed Wade Horn, the founder and director of the nonprofit National Fatherhood Initiative, as assistant director of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). In 2001, Bush and Horn announced that strengthening marriage would be one of nine ACF priorities (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center 2008). While these developments were underway, refer back to Table 4. 1 to see that marriage reporting as a whole was down in *The Post*. In 2002 the top trending marriage-related taglines only occur eleven times, as compared to 51 times in 2000

Interestingly, same-sex marriage issues did not account for the higher frequency in policy reporting in 2000. Rather, stories about "marriage penalty" tax relief sought in Congress dominated the headlines. By 2002, reporting on marriage was still subdued, but the primary policy focus shifted from tax penalties to welfare reform. Policy headlines noting this shift include, "Welfare: New Plans, Old Budget; Bush to Stress Marriage Promotion, Job Aid" (2/7/2002) and "Tying Marriage Vows to Welfare Reform; White House Push for State Strategies to Promote Family Ignites Dispute" (4/1/2002). While Bush introduced welfare reform legislation to secure the link between marriage promotion and poverty relief, ACF used several existing vehicles in various governmental offices serving families and children to explore how encouraging marriage could strengthen families. This was the inception of the Healthy Marriage Initiative.

The proposed welfare legislation link to marriage was not without controversy, as the latter headline above suggests. Despite the introduction of a TANF reauthorization bill in 2002, such legislation did not pass until February 2006 as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Initial controversy over the bill had extensive coverage in the *The Post*, but final passage of the legislation did not receive mention within the parameters of my marriage-driven search terms. Such uneven reporting may indicate that by 2006, the focus on a state/marriage link was no longer relevant, or perhaps same-sex marriage concerns over-powered the link. Feminist CDA will help illuminate the tempo of discursive interest in state marriage initiatives, and their effects on the Marriage Movement (MM).

The legislation that ultimately passed in 2006 established a new grants program for the promotion of healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood. The law authorized an appropriation of up to \$150 million per year for fiscal years 2006 through 2010 - \$100 million per year for healthy marriage programs and up to \$50 million per year for responsible fatherhood programs (Fein and Ooms 2006). These two policy tenets came to be closely associated with the MM in perception and practice. Those in favor of state involvement cited reasons arguing that marriage is better for children and for the health and wealth of married partners. Opponents, on the other hand, felt that the state/marriage link played squarely into the hands of pro-family values rhetoric. A concern for the opposition was that marriage promotion policies and closely related responsible fatherhood initiatives causally link poor women's intimate decisions about the conditions of their families to poverty. Opponents were primarily feminists who argued that such policies additionally extended the power of the government to compel poor mothers according to moral prescriptions of hegemonic marriage (Mink 2002). While these controversies are well documented in academic literature, discursive effects of movement and elite framing relating to hegemonic marriage are not readily apparent. In conducting feminist CDA, a detached assessment of what the general public and movement leaders were hearing and how they synthesized that information in relation to hegemonic marriage will be important.

Trend #7: Reporting on prohibitions. *Language about banning/prohibiting within the context of marriage is prevalent in 2006.* The year 2006 brought with it an upswing in headline language devoted to prohibition or bans relating to marriage. Two events contributed to this trend. First, a second attempt at a Constitutional ban, now known as the Marriage Protection Amendment, was underway and supported by President Bush, as evident in the headline “Bush Re-enters Gay Marriage Fight; Two Speeches Set Pressing Senate to Vote for a Ban,” (6/3/2006). The Massachusetts *Goodrich* decision reignited the flames for a Constitutional ban, and then that fire became a full-on blaze with the Supreme Court’s decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (Colby 2008). Colby states:

Lawrence and *Goodrich* added an element of urgency to the perceived need to use the constitutional amendment process to preempt a judicial declaration of a constitutional right to gay unions. In the first month after the *Lawrence* decision, the [Federal Marriage Amendment] gained fifty new cosponsors, tripling its prior support and propelling it to the forefront of the congressional agenda. The gay marriage debate in Congress had begun (Colby 2008, 541).

Yet the original Constitutional amendment did not go anywhere, largely because of ambiguity in its wording regarding the rights of states to recognize civil unions. The ambiguity made it difficult for amendment proponents to garner the support of both social conservatives and moderate Republicans who tended to be far apart on the question of civil unions (Colby 2008). The headlines also recognize such ambiguity: “Little Consensus on Marriage Amendment; Even Authors Disagree on the Meaning of its Text” (2/14/2004). Opponents were eventually successful in killing the amendment in a Senate vote of fifty to forty-eight during July 2004 (“Gay Marriage Ban Fails in Senate, 7/13/2004).

The Marriage Protection Amendment was attempt number two at essentially the same thing – naming marriage as a union between a man and a woman, as well as ambiguously circumventing the question of civil unions and domestic partnerships. The amendment in new

guise was introduced in the House of Representatives two months after the Senate defeat of the first ban attempt (Colby 2008). The proposed amendment failed a rushed floor vote just seven days later (“House Rejects Same-Sex Marriage Ban,” 10/1/2004), but some argue that the rushed treatment was actually a political ploy to help Republican incumbents and challengers in the 2004 election (Colby 2008). A day after the election, Focus on the Family’s James Dobson made another call for a federal amendment. Karl Rove answered his call by saying that the President would renew his resolve for marriage constitutional protections (Colby 2008). The amendment was again reintroduced as the Marriage Protection Amendment in the Senate in 2005, and debate continued in subcommittees in 2006 until it was finally defeated in the Senate during a procedural vote (“Same-sex Marriage Ban is Defeated; Supporters Knew Senate Passage was a Long Shot,” 6/18/2006). When Democrats gained a majority in both chambers in the 2006 congressional elections, the amendment finally dropped from the legislative agenda (Colby 2008).

Second, while 2006 saw the final defeat (for now) of a constitutional amendment, another type of attack on same-sex rights was occurring at the state level: ballot referenda for constitutional bans of same-sex marriage. During 2004, 2005, and the first half of 2006, for example, voters in sixteen states endorsed anti- same-sex marriage amendments (Keck 2009). Headlines in *The Post* address a broad array of these prohibitions. Some examples include: “Ohio Gay Marriage Initiative Roils Skeptics; Some See Conservatives Pushing Bans in Close States to Spur Turnout for Bush” (5/1/2004); “Corzine Defeats Forrester to Become NJ Governor; Bloomberg Wins Easily; Texas Passes Gay-Marriage Ban” (11/9/2005); and “Gay Marriage Ban Advances Toward Va. Referendum; Md. Lawmakers Offer Similar Bill” (1/26/2006). Klarman (2005) points out that these sixteen state bans passed by large electoral margins – the median vote share for the ballot proposals was 73.4 percent.

Function of Identifying Trends

The purpose of this chapter is solely to identify potentially significant punctuating events. In subsequent chapters, I use textual insights and punctuating patterns to assess whether socio-

political events are relevant in how movements negotiate hegemonic marriage across time. One certain conclusion, however, is that a fairly constant or common-sense notion of “traditional” marriage, “family values” is present both implicitly and explicitly throughout my newspaper headline analysis. Application of the ethic index code, however, shows that some discursive trends regarding marriage may be more subjected to contention than others. I expect that the more contentious discursive trends and events will be the ones most likely to precipitate new or renewed frames or framing strategies, and thus alter how movements deal with hegemonic marriage.

I anticipate the punctuating events surrounding same-sex marriage in 2003 to be particularly relevant for movement framing decisions. The same-sex marriage debate illustrates an almost even split between headlines coded in support of or in opposition to hegemonic marriage tenets. (As a counterpoint, 86 percent of headlines adhering to the subject code of “marriage skills” were also coded as supportive of hegemonic marriage. Only 4 percent of marriage skills headlines were coded as oppositional to hegemonic marriage.) Secondary empirical evidence such as research on trends in divorce attitudes and behaviors in the late 1970s and early 1980s, pro-family discursive trends in the early 1990s, and the latter establishment of a marriage/state link in various policy mandates suggest a degree of popular consensus regarding characteristics of the “traditional family.” Such a common understanding of the traditional family exists despite the fact that many Americans’ romantic lives are far-removed from such an ideal. Yet even with evidence of popular hegemonic marriage alignment, approximately half of all headlines relating to same-sex marriage do not discursively support key tenets of the hegemonic marriage. This fact is suggestive of hegemonic contention, and lends me to mark it as a potentially relevant punctuating event in shaping movement framing.

I use the seven trends of marriage headline reporting to assess discursive effects of hegemonic marriage in the following chapters. Textual analysis is only the first step in identifying how shifts in hegemonic marriage trends affect the discursive choices of movement leaders.

1 shows a timeline of the punctuating events identified through the textual analysis in this chapter.

Table 1: Timeline of significant marriage-related events, 1985-2007

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Event</u>
1979-1987	U.S. divorce rates leveled off
1990	Census
1991	Responsible Fatherhood Movement begins campaign against “deadbeat dads”
1992	Vice President Dan Quayle condemns Murphy Brown; Presidential election
1993	<i>Baehr v. Lewin</i> Hawaii Supreme Court decision; Publication of the article “Dan Quayle was Right” in the <i>Atlantic</i>
1994	Republicans’ <i>Contract with America</i>
1996	Passage of welfare reform legislation leading to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Family Reinforcement Act, and the Defense of Marriage Act
1997	Covenant marriage begins in Louisiana
2001	President George W. Bush announces that marriage is a priority of the Administration for Children and Families
2002	Launch of President Bush’s Healthy Marriage Initiative
2003	<i>Goodrich v. Department of Health</i> Massachusetts Supreme Court decision; <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> U.S. Supreme Court decision; introduction of the Federal Marriage Amendment
2004-2006	16 states endorse anti- same-sex marriage constitutional amendments
2004	Defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment; San Francisco mayor issues same-sex marriage licenses
2006	TANF reauthorization with the Deficit Reduction Act of 1995 provides funding for healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs; Marriage Protection Amendment introduced and later defeated

While Table 1 provides a glimpse into the social practices surrounding marriage from 1985 to 2007, I am reluctant to say that it is comprehensive. Remember that headline authors find themselves embedded within discourse as well. Such authors use their understandings of the

socio-cultural arena to optimize headline relevance as they perceive the needs and positions of their target audiences. As such, it is possible that word frequency counts only reflect the orientations of specific discursive agents, and do not adequately reflect larger trends in social or discursive practice. Feminist CDA helps me decipher the discursive importance of messages relating to hegemonic marriage, and subsequently allows me to assess how shifts in hegemonic marriage influence social movement framing.

CHAPTER 5: THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY MOVEMENT

This chapter uses feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistic (CL) analysis to assess longitudinal framing choices of the Marriage Equality Movement (MEM). Because of the dominance of same-sex marriage rights discourse since 2003, I start my movement-specific analysis with the MEM. By focusing first on what the fuss is all about, I can more efficiently contextualize proactive and reactive framing decisions of the movements. I analyze the MEM in this chapter, and move to the traditional marriage movement (TMM) and the Marriage Movement (MM), respectively, in chapters 6 and 7.

I begin with careful study of online movement materials from the mid- to late-1990s proceeding to the present. I also closely evaluate interview data with movement organization leaders from five SMOs. I consider these insights in relation to those gleaned regarding punctuating events potentially relevant to how shifts in hegemony may affect social movement framing. Such analysis suggests that the year 2003 marked a significant shift in movement framing. This is perhaps to be expected given my prior discussion of coding *The Washington Post* headlines with the ethic index during that time period. Coding indicated an almost even split between headlines in support of hegemonic marriage and those in opposition. Such a split suggests a time period in which hegemonic marriage was potentially in flux, likely because of events like the *Lawrence v. Texas* sodomy decision, the Federal Marriage Amendment, and the marriage equality victory in Massachusetts with the *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* decision. This time period presented an opportunity to the nascent marriage equality movement to hone their framing strategies in order to better access “middle” or “persuadable” Americans who were on the fence regarding the same-sex marriage issue, or who did not yet have it on their radar. The MEM wanted their messages to be as persuasive as possible in a time they likely saw as a critical juncture in swaying hearts and minds of Americans.

Textual analysis of web content of two key marriage equality movement organizations – Freedom to Marry and the Human Rights Campaign – indicate that a civil rights frame predominated very early in the movement’s history. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the movement already recognized that language choices and framing would be important factors contributing to success or failure in achieving marriage as a civil right. This recognition was largely manifest in the use of three framing strategies: first, denying claims of trying to “redefine marriage;” second, making overtures to civil rights and past success in overcoming marriage discrimination among different social groups; and third, placing emphasis on the importance of sharing personal narratives to convey that same-sex relationships are similar, or even the same in many aspects, as heterosexual relationships. The latter strategy has become much more prevalent in recent years, even to the point that activists are encouraged to downplay or refrain from using rights-based language. Even though “equality” remains the purpose of the movement, many advocates today pursue a framing strategy of using narratives to personally connect with movement targets. The hope is that once “middle” Americans recognize similarities between same-sex couples and their own relationships, they will advocate for parallel civil rights without requiring MEM activists to make the rights link explicit.

An important implication of the shift away from overtures to civil rights and equality toward personal narratives stressing similarities to heterosexual couples is that it marked a shift in how the movement conceptualized its relationship to hegemonic marriage as well. Early MEM civil rights discourse suggested counter-hegemonic tendencies in a variety of ways. First, some frames evoked anti-establishment sentiments that delinked the institution of marriage from avenues of disciplinary power (recall that one of the tools of hegemony is policing). An example is the argument that marriage is an individual choice – it is not a function of the state to sanction choice of one’s marital partner. Second, some frames explicitly argued for the need to transition from a repressive understanding of marriage to a new progressive reality. Finally, early frames demonstrated acceptance of trends of sexual liberalization and less rigid gender roles. These

trends were evident in an update by Evan Wolfson in September 1997 on the Freedom to Marry website. Wolfson stated, “Updating marriage to reflect the reality of today’s families is a long-term process. . . . This is just one phase of a long-term civil rights movement” (Lambda Legal 1997). Wolfson acknowledged changing dynamics in American marriages away from the hegemonic ideal, and made an argument for “updating” marriage as a key step to achieve new civil rights for same-sex couples. Acceptance of non-nuclear, non-patriarchal family forms and being open to changing the marriage institution can be read as oppositional to hegemonic marriage or even as counter-hegemonic.

Some gay and lesbian rights activists argued prior to the punctuating events of 2003 (and even still today) that having access to marriage could change the institution. See Table 2 below for two illustrative examples. It is, however, debatable whether such activists actually represent the marriage equality movement or a liberation-based gay rights movement with roots stretching back to the Stonewall Riots. For such activists, basing social critique and arguments about empowerment on their marginalized identity was strategic. They could argue that legal access to marriage for same-sex couples had revolutionary and radical potential because they believed that their gay and lesbian identities, by their very nature, confronted the values, categories and practices of dominant culture (Bernstein 1997). Radical and revolutionary discourse to such a degree, however, is not apparent in MEM statements or literature. Documents hint at revolution as a promising result of gaining access to new civil rights, but the implications of revolution are never discursively vetted.

In reality, marriage equality holds great promise to change common-sense understandings of marriage by challenging hegemonic marriage. In practice, ramifications of normalizing same-sex marriage could be huge. For example, it is possible to imagine less cultural rigidity when considering the definition of a *normal* marriage. Building a “new normal” could have transformative potential for any member of society historically on the wrong side of the normal dividing line – cohabitators, single mothers, divorced parents, and more. Accepting the normalcy

of single mothers and other stigmatized non-marital or unmarried identities could challenge gender norms by default. The *same sex-ness* of the MEM is its greatest counter-hegemonic attribute. Taking the wind out of marriage's heteronormative sails holds the most transformative potential for MEM discourse.

Table 2. Examples of MEM counter-hegemonic marriage rhetoric prior to 2003

<u>Examples of Counter-hegemonic Marriage Rhetoric</u>	<u>Source</u>
<p>"A middle ground might be to fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, to demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society's moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution."</p>	<p>Michelangelo Signorile, "Bridal Wave," <i>OUT magazine</i>, December/January 1994, p. 161</p>
<p>"[E]nlarging the concept to embrace same-sex couples would necessarily transform it into something new ... Extending the right to marry to gay people – that is, abolishing the traditional gender requirements of marriage – can be one of the means, perhaps the principal one, through which the institution divests itself of the sexist trappings of the past."</p>	<p>Mayor's Task Force on Policy, "Approaching 2000: Meeting the Challenges to San Francisco's Families," <i>The Final Report of the Mayor's Task Force on Family Policy, City and County of San Francisco</i>, June 13, 1990, p. 1</p>

However, in order to recognize the transformative potential of same-sex marriage, the MEM must discursively acknowledge that marriage equality will likely change the very fabric of the marriage institution. Detailed analysis of MEM documents suggests that the movement is leery of acknowledging such change as desirable, or even possible. Instead, the MEM relies on discourses of similarity and sameness to minimize opponents' impact. Arguments levied against the MEM that same-sex marriage will change or redefine the institution are consistently challenged by the movement. Discourse analysis implies that the MEM believes that the "institutional change" frame gravely threatens their ability to persuade "middle" Americans. Thus, the shift from overt civil rights framing to personal narratives of similarity and sameness

effectively undermines the movement's revolutionary potential. This shift represents a pendulum swing away from counter-hegemonic discourse right back to hegemonic marriage.

Implications of a shift away from counter-hegemonic potential in MEM framing are two-fold. First, the process of embracing more mainstream conceptions of marriage illustrates the interdiscursive nature of framing in fields of contention. Interdiscursivity signifies that discourses are linked to one another in various important ways (Reisigl and Wodak 2009). For example, early frames suggesting revolutionary potential for same-sex marriage rights sampled discourse that emanated from gay liberation and civil rights movements of a different time and place. MEM rights-based frames were initially deployed in a field of contention marked by marriage politics – a largely conservative field developed within the last fifty years to protect the traditional institution of marriage against damaging elements of sexual liberalization. The MEM, therefore, entered into the field of marriage politics mid-conversation. Over time, greater understanding of how hegemonic marriage shaped the field of contention and the influence of various punctuating events encouraged the MEM to reframe key messages. This process is one marked by interdiscursivity, involving recognition of the discursive elements that initially shaped the field of marriage politics and determining which aspects of such discourse the MEM should strategically access to better achieve their overall movement aims.

Examining the interrelated nature of cultural hegemony and interdiscursive processes in social framing is an empirical contribution of this research project. Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010) argues that interdiscursivity has important implications for social practice and is central in understanding processes of social change (Wu 2011). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) further describe pervasive interdiscursivity as a significant characteristic of postmodern social life marked by a radical unsettling of boundaries (Wu 2011). For the case of marriage politics, I theorize “unsettling of boundaries” as an opportunity for hegemonic contestation. This means, for instance, that periods where old taken-for-granted concepts relating to marriage appear less certain – the procreative purpose of the institution, the social meanings of the identities of

husbands and wives, for example – likely represent times of hegemonic transition. At such times, SMOs likely gain much by sampling hegemonic and other discourses, and resulting interdiscursivity becomes a major motivator in social change. The presence of high degrees of interdiscursivity in social movement framing indicates that the influence of hegemony as a “common-sense” construct is in flux (Gramsci 1971). This directs research attention to how SMOs determine the salience of different discursive strands in their framing.

The second implication of a shift away from counter-hegemonic potential in MEM framing is a conceivable impact on sexual citizenship. Devising a “new normal” through legal recognition of same-sex relationships does not necessarily eradicate stigma – it may merely shift the line. To examine this issue, I primarily assess arguments from a “beyond marriage” perspective. I do this through evaluating interview data from a representative of the Family Equality Council, as well as CL analysis of documents from the SMO Unmarried Equality. MEM frames make the argument that accessing marriage rights will mean that gays and lesbians are no longer second-class citizens. My analysis in this chapter questions whether such a presupposition is likely true.

Textual Analysis (Description) of MEM Web Corpus

Using the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, I evaluate two organizations—Freedom to Marry and the Human Rights Campaign—to provide context of how MEM messaging developed and shifted over the course of time. While I talked with interview representatives for both social movement organizations, these SMOs are good candidates for additional internet analysis for two specific reasons. First, Evan Wolfson is the founder and President of Freedom to Marry, and he is generally attributed as the framing force behind the MEM. As an interviewee stated, he is the “architect and guru” of the movement (Human Rights Campaign, personal communication, March 3, 2009). Second, I choose the Human Rights Campaign because it is the largest LGBT rights organization in the United States. Both of these organizations are top-down and staff-driven. They are not true grassroots SMOs. I use insights from interviews with MEM grassroots

representatives such as Marriage Equality U.S.A, however, to check against prioritizing this more institutionalized model. Using interview data in this way helps me determine whether framing trends are generalizable at the movement level and ring true for institutionalized and grassroots organizations alike.

The early years – Building a movement. Freedom to Marry (FTM) traces its inception to the Freedom to Marry Coalition, a project associated with the work of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund active in the mid- to late-1990s. Lambda Legal played a large role in laying the groundwork for the marriage equality movement to emerge. Following the 1993 Hawaii ruling, Lambda established the Marriage Project to coordinate the legal and political groundwork for winning marriage equality. The Project was intended to be a place for marriage equality advocacy, to work with co-counsel to prepare for the appeal to the Hawaii Supreme Court in *Baehr v. Miike*, as well as to serve as a clearinghouse for research, information, and contacts. A coalition of organizations was called to join “this landmark civil rights battle” (Lambda Legal 1997). The FTM Coalition that emerged was intended to be committed to coordinated public education and political organizing “to fight the inevitable state-by-state backlash against the recognition of same-sex marriages” (Lambda Legal 1997).

Professionalization of the MEM truly began to take shape after the initial Hawaii case. Evan Wolfson remarked in 1995, “national lesbian/gay groups and key others are now meeting monthly (a first!) – with every group now committed to coordinating and devoting resources to work on marriage nationwide” (Wolfson 1999). Some of these organizations were nationally organized, whereas others represented grassroots efforts. Both types, according to Wolfson, were critical (Wolfson 1999).

A “Marriage Resolution” was drafted within the FTM Coalition to promote discussion and organize first principles. As of August 1995, there were nearly two hundred signatories. While I was unable to find an original copy, internet content indicates that the text of the Marriage Resolution changed in reaction to insights gained from public opinion research.

Research showed that a third of Americans were already supportive of same-sex marriage, and another third seemed reachable. The new text of the Resolution was designed to access that middle audience:

Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice, Resolved—the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage (American Psychoanalytic Association, para. 3).

Establishing a civil rights master frame. The goal of the FTM Coalition was two-fold at the beginning. First, the coalition was committed to state-by-state political organizing. Second, the coalition focused on public education, so that “people can have a greater understanding of real-life gay and lesbian families and how we are harmed by being denied the freedom to marry” (Lambda Legal 1997). Very early on it was apparent that the FTM Coalition and the marriage equality movement more broadly used a civil rights frame to propel its organizing forward. For example, Evan Wolfson contributed an article to the FTM Coalition website titled, “The Freedom to Marry: Eyes on the Prize” (Wolfson 1999). Wolfson reflected on the passage of DOMA and lamented the loss of equality represented by the legislation. Wolfson talked strategy framed in civil rights language to embolden the American public and move forward with their mission:

We must seize this historic moment of public engagement to reach out to non-gay people. We must reject opponents’ efforts, as well as the ambivalence, denial, or timidity of those within our own movement, who wish to avoid this battle and moment. As Martin Luther King, Jr. reminds us, “In this Revolution, no plans have been written for retreat. Those who will not get into step will find that the parade has passed them by” (Wolfson 1999).

Representatives of the incipient MEM demonstrated concern about the importance of choosing appropriate language and consistently framing their messages across the movement. A “Movement Q&A” prepared by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) offers insights into some of the movement’s early definitional choices. First, marriage was not

viewed as comparable to a domestic partnership, primarily because benefits associated with the latter were contingent and “not a substitute for the freedom to marry” (GLAAD 1999). Second, the movement recognized that marriage is traditionally defined as a union between men and women, but offered this rejoinder:

Yes, but at different times marriages were also “traditionally” defined as unions between people of the same race, the same religion, and as unions in which wives were the property of their husbands. As recently as the 1960s, state governments denied interracial couples the right to marry. Today, we realize that the choice of a marriage partner belongs to each man or woman, not the state (GLAAD 1999).

Third, the movement denied that marriage is really about procreation, stating that family composition choice belongs to the couple, not to government or religious institutions. They further stated that “marriage is better understood as being about commitment” (GLAAD 1999). Finally, on the question of whether marriage is a civil or religious institution, the answer was both. While some religious institutions perform same-sex marriage ceremonies, the MEM battle was and is about the freedom to have a civil marriage license issued by the state. They qualified their statement that marriage is about commitment by stating its public nature, “Legally, marriage is best understood as a relationship of emotional and financial interdependence between two people who make a public commitment” (GLAAD 1999).

The HRC further bolstered the importance of choosing correct language with the release of *A Basic Human Right: Talking About Gay Marriage* in 1999. They touted the publication as “A Guide for Organizers, Candidates and Public Speakers.” The guide was strategy for reaching “middle” Americans, an obvious target of the MEM. HRC Executive Director, Elizabeth Birch wrote in the guide’s preface, “But when fair-minded Americans understand the widespread problem of anti-gay discrimination, they support equal rights for gay and lesbian people” (HRC 1999). The “fair-minded” language echoed in my interviews with MEM activists a

decade after the publication of the guide, a testament to the longevity of the movement's strategies and messaging.

The HRC guide content resulted from the first major public polling research done on a "gay issue," and offered specific persuasive words and phrases for activists to use. To "set the stage," the guide suggested stressing that "gay and lesbian people living in America today are not protected from discrimination and are denied the most basic rights under the law." The next step after increasing awareness over the dearth of rights of lesbian and gay people was to pursue practical steps in "framing the issue." Two prongs suggested by the HRC were that marriage is a human right, and that marriage is an "individual personal decision" (HRC 1999). The "Key Terms to Use" for the HRC were "basic human right," "personal decision," "individuals, not government, should decide," "rights and responsibilities of marriage," and "no government interference" (HRC 1999).

Gaining momentum. New directions were apparent in the nascent MEM beginning in the early 2000s. When clicking on the November 2, 2001 FTM Coalition internet archive snapshot, the following message appeared: "This site is the future home of the Freedom to Marry Collaborative." Further research uncovered an explanation for the FTM Coalition's new move. In an interview in *The Advocate*, Wolfson suggested that coalition reorganization was pursued in anticipation of the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment because it marked a pivotal moment in national conversations about same-sex marriage. The MEM had to be poised to control the terms of ensuing debate. Wolfson's vision for the new Collaborative was bold:

We can seize the terms of the debate, tell our diverse stories, engage the nongay persuadable public, enlist allies, work the courts and the legislatures in several states, and achieve a legal breakthrough within five years. I'm talking about not just any legal breakthrough but an actual change in the law of at least one state, ending discrimination in civil marriage and permitting same-sex couples to lawfully wed. This won't just be a

change in the law either; it will be a change in society. For if we do it right, the struggle to win the freedom to marry will bring much more along the way (Wolfson 2001).

The new chapter was marked by the establishment of a new Freedom to Marry organization. FTM was part of a “successful civil rights movement,” and Wolfson stressed that it would move forward by setting affirmative goals, pursuing sustained strategies, and enlisting new allies and resources (Wolfson 2001). For the MEM at this point in time, the “we” of the movement was:

... key organizations in key battleground states working in partnership; a national resource center doing what is best done centrally; talented and dedicated individuals who bring new resources and new focus to the table; existing and new national groups prioritizing real work on marriage; and most critically, nongay allies (Wolfson 2001).

FTM’s new blueprint for winning marriage equality rights was straightforward: “win the freedom to marry in at least one state within the next five years” (FTM 2004). The definition of civil marriage was highly individualized: “Civil marriage is a powerful and important affirmation of love, a source of social recognition and support, and the legal gateway to a vast array of protections, responsibilities, and benefits, most of which cannot be replicated in any other form” (FTM 2004).

As the battle against marriage equality picked up in 2003 with success in Massachusetts, FTM addressed more energy toward distinguishing the difference between marriage and civil unions. The basic argument is that civil unions do not confer the same social power as the institution of marriage. Civil unions are always marked as something different and less important reserved for a non-normative group of sexual minorities. Even if civil unions afford the same legal rights as marriage with regard to issues like health care, benefits, adoption, etc., they do not afford the same social rights. Marriage equality advocates maintain that endorsing civil unions is essentially a “separate but equal” type of argument that will always perpetuate LGBT exclusions and relegate them to second-class citizens. This continuing conversation serves as a reminder of

the perceived power of the word “marriage,” and the social and cultural baggage that it carries. Wolfson addressed the issue of civil unions versus marriage by stating “one of the major ‘protections’ of marriage is the word ‘marriage,’ a statement so important that most married people wear it on their ring finger” (FTM 2004).

The new majority. An early strategy pursued by both FTM and the HRC was telling personal stories to build allied support. The types of stories viewed as most persuasive shifted over time. A 1999 HRC document, for example, suggested powerful narratives that solely dealt with the inability of gay and lesbian couples to have hospital visitation and care and guardianship rights in the instance of a serious illness or incapacitation of their partner (HRC 1999). Such problems could easily be remedied by granting civil unions, however. Nothing about them suggested the necessity of *marriage*. Newer strategies of talk included reframing family values language to find common ground with “middle” Americans as well as personalized tales of love, responsibility and commitment to one’s partner and the family unit.

A 2004 HRC article, for example, attempted to reframe American values away from potentially religious interpretations by stating that “the real tradition in this country has been to pass laws to safeguard the American people and to expand laws where they leave citizens unprotected.” To bolster connections with the nascent majority, the HRC continued the tactic of personalizing stories of gay and lesbian people such that they were *no different* from anyone else: “Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people grow up dreaming of falling in love, getting married and growing old together. Just as much as the next person, same-sex couples should be able to fulfill that dream” (HRC 2004). FTM also tried to distill the same-sex marriage battle to a question of basic, shared values in order to gain traction with the elusive middle. In 2007, the FTM website identified shared values as “love, commitment, fairness, and freedom” (FTM 2007).

Despite efforts to build allied support and put forth narratives of the synonymous nature of same-sex relationships and those of the reachable middle, perception that the MEM was trying to “change the definition of marriage” persisted. Again, Wolfson stressed, “Ending the exclusion

of gay people from marriage would not change the ‘definition’ of marriage, but it would remove a discriminatory barrier from the path of people who have made a personal commitment to each other and are now ready and willing to take on the responsibilities and legal commitment of marriage” (FTM 2007).

A *Huffington Post* article written by Evan Wolfson in February 2008 and posted on the FTM website continued to stress that the MEM wanted *marriage*, not a redefinition or a different institution:

Phrases such as "gay marriage" or "same-sex marriage" imply that same-sex couples are asking for something other than marriage. They imply that same-sex couples deserve something different or lesser than the security, protections, safety-net, and respect that married couples cherish. And they play into the right-wing's fear-mongering that gay people are a threat to marriage, that equality and inclusion would somehow unacceptably "redefine" the law (in a country dedicated to those very values), and that "Defense of Marriage" is the answer to committed couples seeking to participate in a precious institution (Wolfson 2008).

Despite these terminology troubles, however, the *Huffington Post* echoed earlier HRC claims that marriage equality is on the way to majority support. Achieving the next level of success hinged on how people talked about the marriage equality struggle. The article stated, “Imagine the rate of progress we could see if people understood this not as creating ‘gay marriage,’ but, rather, ending the denial of the ‘freedom to marry’ and letting couples committed to one another in life share the legal commitment of marriage” (Wolfson 2008).

By 2010, there was an even more pronounced focus on individual advocacy, sharing narratives, and trying to change the minds and hearts of friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors about why marriage equality matters. FTM characterized the general public in terms of people who “genuinely want to do the right thing, they just need help to work through the conflicts they are experiencing” (FTM 2010). While they did not spell out the nature of likely

“conflicts” for the average middle-American, FTM suggested strategies for a successful conversation:

- 1) Create an emotional connection by emphasizing common ground – think of key words they used in talking about marriage, like love, commitment, sharing a life together.
- 2) Illustrate the concrete harms of being shut out of marriage.
- 3) Affirm people’s desire to do the right thing (FTM 2010).

With each of these talking point strategies, there was a clear shift away from the legal rights and personal benefits focus of MEM efforts in the past. For example, FTM described marriage as being about “committed couples who want to make a lifelong promise to take care of and be responsible for each other” and suggested emphasizing personal stories that showed that “tradition is important in our family” (FTM 2010). FTM also addressed religiously based objections in a new way. Beyond saying that churches will not be forced to perform religious marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples, they also stated that “people can have different beliefs and still treat everyone fairly. That’s why our constitution exists – to protect everyone equally, including minorities.” Finally, FTM continued to stress what *not* to do, including talking about “gay marriage” as if a new type of marriage is being created or that marriage is being “redefined.” FTM also stressed, in direct opposition to their previous messaging to not “focus on ‘rights’ or ‘benefits’ – most people don’t think about marriage this way” (FTM 2010).

Web corpus textual analysis suggests that the narrative one-on-one approach, coupled with a move away from rights-based benefits to interpersonal responsibility and commitment, seems to be the strategy and message *du jour*. This does not mean that the civil rights master frame has gone away. In 2012, the FTM website included both – it draws “on the history of other social justice movements in the United States” and pursues a strategy to grow and diversify the “national majority for marriage.” FTM now cites statistics that indicate that a majority of Americans support marriage equality, and using the *Loving v. Virginia* anti-miscegenation case as

a yardstick, shows that movement opposition is far less than the 70% of Americans who opposed interracial marriage in 1967. The new strategy is clear: “Freedom to Marry has tested the most effective messages to move hearts and minds, and through national public education and one-on-one conversations, we’re adding more supporters to the growing majority for marriage each year” (FTM 2012).

Textual Analysis (Description) of MEM Interview Corpus

Textual analysis of movement documents, on the other hand, easily lends itself to frame identification. The three primary MEM frames are 1) a commitment to naming same-sex marriage as “marriage,” so as to avoid accusations of trying to redefine the marriage institution; 2) a civil rights master frame; and 3) an attempt to equivocate the experiences of same-sex and heterosexual relationships using terms like love, responsibility, and commitment. Keeping these in mind, textual analysis of the interview corpus will provide greater insight into how SMOs arrive at the point where such collective action frames are discernible. Whereas the internet corpus focused my attention at the meso level – evaluating alternative movement frames and the factors that influenced them as SMOs engage with each other – the interview corpus functions at the micro level. By paying attention to the details of movement framing processes, I am better positioned to understand how such practices can promote or resist hegemonic marriage perspectives.

Grassroots versus staff-driven SMOs. There are three types of SMOs active in the field of marriage politics: grassroots organizations, staff-driven organizations, and the Freedom to Marry. FTM is its own creature because of the role that it plays as a clearinghouse for information, frame generator, and fund re-grantor. An interviewee from Marriage Equality U.S.A. (MEUSA) attempted to describe their role by saying, “I think what Freedom to Marry brings to the table is an overview” (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009). The epitome of a staff-driven organization is

the Human Rights Campaign, and grassroots efforts are truly encapsulated by the work of MEUSA and other volunteer based organizations. The interviewee from MEUSA further explained:

I think in any movement leaning in the social justice area, we have two kinds of organizations. The first are centrally managed, staff-driven organizations. ... [T]he real impetus of what they're doing comes out of the central staff. ... These kinds of organizations have the capacity to focus very tightly, to maintain tight control over their activities, and frankly, to raise a lot of money. They can make very effective approaches to their donor base. The second kinds of organizations are grassroots, volunteer driven organizations. ... The volunteer driven organizations tend to be much more ... attuned to the members' positions, needs, and desires. Much more responsive. ... And you know a volunteer organization – basically things happen when you get a champion (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009).

The distinction between staff-driven and grassroots organizations plays out on three levels: their internal organization, their flexibility and scope, and their primary strategies of getting the word out. First with regard to internal organization, the experiences of Create Equality, a now-defunct, Pennsylvania-based upstart grassroots SMO, suggest much infighting and general lack of an agreed framework for action among small grassroots organizations operating at the local level:

[L]ast weekend... basically we had a summit meeting to find a way to use technology to bring all of these groups together because, oh my God, you have no idea. Coming into this, and the infighting and baloney that goes on in these groups – it's so wasteful. There's so much energy in these groups and time wasted when one group ... won't come to the marriage protests because they have issues that aren't being addressed. It's so sad (Create Equality, personal communication, February 3, 2009).

Even though such local grassroots organizations are still figuring out how to work together, their goals align with movement messaging (“It’s the equality awareness revolution”), even perhaps unwittingly. I say unwittingly here because in the course of my conversation with the representative from Create Equality, it became apparent that Freedom to Marry only recently appeared on the radar for their organization:

I just learned of them on Saturday. I didn’t know what they were all about. Now I know that it’s one guy, Evan Wolfson, who is kind of the show and there’s plenty of money to fund him going around the country to talk about marriage equality (Create Equality, personal communication, February 3, 2009).

Despite a lack of formal knowledge about SMOs that most clearly shape the MEM agenda, grassroots framing remarkably reflects the course sought at the national-level. An interviewee from the Freedom to Marry explained that the MEM expects upstarts to fall into alignment with the equality frame:

Basically, almost any organization which is working on our side of the issue would use the term marriage equality or freedom to marry or something along those lines. There may be some small organizations which are new startups which haven’t been as involved in the movement long enough, or haven’t really given it the thought, but when I explain ... they would switch very quickly (Freedom to Marry 1, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

The second main distinction between staff-driven and grassroots organizations relates to their flexibility and scope. The interviewee from Marriage Equality U.S.A. correlates volunteer directed organizations and issue flexibility. Based on interview data, this is apparent in the greater attention paid by grassroots organizations to gender identity issues. The MEUSA representative, for example, explained gender identity focus in terms of volunteer advocacy: “Because our chapters said, hey, we’re missing people. We need to advocate for a broader spectrum of the sexual minorities than just gays and lesbians.” Yet, the interviewee stressed, “We’re flexible only

as long as we're on message" (Marriage Equality U.S.A, personal communication, January 15, 2009). The scope of Create Equality's work was also influenced by volunteers. The interviewee explained, "LGBTQI, you want to get into those terms because you've got a group of people who get upset if you don't use that acronym" (Create Equality, personal communication, February 3, 2009).

The HRC is on the other end of the professionalization spectrum, but they also pay attention to gender identity discrimination. (Freedom to Marry, beyond occasionally using the acronym, does not seem to have such a broad focus). An interviewee explained, "HRC has been attentive to the legal needs of transgendered people for a long time. It's actually a policy of the HRC Board of Directors that we don't support legislation that in a final form ... is not inclusive of transgendered people" (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009). The interviewee's continued discussion of factors that go into mobilizing the SMO's base around gender identity issues, however, illustrates vast differences between the two types of organizations. In order to be most impactful, staff-driven SMOs continuously watch for trends and try to manipulate them to serve the mission of the organization. Providing an example about the need for transgendered protections in employment non-discrimination, the interviewee described a potential reaction to this external controversy for the HRC:

The controversy created some availability of money to do it from funders that might not have been available otherwise. What the controversy did ... was to crystallize the need for it. It's not really a dichotomous situation. It's really a matrix. It can't really be said, oh well, this controversy arrived and HRC decided to do this. If in fact I hadn't been laying the groundwork for ... a number of months ... we wouldn't have been able to do it. ... Likewise though, it was easier for me to mobilize folks within HRC, within the rubric of the controversy, to make sure that it happened in that budget year, and that sort of thing. And so all of those things work together when you manage well. ... When I manage well it's because I am watching all of those trends and making them work for the

organization as much as possible, for the organization's goals (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

The interviewee continued, "But it's not the sort of thing that can be gotten up quickly. It has to be planned for and resources routinely [gathered] so that the episodic and historic moments can be taken advantage of" (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

The third distinction between grassroots and staff-driven SMOs relates to their strategies for message deployment. Both types of organizations believe that moving the hearts and minds of the American public through conversation and one-on-one interactions is a promising strategy. The Create Equality interviewee, for example, discussed planning activities for a love reunites weekend to be held in conjunction with national Freedom to Marry Day (typically held in February):

We're encouraging any city, state, gallery, photographer that wants to get involved by basically having an art show in any place. ... [D]o something to show that you're getting together and you're going to generate conversations about marriage equality and family equality. ... You're meeting new people. You're encouraging straight and gay people in these conversations that are crucial in these organizations surviving. You're finding common ground that everyone can appreciate (Create Equality, personal communication, February 3, 2009).

Marriage Equality U.S.A. is also committed to sharing personal narratives. They direct their stories to three audiences (or, as they are also known, to "everyone"): people within LGBTQI communities who do not prioritize marriage equality, fair-minded Americans who are ambivalent or persuadable about marriage equality, as well as those who seem vehemently opposed. The process of talk for MEUSA is "organic, informal, and experiential – it doesn't want a label" (Marriage Equality U.S.A, personal communication, January 15, 2009).

Contrast these approaches with the process of deciding how best to encourage talk as a strategy for staff-driven organizations. Staff-driven organizations conduct focus groups.

Messages are tested, and the best messengers are considered. A representative from the HRC says, “I consider a good news day to be one in which we use a speaker that is an appropriate spokesperson for the audience, and that we reach that audience through media that the audience that we were trying to reach actually listens to or reads” (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009). A Freedom to Marry interviewee provides additional insight into this professionalized process:

The messaging portion starts with one, having the end in mind. Knowing that your goal is to influence hearts and minds. Then beginning your research just like [a corporation]. We have done a great deal of research in terms of attitudes, in terms of what words mean different things to different people. Then you take that information and you go through the creative process to see what works. And then you, if possible, do more testing of that to match up the creative with what your focus groups are finding out (Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

The interviewee continues with this important example, considering the dominant civil rights frame used by the movement:

One of the easiest ones for people to ... wrap around is the use of the words “civil rights.” Certainly I think folks in the movement would agree, and most civil rights lawyers would agree, that marriage equality and marriage discrimination is a civil rights issue. But in the public mind, particularly amongst people of color, and especially African Americans, the word civil rights has racial connotations only. The use of the words “civil rights” for many within the African American community is ripping off part of their history and identity. But it’s a little bit different if an African American civil rights leader used the words versus, say, a white gay rights leader. And those are the kinds of things that you find through doing your research and then testing. Saying “civil rights” is very effective for Alice Huffman, the president of the NAACP of California.

Saying “civil rights” to a black audience is not as successful for an Evan Wolfson of Freedom to Marry (Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

These three differences between grassroots and staff-driven SMOs – internal framing processes, flexibility and scope, and strategies for message deployment – all shed potential insight on my primary research question. In order to evaluate how hegemonic marriage can influence social movement framing, it is important that I have a firm grasp on framing processes. These three trends suggest to me a differential relationship with hegemonic concepts depending on the movement organization type. For instance, grassroots organizations are more flexible and inclusive, more responsive to micro level expressions of their adherents, and more likely to pursue organic, rather than professionalized, message deployment strategies.

Remember that hegemony is a process of negotiation and contestation. The story presented here of the internal mechanisms of grassroots organizations implies greater counter-hegemonic potential than is apparent with staff-driven organizations. Take the example of including a gender identity issues. The interviewee from Create Equality described infighting among volunteers of grassroots groups such that some refused to attend marriage protests because they had issues that were not being met. Both the Create Equality and the Marriage Equality U.S.A. interviewees described instances where the focus of their SMOs widened to incorporate the gender identity perspectives of sexual minorities. These are instances of hegemonic negotiation in movement framing activities on the micro level that have the potential to influence how the SMOs engage with other organizations in the field of marriage politics. These instances of negotiation are more responsive to how individual people within grassroots SMOs personally negotiate hegemony than is possible in staff-driven organizations.

Staff-driven organizations, on the other hand, have unequivocally accepted the marriage equality master frame. The conversation is largely cast in terms of marriage rights for same-sex couples, not bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex couples. There does not appear to be space for individual adherents to express their gender identity perspectives in SMO framing.

Additionally, staff-driven organizations act very instrumentally. They track trends and try to manipulate circumstances to achieve already pre-determined movement goals, and they do so through professionalized channels. Changes in message strategy or content are not the result of organic processes, but rather are part of a systematic approach involving focus groups, polling, and extensive public opinion research. This means that staff-driven organizations tend to seek consensus at the meso, rather than micro, level. They look to identify what the vast majority of their target audience finds compelling, and tailor their messages to meet those components. From the perspective of hegemony, they are essentially working to identify what is already “common-sense,” and then strategizing how to tweak it in a non-threatening way in order to make incremental gains toward their ultimate goal of full marriage equality. It is perhaps no wonder that as the MEM became increasingly professionalized, there was a shift away from potentially counter-hegemonic messaging to frames more aligned with hegemonic marriage. Concern with regard to grassroots organizations, therefore, is the degree to which they eventually fall into step with the framing strategies of staff-driven organizations and the Freedom to Marry. Such coherence is another step away from achieving marriage equality’s full counter-hegemonic potential.

Message targets. For the most part, both grassroots and staff-driven organizations share similar plans for movement action. Marriage Equality U.S.A., for example, describes its messaging work in language that very much echoes the strategies discussed by staff-driven organizations: dividing the American population by affinity toward the marriage equality goal, and devising specific message strategies within the civil rights master frame to change hearts and minds. But Whereas organizers within FTM and the HRC use terms like moveable, reachable, or persuadable middle to describe the population that is “fair-minded” and potentially open to movement persuasion tactics, MEUSA also adds another target audience: those members of LGBTQI communities who do not believe marriage rights are necessary. Staff-driven

organizations remain silent on the possibility of dissent within their communities, and do not offer strategies for persuading people within their own ranks.

The most promising audience identified by SMOs is the moveable middle. Shared characteristics of this group include being “motivated by a mix of religious beliefs, a belief in their desire for the common good, and for real community. And also their self-interest, and all the ways that’s defined and measured” (Human Rights Campaign, personal communication, March 3, 2009). An interviewee from the Freedom to Marry offered this composite:

They’re college-educated. They are female. They are enlightened people of faith who don’t take the Bible literally. They are people who know other people who have been discriminated against and don’t want that to happen to themselves or anyone. And they probably live in urban or metropolitan areas. What I’ve also just sort of described is blue state people. ... If there’s anything about that grouping that does sort of stand out is that [they] are probably younger than older (Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

Interviewees acknowledge that meaningful conversations with the moveable middle must be about equal rights, but language used does not have to be rights-based. For example, the HRC interviewee stated, “[W]e have to help them see that community means that what’s good for gay people is also good for their community” (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

Orienting messages to be sensitive of “religious baggage” helps “fair-minded people” separate the religious elements of marriage “from the fact that it is in reality a civil contract. That you don’t get a license to marry from your priest. You get it from City Hall” (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009). The MEUSA interviewee continued:

People who I’ve talked to over the years have said, you know, gays and lesbians shouldn’t be treated any differently, but why’d you have to call it marriage? The answer for that is that, actually, you don’t. If you want to call the civil contract that I and my [spouse] have “strawberries,” and then make sure that my daughter and her honey can be

“strawberries” too, I’m fine with that. But as long as the contract names rights, privileges, and obligations that are the same. If it’s strawberries and strawberries, fine. But if it’s marriage and civil partnerships, there’s a difference. ... That to convince people of goodwill, the fair-minded people, that it really is a difference and it really is important is the kind of messaging that has to go there (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal correspondence, date).

But talking at the level of the abstract—strawberries and strawberries or even civil versus religious marriage—is not the best path to persuasion for the moveable middle. The HRC interviewee elaborated, “We talk about the needs of our families and our commitments. That would ... resonate with the movable middle. We talk about the benefits of marriage, and we talk about rites. R-I-G-H-T-S, not so much (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009). In particular, the interviewee feels that the rights frame does not resonate especially well with people of color, despite the movement’s past attempts to align same-sex marriage rights with the historic *Loving* decision on interracial marriage:

For some African-Americans it feels presumptuous and assumptive to use that language. ... [w]hen we have a conversation in the public sphere in terms of changing people’s hearts and minds, it’s not as useful a frame. ... For some white people, it seems, oh God, here we go again. I’m back in the oppressor role. I didn’t do anything to these people either, and they’re mad at me. Those are gross overgeneralizations and oversimplifications of people’s feelings, but what we’re talking about with the movable middle is largely about what happens in the gut. And if their first gut response, their visceral response is, not that again, or oh no – you can’t have that on either side of the spectrum. Then we are not communicating well. What we want is instant connection. Oh, family, responsibility (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

Talking about stories using narratives is effective because of the memetic nature of social knowledge. The HRC interviewee believes narratives about marriage work because:

...it's how we learn about marriage in the first place. That common understanding that we all think we have, that none of us can quite define, of marriage, was gotten over years hearing people tell stories about their marriages. Our parents, our grandparents, our aunts and uncles, our teachers, other people who are important to us. And likewise, coming to a broader understanding of marriage is going to come through the same medium (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

Through talk, MEM activists believe that personal stories can influence people, and encourage them to explore their own biases, prejudices, and preconceived notions “by talking about the real harm that is done to same-sex couples by not being allowed to be married” (Freedom to Marry 1, personal communication, January 13, 2009). It is important to remember, however, that even through testing messages that will best be received by different audiences, “we’re never really changing message. What we’re looking for is different messengers to talk to ... constituent groups Ultimately you are still talking about it’s an injustice, it’s a civil right, it creates harm in people’s lives. That why you still have to make the change” (Freedom to Marry 1, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

Beyond marriage. We know that not all LGBTQI people want to secure equal marriage rights. Of the organizations represented in this study, only Marriage Equality U.S.A. identified such internal detractors as a target for messaging:

So these are things that I think that we have to communicate within our community. Marriage equality is the linchpin for full equality everywhere else. It may be the last equality we get. ... And to communicate that within our community – yes, whether you wish to get married or not, until we get the right to marry, we are still second-class citizens. And that’s unacceptable (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009).

However, one organization—the Family Equality Council—acknowledged a broader interpretation of family equality. This broad vision includes realizing that marriage equality rights

will not be enough to address all sexual minorities' relationship recognition and support problems. For this organization, broadening their focus from marriage equality to family equality is a way to ensure support of LGBTQI families, however configured. They call this perspective "beyond marriage."

While the Family Equality Council is undoubtedly part of the MEM, it represents the closest that I got to an internally oppositional voice to prioritizing marriage over pursuing equal protections for all family types. The interviewee explained:

Because we are an organization that protects the family, and certainly in all of its forms and shapes, specifically working around lesbian and gay, bisexual, and transgendered families, I would probably say that any form of recognition of our families would be something that we would like to advance as a form of policy, and within all of those forms marriage equality is one of the positions that we hold. So, yes, we are 100% beyond marriage, in that is marriage necessary to recognize the family? No. But are we an advocate of marriage equality? Yes (Family Equality Council, personal communication, January 30, 2009).

For this interviewee, denial of marriage rights represents an action by the government to deny choice that is afforded to heterosexual couples. So while "the reality is that this idea that the unit created to benefit two or more people around both home and children or family doesn't necessarily have to be tied to this entity that we know is marriage," the interviewee indicated that framing marriage equality rights in terms of choice may be a persuasive tactic for those who are not currently on board with the MEM movement:

Why is it that marriage is the only path to protection? Why is it that only marriage is a path to financial security? ... Me and my partner, we've always been really open about this and we very much believe in the choice of marriage. I want to make sure that I have that choice, but would ... I ever get married? I doubt it. It's not an institution that I believe is for me. But I'll be damned if somebody else is going to make that choice for

me. At some point, I think that is probably one of the core messages for us in terms of speaking to those who don't quite understand why marriage has become this so-called thing (Family Equality Council, personal communication, January 30, 2009).

While such an approach may help to cultivate supporters, the interviewee does not necessarily equate marriage equality with material, political and social security for LGBTQI families. As such, it is unlikely that framing marriage a choice would be enough to overcome arguments against marriage equality within the LGBTQI community. I will explore more of the potential of the "beyond marriage" position to challenge or bolster hegemonic marriage later in this chapter with CL analysis of web material from the SMO Unmarried Equality

Process Analysis (Interpretation) of MEM Interview Corpus

In addition to close textual analysis of interview transcripts, I also coded interview passages for diagnostic and prognostic marriage-related frames. This section explores the results of coding interview content (See Appendix F). Coding gives me a clearer picture of how SMOs wish to convey the current state of marriage politics for their organizations and a sense of where they think they should direct their energies. For my purposes, diagnostic frames address two questions – the definition of marriage, and primary problems facing marriage. Prognostic frames speak to why it is important to act on marriage, and how marriage should be addressed. It is important to note, however, that my framing analysis of MEM interviews did not reveal any diagnostic frames addressing primary problems facing marriage. This fact will be taken up again in chapter 8.

MEM interview diagnostic frames. My insights into how SMOs define marriage did not come about organically. I straightforwardly asked the question to each interview participant, and there was little variation in answers. The predominant diagnostic frame is that marriage is a *civil* institution. Other important diagnostic frames include choice, commitment, responsibility and benefits. See Table 3 for a list of answers provided.

Table 3. Definitions of marriage among SMOs in the Marriage Equality Movement

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Create Equality	A legal union of two people. And it should be regardless of your gender. Two people who choose to live their lives in unison benefitting from the benefits of marriage as well as working through the commitments that it requires. It's not just the tax breaks and the things that go along with marriage. There are responsibilities.
Human Rights Campaign	Marriage should be available to everyone. And currently it's not. We are working to make the responsibilities and protections of marriage available to everyone, regardless of gender.
Marriage Equality U.S.A.	How do we live in a construct which means you have to occupy the same house and be somewhat civil to one another? What does it all mean? What is fundamentally different [in a same-sex] relationship and mine and [my spouse's]? Huh? nothing.
Freedom to Marry 1	Two people who love each other and plan to make a lifetime commitment to taking care of each other. [Refers to Wolfson's book] Marriage is a relationship between a couple and government. ... [I]t is a legal or civil institution. It is a legal gateway to a vast array of protections, responsibilities, and benefits. Personal commitment and an important choice that belongs to couples in love.
Freedom to Marry 2	Ultimately what we are focused on is the civil institution of marriage. ... Part of what I believe we're saying is that we want our couples, our relationships to be treated equally from a social perspective. ... It's about when you ...

<p>Family Equality Council</p>	<p>introduce your partner as your husband or wife, people somehow get that. Whereas all this other language, the spouse, partner, lover, whatever, they are sort of inadequate terms and they maintain us as second-class citizens.</p> <p>Currently marriage in this country is an institution that is reserved for ... a heterosexual contract among two individuals for the protection of good benefits and children. What we would like to do is take the heterosexual out of that equation and make sure that it is an institution that is open to any two people who wish to enter into this contract. ... Marriage is marriage. So the question is, do you have access to the institution or not?</p>
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Only one interviewee used the term “heterosexual” to define marriage. Every SMO except for the two FTM representatives slipped between what marriage *is* and what it should be. All but those two interviewees correlated the current institution with heteronormativity, even if they did not name it as such. The interviewees, in discussing what should be, elucidated a vision including the availability of marriage to anyone, regardless of the gender of relationship partners. Freedom to Marry representatives are silent on gender, and likely purposefully provided an unmodified definition of marriage. I say “likely” because an unmodified definition is to be expected from an organization preoccupied with accusations of trying to redefine marriage.

FTM interviewees stressed that marriage is a civil institution, and as such is tied to citizenship rights. One interviewee referred to Evan Wolfson’s book (“His book is called *Why Marriage Matters*, and it’s basically our Bible” – Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009), and added that marriage requires commitment, offers protections, responsibilities, and benefits, and is a choice for people in love. Elements of this expanded definition – commitment, protections, responsibilities, and benefits – are echoed in the responses of other interviewees as well. Create Equality included commitment, and joined with the Family

Equality Council to incorporate benefits. The Human Rights Campaign, along with Create Equality, included a focus on responsibilities, and the HRC and the Family Equality Council both addressed protections. The Freedom to Marry, however, is the only one to mention love. Additionally, while the definition given by Marriage Equality U.S.A. seems vague, the interviewee essentially said whatever conception of marriage someone thinks that heterosexual people have, same-sex people should have the exact same thing because their relationships function no differently in practice.

How interviewees defined marriage sheds insight into their understanding of the relationship between SMO framing choices and hegemonic marriage. There are four implications to explore. First, arguing that homosexual relationships should be able to assume the same legal status as heterosexual marriage is a counter-hegemonic proposition. Incorporating homosexuality into the marriage institution will certainly change it. The potential for change, however, is not mentioned in any of the definitions offered by movement interviewees. Even the passage from the Family Equality Council that most explicitly stated the need to take “the heterosexual out of the equation” concluded that “marriage is marriage.” What is left unsaid in discussions of marriage can be equally revealing as what is said. Remaining silent about changes that will likely incur in marriage because of same-sex inclusion is tantamount to deploying a tactic of dominance discussed in chapter 2 – disguising contradictions (Clair 1998). If we know marriage to be a heterosexual union, then including homosexual relationships changes the definition of marriage by default. Silence is a means to downplay the contradiction that homosexual marriage by definition is something different than the traditional marriage institution.

Second, the choice to be silent on how marriage equality will change marriage is also an example of acquiescing to dominant interests. It is in the best interests of hegemonic marriage to appear as a stable construct. Change can be uniquely destabilizing, and as such it may be harder for the MEM to capture the hearts and minds of “middle” Americans if they stated that marriage

as we know it will go away post-marriage equality. The MEM strategically deployed tactics of dominance in order to better achieve their goals.

Third, interviewees were largely silent on the gendered nature of public identities within marriage. The only exception was an FTM interviewee who acknowledged that marriage labels participants as husband and wife, and then commented on the social power of such designations. Potentially counter-hegemonic marriage equality messages might argue that including same-sex couples in marriage challenges the institution's sexist and patriarchal bases. The definitions offered here, however, do not suggest any such thing. Again, this is an example of disguising contradictions (Clair 1998). Whereas husband and wife are conventionally understood as identities assumed by people of the opposite sex, the FTM interviewee noted that having access to those same classifications – not spouse, lover, or partner – is critical to citizenship. Such framing required disguising the contradiction between two people of the same sex assuming the “conventional” roles of husband and husband or wife and wife. The marital identities of husband and wife are powerful because of the socio-historical role they played in cultivating and maintaining the heteropatriarchal nuclear married family. By remaining silent about or engaging in tactics of dominance to maintain the social meanings of these marital roles, the MEM likely further bolstered their power.

The final implication of definitional framing relates to the choice of some adherents to stress that homosexual relationships function no differently than heterosexual marriages in practice. In making this claim, some interviewees highlighted the values that both groups share such as commitment, responsibility, and love. The importance of such shared suppositions for hegemony is that stressing alignment with conventional heterosexual marital values reinforces them as common-sense, natural, and universal. While love and commitment are hopefully equally shared virtues between marriage partners, it is possible to imagine responsibility scripted in marriage relationships along gendered lines. In the traditional, hegemonic marriage ideal, for example, the husband/father had responsibility for providing financial security to the family unit,

largely through paid work in the public sphere. The wife/mother, on the other hand, was given primary caretaking responsibility in the domestic or private sphere. Such work was largely unpaid, and domestic caretaking obligations often signified that women household laborers were relegated to a second-class status. By uncritically stressing similarities or sameness between same-sex relationships and homosexual married relationships, movement interviewees engaged in the third tactic of dominance – reification. They did not question traditional gender role hierarchies within the marriage institution, but rather implied that their values are the same values as those of traditional marriage. While in reality this is probably not true, the urge to stress similarities means that the MEM missed an important opportunity to engage in counter-hegemonic positioning of same-sex relationships as valuing non-gendered egalitarian or peer relationships rather than marital hierarchy. I will leave these conclusions to conjecture at this point, as the interview question wording and juxtaposition within the interview may have constrained their responses. Additional CDA will provide more insights on the question of how SMOs use tools of dominance in their hegemonic negotiation.

MEM interview prognostic frame. Prognostic frames address both why marriage should be addressed, and how. For the MEM I collapse those distinctions into one prognostic frame because the why and how are part and parcel of the same thing: rights through the law. One-hundred percent of the organizations interviewed use a rights/equality oriented, justice-based frame. This prognostic frame argues that the reason marriage needs to be addressed is because there are people excluded from marriage, and such exclusion is a violation of personal rights. The interviewee from the Human Rights Campaign discusses the “gift” of this frame to the movement, primarily by Evan Wolfson:

[I]f you would have rights first you must name it. ... Evan’s wisdom around needing to name what we wanted, and to be consistent in that naming and to keep it always before us, would be important in making the rest of our work easier and more consistent. And in fact would keep us from having wedges driven between us at every turn. In those days in

the early 90s and in the mid-90s, we would be asking for, say, hate crime protection in the legislature and our opposition would tell legislators, you can't do that – what they're really wanting is marriage. They want to have their relationships recognized. So people would vote against the hate crime bill because of marriage. And Evan began to point out that many of us around the country, look if that's what they're using against you, what you need to be talking about is marriage. Because as soon as that loses its power as a bogeyman, as a straw man, then we can get down to the work of actually achieving what we need. And he was absolutely right (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

The interviewee stressed that the HRC came to think of the equality frame in the same manner, and their journey to that way of thinking was “not particularly fast or slow.” Rather, “all the national organizations were equally reticent and disjointed at first and then found their voice around the frame that Evan put out for us” (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

In terms of how the frame came about, the HRC representative stressed that there was not one moment in time that represented the historic unveiling of the marriage equality frame. Relevant factors in its rise to preeminence included the “publication of Evan's book, the founding of Freedom to Marry, and funders putting a significant amount of money behind the concept.” Funding, in particular, contributed because it came at serendipitous times:

I think that there are benchmarks around resources. If I had all the money in the world I would like to fund a follow the money study. And I do think it was significant that Evan was able to put together a consortium of funders that would help him promote that concept. That was new in our movement. We've never had that much work done on conceptualizing what we were trying to accomplish before, in my memory. Always before we were either reacting, certainly that was the case with the flood of DOMAs in the 1990s, or even before that and most importantly perhaps with the AIDS epidemic. So much was done by really brilliant people operating by the seats of their pants. And this was the first example that I know of in our movement where really brilliant people were

given the resources to actually think through a frame in advance of its promulgation (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

Insider assessments of the frame also indicate that it is successful. The HRC interviewee provides an example of how public opinion on LGBT rights issues has dramatically changed since the introduction of the justice-based frame:

And you can see the American people come along on those issues in terms of poll data. ... [Two-thirds of voters] are now in favor of relationship recognition of some kind. Only half of those roughly are willing to call it marriage at this point. We have a lot of education to do to help them see that separate is still unequal and that marriage is the frame that they should be using for our relationships too. Setting things up in that frame has made the rest of our work actually quite a lot more palatable for our opposition. And more importantly for those who are not our opposition but who simply didn't care or were ambivalent about our issues. They are starting to lean in our direction (HRC, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

In terms of how the frame functions, there was agreement that the frame should be deployed with nuance. As I have already mentioned, there is a great deal of message testing in the staff-driven organizations around which words to use when discussing equality and rights, and how to persuade the moveable middle and avoid offending donors or potential donors. Grassroots organizations like Marriage Equality U.S.A. and Create Equality, however, also highlighted the power of conversation around equality to build bridges and "plant seeds of doubt" in the minds of opponents (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009). The goal is to "find words that are somewhat parallel and don't create isolation" in order to reach different audiences (Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009). Keep in mind that hegemonic marriage exists because its tenets are considered to be common-sense, familiar territory. Challenging hegemonic tenets can be unsettling and controversial, reactions that the

MEM wants to avoid whenever possible. The process of framing to the middle, therefore, likely lessens the counter-hegemonic potential of marriage equality messages.

MEM Corpus Linguistic (CL) Analysis

Textual analysis provides initial insights into the relationship between hegemonic influence and social movement framing. The text-based descriptive analysis above implies that the MEM downplays its counter-hegemonic potential by directing framing processes to mesh with the interests of “middle” Americans and deploying various discursive tactics of dominance. Corpus linguistic (CL) analysis allows me to interrogate trends I identified in textual analysis to discern which framing factors are most relevant at the level of language. To conduct CL analysis, I focus on diagnostic and prognostic frames developed by MEM advocates. An important reminder is that diagnostic frames can exist in two forms – what marriage is, and what is wrong with marriage—but my process/interpretative analysis of interview transcripts does not suggest any framing aligned with the latter. For the most part, MEM adherents do not problematize marriage as an institution in trouble, as an institution in flux, or as an institution under threat or a dangerous, harmful institution. Rather, if they were to diagnose a “problem” with marriage, it would be that the institution is closed to same-sex couples. In my conception of diagnostic frames, this is really a diagnostic question about the nature or definition of marriage – it is a foundational issue.

The two primary relevant framing themes identified by close reading of interview transcripts are:

Diagnostic: civil, choice, commitment, responsibility, benefits

Prognostic: rights/justice

I first prepare frequency wordlists for the interview and web corpora in relation to the keyword of *marriage*. Table 4 shows the number and frequency of expressions related to each diagnostic and prognostic frame for both corpora. See Appendix G for a detailed discussion of the steps used to conduct CL analysis.

Table 4. Textalyser frequency of MEM diagnostic and prognostic frame expressions

Expression	Interview Corpus		Web Corpus	
	Number	Frequency	Number	Frequency
Prognostic Frame: Rights/Justice	108	1.5%	757	5.0%
right/rights	34	0.5%	229	1.5%
equal/equality/unequal	74	1.0%	189	1.3%
Freedom	0	0	177	1.2%**
Liberty	0	0	2	*
discrimination/discriminatory	0	0	105	0.7%
Fairness	0	0	12	0.1%
Exclusion	0	0	11	0.1%
Justice	0	0	24	0.2%
citizen/citizens	0	0	8	0.1%
Diagnostic Frame: Civil Marriage	61	0.8%	353	2.3%
Civil	22	0.3%	158	1.0%
legal/legally/lawful	17	0.2%	129	0.9%
Contract	9	0.1%	2	*
license/licenses	0	0	28	0.2%
recognition/recognize	13	0.2%	36	0.2%
Diagnostic Frame: Commitment	8	0.1%	131	0.9%
commitment/committed	8	0.1%	131	0.9%
Diagnostic Frame: Responsibility	9	0.1%	51	0.3%
benefit/benefits	9	0.1%	51	0.3%
Diagnostic Frame: Benefits	8	0.1%	40	0.3%
responsibility/responsibilities	8	0.1%	40	0.3%
Diagnostic Frame: Choice	17	0.2%	40	0.3%
Choice	17	0.2%	21	0.1%
Personal	0	0	19	0.1%

NOTE: *The frequency percentage is below 0.1%. ** For the interview corpus, I removed all references to organization, including Freedom to Marry. As such, the word “freedom” does not appear in the interview corpus analysis. I did not make the same adjustment for the web-based corpus, and so many of the instances of the word “freedom” are likely in reference to the organization’s name, and not to the concept of freedom more broadly.

While word frequencies are a good entry point into text analysis, they do not provide insight into what terms are important or unusually frequent. I use *AntConc*, an online concordance program, to learn more. Keywords clearly read as a quick primer on what the MEM is all about (see Appendix G, Table G.1 for data). Movement subjects are apparent in terms of sexual orientation identifiers – *same sex, gay, lesbian* – as well as their goal, the ability to *marry* and participate in *[M]arriage*. The majority of other keyword expressions relate to the dominant

prognostic frame – *equality*, *civil rights*, and *discrimination*. Also prevalent is a historical marker – *Hawaii*, as well as a nod to their opposition – *anti* – and to a prognostic mechanism for securing freedom – the *Court*. This keyword analysis serves as a useful triangulation tool to verify that textual/descriptive and process/interpretive analyses of the movement thus far are on target.

Returning to high frequency expressions from Table 4, I see that *right* and *rights* are the most common expressions for the prognostic rights-based frame. *Civil* is the most common expression for the diagnostic frame of civil marriage. Because *civil* could refer to either *civil rights* or *civil marriage*, I also include the second most frequent expressions: *legal*, *legally*, and *lawful*. In the following sections I focus on in-depth grammatical and semantic categorization of these expressions (Lukač 2011).

MEM diagnostic frame. As noted in Table 4, there are well over 100 occurrence of *civil* in the web corpus. There are also at least three different civil content clusters that I can imagine off the top of my head: *civil marriage*, *civil rights*, and *civil unions*. Concordance analysis confirms that the cluster *civil rights* primarily occurs as part of the phrase *civil rights movement* or *civil rights struggle*. Both phrases tend to locate the desire for marriage equality to be put in a larger, historical civil rights context. *Civil unions* are typically cast as sub-par or a stepping stone to something better, as in this concordance: “*Civil unions* are a tremendous step forward, but they are not good enough.”

What is good enough, however, is *civil marriage*. *Civil marriage* has 60 occurrences. Of those, five occurrences reference *civil marriage equality*, which is part and parcel of the larger right-based content. Six occurrences involve the expressions of *license* or *licenses*. Analysis on the left of the phrase node of *civil marriage license* shows that they are all preceded by verbs about possession: *who gets a*, *the freedom to have*, *the right to a*, *reason for withholding a*. In usage these concordances equate civil marriage with possession of a marriage license, a fairly simple arrangement. A marriage license can be obtained from the clerk’s office. It does not require pre-marital counseling or demonstration of commitment between the partners in front of

witnesses who join in their covenant. Reducing marriage – from a rich social institution to civil marriage to a marriage license that is “just a piece of paper” – is one of the objections at the heart of TMM and some MM activists regarding same-sex marriage. In their minds, granting licenses and calling them marriage continues the deinstitutionalization of marriage in American society. Keeping in mind what civil marriage actually entails (merely a license) in cross-movement analysis may be informative.

The final diagnostic terms I subject to concordance analysis are *legal*, *legally*, and *lawful*. As an adverb, all but one of the occurrences of *legally* refers to *legally marry* (or some other derivative of that word – *marriage*, *married*) or *recognize* a same-sex relationships (with *recognize* as a signifier for the meaning encoded in marriage). The only exception is the phrase *legally treated*, which suggests that legal differences faced by same-sex couples are important manifestations of their status as second-class citizens.

The node *legal* further highlights connection between a civil marriage (rights granted by law to married people) and citizenship. Right-side of the node analysis shows that married people can expect *legal benefits*, *protections*, *rights*, *responsibilities*, *security*, and a *safety net*. Additionally, marriage equality is the legal act that ushers in all of these things for same-sex couples (*legal gateway*). *Legal challenges* are required for there to be a *legal breakthrough*, and until that happens, same-sex couples will maintain *legal and cultural second-class status* because alternatives like civil unions are not *legal equivalents* to marriage. This concordance narratively highlights cohesion within MEM messaging. Despite the fact that I am looking at a column of four words in 77 sentence fragments, it is possible, and even quite easy, to patch together the coherent message of the movement. Analysis of the node *lawful* adds a historic element to the message by criticizing the impact that DOMA had on (re)instituting relationship discrimination. Every instance of *lawful* refers to the phrase *lawful marriage*. Each occurrence references either the need to respect or recognize same-sex marriage in the light of federal or mini-DOMAs, or laments discrimination or relationship invalidation at the hands of such legislation.

Shifting to collocation analysis, the top collocate by Mutual Information score for the word *civil* is *unions* (see Appendix G, Table G.2). The list of collocates does not really include any surprises, except perhaps that *marriage* barely makes the Top 20. Thinking about that further, however, makes sense. Collocation is a measurement of words that frequently occur together. For the most part, the MEM is interested in securing *marriage* rights. Only sometimes will they find it instrumental to define that in *civil* terms. If you can remember back to the very beginning of this project, I stated that for most Americans we tend to think of marriage as marriage. We do not think of it in modified terms. It may be instrumental, though, for the MEM to modify marriage at times, perhaps to fend off opposition from those who wish to classify the MEM as a movement out to “redefine” marriage.

Civil unions, on the other hand, are commonly constructed within the MEM as a sub-par alternative to marriage. Settling for civil unions is a threat because it allows potential allies to settle into a comfort zone where good is good enough. Addressing this risk, deploying civil rights discourse of separate and unequal, and making distinctions between how marriage guarantees citizenship and civil unions guarantee second-class status, is an important task undertaken by the movement. To further illustrate the relative importance of the *civil unions* collocation for the MEM, I do the same exact collocation of the word *civil* using newspapers from 1990-2012 in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The reference corpus represents over 86,000 words (Davies 2008-). Drawing from this repository of random words, *rights*, *union* and *unions* are the only three collocates that the two lists share. The MI score for *rights* in the reference corpus is highest ranking at 7.50 (as compared to 6.32 in the MEM web corpus). The MI score for *union* is 4.40 (as compared to 6.78), and the MI score for *unions* is 5.54 (as compared to 7.64). From this information I can infer that *union/unions* are more likely to collocate with *civil* in the discourse of the MEM than it is in general, or at least journalistic, discourse. *Rights*, on the other hand, is less likely to collocate with *civil* in MEM discourse. That

observation, of course, is not ample evidence to dismiss the prevalence of a rights-based frame. As this chapter has shown, there are many different ways to talk about rights.

Lastly, I use *civil* to figure out the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences in the MEM web corpus using cluster analysis. The frequency of two-word sequences suggests patterns that I can expect. Taking the example of the *marriage*, I assume that *marriage* will collocate with *civil* most frequently to form the cluster *civil marriage*. Cluster analysis helps me test and determine that this inference is valid. In fact, the three main types of clusters I can expect to find are *civil marriage*, *civil rights* and *civil unions* (See Appendix G, Table G.3).

MEM prognostic frame. Concordance analysis for the prognostic search term *right* identifies 70 occurrences in the web corpus. The node is used most often within the phrase *right to marry*. The second most common phrase is *right-wing*. Characterization of “right-wing” is overwhelmingly negative, either depicted as oppositional to same-sex identity (*right-wing anti-gay* and *right-wing opponents*) or in terms of negative or even violent tactics by right-wing people or groups (*assault*, *backlash*, *extremists*, *forces*). Looking to the left of the node, most references point to the phrase *basic human right*. This phrase most often appears at the end a sentence and takes a declarative form: “Marriage is a *basic human right*.” In both the instance of *right to marry* and *basic human right*, the phrases assume that the *right* in question relates to marriage.

Concordance of *rights* yields almost twice as many occurrences as does *right* (159 versus 70). Although identity markers shift between *gay and lesbian*, *same-gender*, *gay*, and *same-sex*, the most common occurrences on the right side of the node refer to who should have *rights*. Within those identity signifiers, there is also a mix between descriptors of the unit: *couples*, *Americans*, and *people*. A significant number of occurrences link *rights* with terms I earlier identified as diagnostic frames: *benefits* and *responsibilities*. Such frequent associations indicate that benefits and responsibilities likely do not have much inherent meaning as frames separate from *rights*. Instead, they seem to be part of common clauses used to describe marriage. A need

for same-sex and heterosexual relationships to have synonymous access to rights, *same rights as heterosexual*,” is also apparent. The final notable relationship on the right is reference to an on-going *civil rights struggle* featuring same-sex people. What constitutes the *civil rights struggle*, however, is not apparent, and is left up to the reader to fill in the blanks. In popular usage, *struggle* often connotes a fight for equality that is part of a broader civil rights historical moment likely including fights against racial and sex discrimination, among others.

On the left side of the node of *rights*, a large number of occurrences refer to broad categories of rights: *civil rights*, *equal rights*, *human rights*, and *legal rights*. The most prevalent is *marriage rights*, mostly further modified as *civil marriage rights* and *equal marriage rights*. The remainder addresses rights denied to same-sex couples as a result of their blocked access to marriage rights. In the typical case, *inheritance rights* or *immigration rights* are available to all American citizens. The MEM clearly views such rights as derivatives of marriage rights until legal barriers to marriage go away. Same-sex couples are denied their full citizenship rights because of their prohibition from the legal institution of marriage. Such derivative rights include *adoption*, *immigration*, *inheritance*, *parenting*, and *visitation*. Also of note is the historical reference to *voting rights* in two instances, both with regard to historic civil rights victories for women.

In order to get a complete picture of the mechanisms of prognostic framing around rights, I also look to the terms *equal*, *equality* and *unequal*. Concordance analysis on the right of the node *equal* is fairly simple: there are 41 occurrences, more than half of which refer to *equal marriage rights* or to *equal rights* more generally. The only other uses of *equal* that are not in a rights context are *access*, *benefits*, *ferocity*, *opportunity* and *protection*. *Access*, *benefits*, *protection* and *opportunity* all refer generally to the “American dream” or components within it, like a good job, decent home, rights and responsibilities. *Ferocity* refers to a tactic by the opposition (“attack us with equal ferocity, no matter what.”) There do not appear to be any meaningful occurrences on the left of the node. Patterns are very small or non-existent. The only

duplicating terms are *deserve*, *provide*, and *support*, which could all be interpreted as positive material verbs relating to the importance of pursuing equal rights.

Equality, much like *rights* before, yields many more occurrences (90 as compared to 41 for *equal*). Analysis on the right and the left of the node did not yield meaningful patterns because equality functions overwhelmingly as the last word in the 2-word *marriage equality* cluster. I therefore do another concordance on the phrase *marriage equality*, rather than merely the word *equality*, to get a sense of patterns around that concept. Meaningful patterns still do not emerge on the right side of the node, but the left side yields interesting verb choices that offer insights into process. All verbs included are examples of active voice *to achieve*, *to push for*, *mandates*, *battles over*, *to promote*, *ranked*, *supports*, and *to win*. Such examples assume responsibility on the part of the agent however the agent may be defined (the movement, the federal government, the individual, etc.) to access the prize of *marriage equality*. Imagine, for instance, how the following concordance could be written using passive voice, and how the meaning for the agent, and for the social phenomenon of marriage equality, would change:

Active voice

The Human Rights Campaign is working at both the state and federal level to achieve marriage equality.

to passive voice

Marriage equality is being sought at both the state and federal level.

Such a switch deletes the agent, and focuses attention on the circumstance, winning marriage equality, rather than the agent. Using the active voice, it is apparent that a specific SMO is pursuing action, through processes that are likely deliberate and strategically directed toward specific targets located in two strata of government. The switch to passive voice strips the discourse of much of its contextual meaning. Who is seeking marriage equality? Not knowing the agent means that we cannot infer anything about process.

I share this active/passive voice example to underscore the importance of remembering that discourse is imbued with instances of lexicogrammatical choice. In evaluating messages intended to be consumed by someone outside of SMO decision-makers – whether targets, potential adherents, or curious researchers – thinking about what could have been said versus what was actually said can be insightful, particularly with regard to interdiscursivity. A discourse may originate in one field of action and proceed to another one (Wu 2011). Lexicogrammatical choices about how to convey discursive influences may overtly identify an originating discourse, or not. For example, consider early MEM allusions to civil rights movement discourse of the 1960s. By the late 2000s, movement framing more frequently included statements like *The HRC is working to achieve marriage equality* rather than *The HRC is working to end discrimination in marriage*. The phrase *marriage equality* interdiscursively samples civil rights movement discourse, without making such discourse explicit.

The choice to use the discursive shortcut *marriage equality* (rather than spelling how denying access to marriage is a discriminatory violation of civil rights) avoids potential alienation of framing targets differentially positioned vis-à-vis civil rights discourse. For example, MEM interviewees indicated a number of times that the movement must be careful to avoid too closely correlating marriage equality struggles with the experiences of African-Americans in their civil rights struggles. The interviewee from the Human Rights Campaign describes this clearly:

Rep. John Lewis is a sort of person who routinely makes the argument that [marriage equality] is not just like the civil rights movement, but is akin to it. For some African-Americans it feels presumptuous and assumptive to use that language. ... When we have a conversation in the public sphere in terms of changing people's hearts and minds, it's not as useful a frame. ... For some white people, it seems, oh God, here we go again. I'm back in the oppressor role. I didn't do anything to these people either, and they're mad at me. Those are gross oversimplifications of people's feelings, but what we're talking about with the moveable middle is largely about what happens in the gut. And if their

first gut response is “not again,” or “oh no, you can’t have that” on either side of the spectrum, then we are not communicating well (Human Rights Campaign, personal communication, March 3, 2009).

Interdiscursive influence is also apparent in concordance analysis for the node *unequal*. All but one of the occurrences treats the node as part of the phrase *separate and unequal*, a commentary on differential status in American culture between civil unions/domestic partnerships and the institution of marriage, as well as an interdiscursive overture to civil rights rhetoric centered in the historic Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. While such references do not overtly equate the marriage equality struggle with black civil rights, they certainly do so implicitly by drawing on iconic symbolic language of the civil rights movement.

Turning to collocation analysis, the highest ranking collocates by Mutual Information score for the word *rights* are in Appendix G, Table G.4. I omit collocates *human* and *campaign* because they collocate with *rights* as part of the proper noun *Human Rights Campaign*. After thinning the results, the collocate with the highest frequency is *civil*, with all collocates on the left, as in *civil rights*. A number of collocates specify the types of rights at stake in the MEM – *inheritance*, *adoption*, *immigration*, and *visitation*. Collocates also suggest a tactic of contextualizing marriage equality in a broader field of historicized civil rights struggle. *Voting* refers overwhelmingly to empirical examples of voting on behalf of rights expansion, either for women’s voting rights or voting to remove barriers against interracial marriage. *Hero* and *heroes* both refer to Civil Rights Movement-era leaders. *Struggles* focuses attention on how the MEM is experiencing the same pushback as civil rights pioneers before them (for example, “As in early *struggles*, our opponents are willing to train their fire on even the Bill of Rights in their effort to get at us.” And, “In each of the civil rights *struggles*, then as now, opponents of equality prophesied that ending discriminatory restrictions on marriage would lead to disaster.”) The notion of struggle sets up an oppositional process at the heart of MEM discourse.

Finally, cluster analysis is useful to identify the type of rights that MEM advocates seek. Patterns that emerge from the MEM web corpus suggest that same-sex couples want *marriage rights*, *civil rights*, *legal rights*, and *human rights*. The differences in terminology provide different lexical choices to movement framers, and well as opportunity for interdiscursivity. The top 10 clusters for the word *rights* are in Appendix G, Table G.5.

Overall, CL analysis demonstrates that the MEM discourse is highly cohesive, and their consistent message is that marriage is a civil institution through which same-sex couples should be able to access rights. The MEM uses interdiscursive tactics in negotiating hegemonic marriage, primarily borrowing from civil rights discourses to bolster their master frame without necessarily overtly making the case that exclusion from the marriage institution is tantamount to discrimination. Much of the MEM's interdiscursive framing decisions are strategically tied to the perceived identities and positions of movement adherents, particularly the moveable middle.

MEM Social Practices Analysis

The prior two levels of my critical discourse analysis thus far – textual/descriptive analysis and process/interpretation analysis – helped me to identify relevant movement actors, the content of primary movement frames, and examples of interdiscursivity. Corpus linguistic analysis further aided me in assessing which aspects of movement frames are most relevant based on semantic patterns at the level of language. To engage social practices analysis, I return to Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of discourse as embedded boxes and Janks's (1997) related strategy of assigning content to each "box." There are three themes that map across the boxes: lexicogrammatical choice, citizenship, and controversy within the LGBTQI community regarding marriage rights.

The model shows that at the textual level, two main concepts emerge – the diagnostic frame of *civil marriage* and the prognostic frame of *rights*. Applying these insights first identifies a MEM discursive shift beginning with 2003 and proceeding to the present. This discursive shift indicates that punctuating events during 2003 were most impactful to movement framing and to

the contours of hegemonic marriage. These events included the Massachusetts *Goodrich* decision, the Supreme Court *Lawrence v. Texas* decision, and the introduction of the Federal Marriage Amendment. The year 2003 certainly marked a time of monumental shifts in understanding the private ordering of sexual relations and the public sanctioning of sexual relationships. Second, the events spurred a great deal of momentum among MEM activists seeking expanded rights, as well as a groundswell of opposition from those who sought to protect the “natural” family. Finally, while social practice analysis acknowledges the MEM goal of greater rights claims, it also suggests there is no guarantee that achieving new rights will necessarily liberate same-sex couples or other sexual minorities from positions of second-class citizenship. See Figure 7 for my application of Fairclough’s (1995) model.

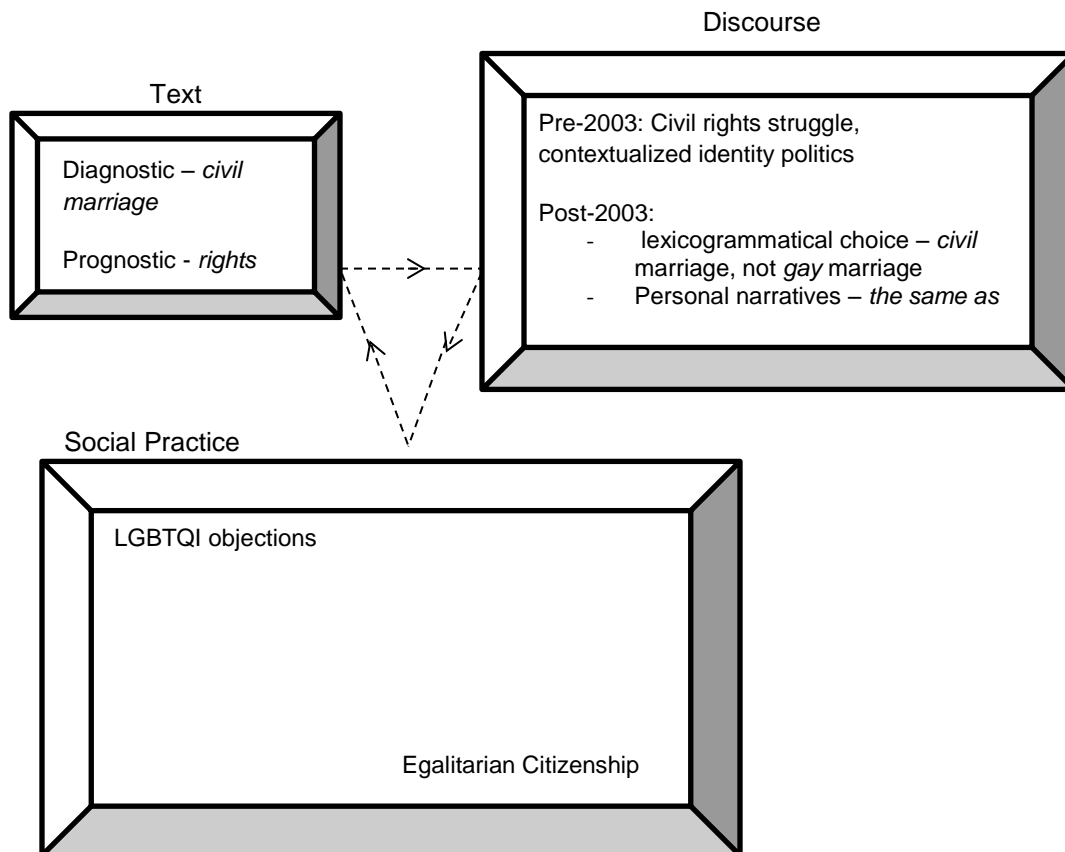


Figure 7. Application of Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model to the MEM

While the frames of *civil marriage* and *rights* remained unchanged over the time period studied, there was a notable shift in how the MEM deployed them. The shift is observable with

regard to lexicogrammatical choice – decisions made within the movement regarding which words the MEM used to convey their frames. See Figure 8 for a visual representation of this temporal and lexicogrammatical shift. Prior to 2003, the MEM primarily deployed an identity-based political interest group civil rights frame, arguing that the marriage equality struggles of gay and lesbians were akin to identity-based civil rights struggles of the past, particularly those of African-Americans. After 2003, there was a shift away from identity toward focusing on the object of rights claims – civil marriage rights – and a change from signifying the subject as an identity group set apart from mainstream society to discussing the subject as *similar to* or *the same as* those in mainstream society. This is significant because language process is semiotic, meaning that actors make language meaningful through choice (Halliday 1978). Eggins (2004, 3) further explains, “The distinctive feature of a semiotic process is that each choice in the system acquires its meanings against the background of the other choices that could have been made.”

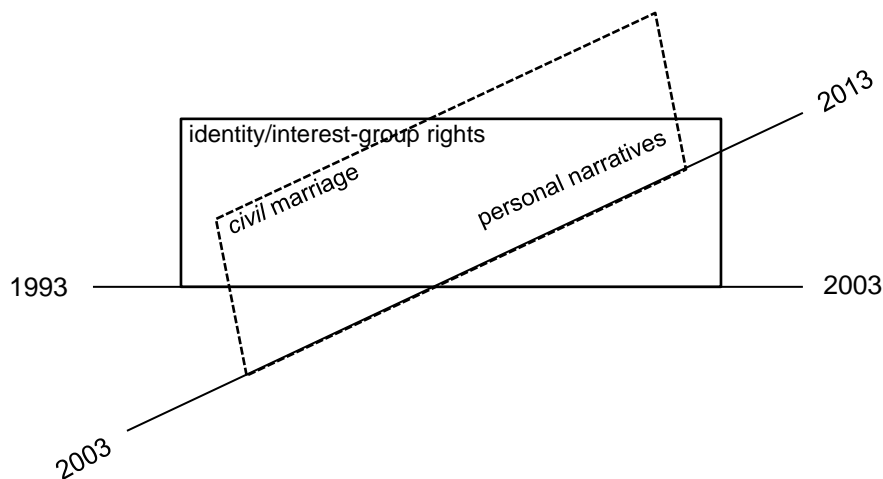


Figure 8. Lexicogrammatical shift in MEM diagnostic/prognostic framing from 1993 to 2013

For some scholars, cultural barriers to homosexual acceptance and the challenge of self-acceptance for sexual minorities require cultural struggles that make the lesbian and gay rights movement the “quintessential identity movement” (Bernstein 1997; Melucci 1989; Duyvendak 1995; Duyvendak and Guigni 1995). Bernstein (1997, 532), however, also notes that the “lesbian

and gay movement has been altered from a movement for cultural transformation through sexual liberation to one that seeks achievement of political rights through a narrow, ethnic-like (Seidman 1993) interest-group politics.” For the MEM, however, framing decisions since 2003 have deliberately downplayed interest-group politics in favor of alliance with mainstream, consensus politics.

Why did the MEM shy away from prior gay and lesbian movement sexual liberation orientations? Bernstein (1997) offers a model of identity that is useful to consider in Table 5. Early gay and lesbian activists often deployed identity for empowerment and critique which produced and reinforced critical identities characterized as oppositional to the state (Bernstein 1997). Another major part of the formation of a critical identity for early activists was the absence of organized opposition. Opposition was routine, and activists only had to define themselves against mainstream cultural views to criticize or deconstruct them (Bernstein 1997). All of this changed by the 1970s with the rise of the religious Right, and other factors:

Activists no longer placed the same emphasis on challenging gender roles and the construction of heterosexuality in state-oriented lesbian and gay rights campaigns. As many have observed, an ethnic- or interest-group model that sought achievement of rights replaced the liberation model that sought freedom from constraining gender roles and sexual categories (Altman 1982; Paul 1982; Escoffier 1985; Epstein 1987; Seidman 1993; Gamson 1995). Institutionalized, professionally led organizations often supplanted the grassroots groups of the early 1970s The gay liberation fronts and the gay activists’ alliances had all but disappeared (Bernstein 1997, 548).

Table 5. Analytic dimensions of *Identity* per Bernstein (1997, 537)

Identity for empowerment	Activists must draw on existing identity or construct a new collective identity in order to create and mobilize a constituency. The particular identity chosen will have implications for future activism.
Identity as goal	Activists may challenge stigmatized identities, seek recognition for new identities, or deconstruct restrictive social categories as goals of collective action.
Identity as strategy	<p>Identities may be deployed strategically as a form of collective action. <i>Identity deployment</i> is defined as expressing identity such that the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become subject to debate.</p> <p><i>Identity for critique</i> confronts the values, categories and practice of the dominant culture.</p> <p><i>Identity for education</i> challenges the dominant culture's perception of the minority or is used strategically to gain legitimacy by playing on uncontroversial themes.</p>

My analysis enters into the larger lesbian and gay rights conversation mid-stream, as institutionalized organizations increasingly issued rights-based edicts that resulted in framing for the whole MEM movement. Eagin and Sherrill (2005) argue that the earlier sexual liberation-focused lesbian and gay rights movement focused on liberty – freedom for LGBT people to live the lives they desire – whereas the contemporary MEM focuses on equality – respect from straight people is a prerequisite to include LGBT people as fellow citizens. While these two foci are not mutually exclusive, it was not until the same-sex marriage debate post-Hawaii that equality began to routinely trump liberty. Early grassroots groups, like the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists' Alliance, primarily focused on two goals: ending laws that criminalized homosexual behavior, and freedom from retaliation for being openly gay:

Now consider how different civil marriage is from these aforementioned concerns. While the goal of attaining same-sex marriage is certainly somewhat about liberty—the freedom to live one’s life with the partner of one’s choice—it is much more about having this partnership be treated as the same as a heterosexual marriage before the law and in the eyes of fellow Americans. Whereas once LGBT people sought primarily the right to be left alone, they now increasingly demand the right to be recognized as equals (Eagin and Sherrill 2005, 230).

This fundamental reshaping of the movement, as well as increased opposition from traditionalists and christianists led the MEM to forego deploying identity as goal or critique and move toward identity as education (Bernstein 1997). The initial court victory in Hawaii propelled the issue of same-sex marriage to the top of the lesbian and gay rights agenda, and made it seem as if gaining ground in that area would be possible. According to Eagin and Sherrill (2005), prior to such court victories many gay activists long believed that pursuing marriage rights would be a losing battle. In order to claim success in a prolonged marriage campaign against traditionalist opposition, MEM leaders realized that an allied, inclusive strategy was necessary, and the educational identity model prevailed (Bernstein 1997).

Early lesbian and gay rights activism, on the other hand, was counterhegemonic. Achieving marriage rights was not a primary goal of the movement. By stressing liberty-based goals – the right to be left alone, to not be criticized, penalized or stigmatized for being homosexual – early activists challenged those aspects of the status quo that clung most dearly to heteronormativity. In the shift to an equality based movement, however, the MEM had to reconceptualize its position vis-à-vis hegemonic marriage. It was a difficult line to straddle in order to both deploy identity as critique (although some try, as in the arguments that allowing same-sex marriage will transform the institution into something better) and identity as education. The only way to “play on uncontroversial themes” within the marriage debate is to not challenge the aspects of marriage that are most controversial – those highly valued by traditionalists.

Returning to lexicogrammatical choice, the MEM primarily uses two tactics to “play on uncontroversial themes.” First, they argue for *marriage* rights, not *gay* marriage rights or *same-sex* marriage rights. This stresses legal aspects of marriage that everyone can share, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and reduces marriage to the marriage license – the “piece of paper” responsible for conferring legal citizenship rights. This choice is largely a response to criticisms that marriage equality activists are trying to “redefine” marriage. Recall my earlier discussion about how the MEM deploys tactics of dominance. The choice to argue for *marriage* rights instead of *same-sex marriage* rights disguises the contradiction between heteronormative marriage and acknowledgement that the *same sex-ness* of marriage equality will change the marriage institution by default.

Second, movement adherents use talk and personal narrative in a manner that emphasizes the sameness of same-sex relationships as compared to heterosexual relationships. This tactic exemplifies the identity as education (Bernstein 1997) approach – attempting to challenge the dominant culture’s perception of same-sex couples in order to gain legitimacy. It also risks slipping into tactics of dominance by reifying repressive characteristics of hegemonic marriage through allusions to similarity and sameness, as I discussed earlier.

The institution of marriage historically and contemporaneously confers citizenship rights through marriage. In chapter 2 I discussed the public and political nature of the institution of marriage, and how the public identities of husband and wife relate not only to private, hierarchal orderings within the family but also to public ordering of gender roles with corresponding attributes of citizenship. While it is clear that MEM activists believe that denial of marriage rights reinforces their status as second-class citizens, there is no guarantee that equal citizenship status will materialize after achieving marriage rights. The MEM’s steadfast commitment to securing marriage rights, however, means that movement adherents are likely cognizant of the interplay between hegemonic marriage and citizenship in their framing decisions. Hegemony and citizenship are linked to the extent that hegemony maintains dominant interests, and dominant

interests often have a disproportionate stake in determining the eligibility of normative identities for citizenship. The two concepts, to a degree, are mutually reinforcing – dominance reinforces the normative, and the normative is ascribed upon the hegemonic.

Advocates within the MEM tend to see citizenship in egalitarian terms: providing same-sex marriage access is a matter of equality (Josephson 2005). Their arguments focus on equal protection, as in the MEM web corpus concordance “All families deserve the ability to protect themselves with basic legal rights and safeguards such as Social Security, health insurance and unquestioned hospital visitation.” Of course, the equality issue is more than accessing such rights. As a tagline of the Freedom to Marry campaign *Why Marriage Matters* suggests, “Marriage says ‘we are family’ in a way that no other word does” (FTM 2013a). Not having access to the social meanings of this powerful word makes same-sex people second-class citizens. Concordance analysis of the MEM web corpus on *second-class* is revealing on this point:

- “Opponents of equal marriage rights seem intent on dehumanizing gay relationships and creating a second-class status for lesbians and gay men.”
- “Lambda and others will fight until it is clear that just as we are not supposed to have second-class citizens in America, so we should not have second-class marriages.”
- “Inserting the federal government into marriage for the first time in U.S. history, DOMA creates a radical caste-system of first- and second-class marriages.”
- “It is about basic equality, individual freedom to choose, and the rejection of second-class citizenship and second-class marriages.”

The push for marriage equality, then, inherently assumes a post-equality citizenship transformation extending beyond the confines of the martial relationship – full inclusion and a complete rejection of second-class citizenship status (or worse, invisibility or unintelligibility) that has long plagued the LGBTQI community. A worry, little addressed within the MEM, is whether such a dramatic upheaval will be possible without “fundamental social and political

change regarding marriage, gender roles, and sexuality” (Josephson 2005, 274). As I mentioned before, MEM framing does not problematize the link between citizenship status and marriage. Recall the rhetorical questions asked by the Family Equality Council interviewee – “Why is it that marriage is the only path to protection? Why is it that only marriage is a path to financial security?” The MEM has no answer to such questions, nor do they attempt to go a step further to interrogate whether hierarchical gender roles within marriage afford differential citizenship status to women and men. The fact is that sexual citizenship is much too complicated to believe that discursively equivocating heterosexual and same-sex marriage will be a surefire means to achieve rights. Yet frames put forth by the MEM make this uncomplicated assertion while simultaneously remaining silent on the complexities of sexual citizenship with regard to hegemonic marriage.

It is possible, and a primarily-dismissed concern within the MEM, that marriage equality will only result in full citizenship for a privileged few. Evaluating MEM reactions to those who question the marriage equality link with citizenship rights is the final element of analysis at the social practice level of my CDA model. According to Josephson (2005), debate over marriage as a worthy goal began within the queer community in 1989. Arguments linking feminist marriage critiques with marriage equality maintained that same-sex access to the marital institution would merely reinforce the patriarchal family (Josephson 2005; Ettelbrick 1997; Polikoff 1993; Robson 1992; Lehr 1999). By this logic, same-sex marriage rights fail to recognize the institutional structure and history of marriage, and as a result marriage equality implicitly accepts a flawed hierarchical structure in which equal citizenship rights are continually stratified by marital role (Josephson 2005). Butler (2002) additionally cautions against reducing the parameters of sexual life to the realm of marriage and the family. Whether one argues for the “normalcy of same-sex couples or for the inherently disruptive quality of queer identity, both arguments accept the existing framework for thinking about marriage and kinship” (Josephson 2005, 277). The resulting citizenship framework is inherently inegalitarian, giving preference and greater status to those who are in long-term, committed, and state-sanctioned relationships (Josephson 2005).

Again, by largely ignoring repressive tendencies within hegemonic marriage, the MEM exhibits a tendency to use tactics of dominance like acquiescence, disguising contradictions, and reification in movement framing. I therefore incorporate an additional web corpus into my analysis – that of Unmarried Equality (UE) – to examine what contemporary counter-hegemonic potential might look like. While I do not go through the complete analytical process that I detailed for the MEM – I solely rely on insights from CL analysis here – I do think that it is illustrative to examine what frames linking a “beyond marriage” perspective to citizenship offer that the MEM does not. It is important to note that UE is not anti-marriage equality. Rather, as UE’s *Position Statement on Same-Sex Marriage* attests:

While access to marriage will provide important legal protections and social recognition for those same-sex couples who choose to marry, it will not guarantee equality and fairness for unmarried people. Many of these existing inequities should be remedied by changing government policy so that it does not discriminate on the basis of marital status (Unmarried Equality 2013).

To evaluate counter-hegemonic messaging from the “beyond marriage” perspective, I only look to concordance analysis of the phrases *marriage equality* and *same-sex marriage*. Such a focus allows me to assess the degree to which UE’s framing decisions mirror with those of the MEM. The following concordance examples are illustrative:

- “Meanwhile, the LGBT movement has recently focused on marriage equality as a stand-alone issue. While this strategy may secure rights and benefits for some LGBT families, it has left us isolated and vulnerable to a virulent backlash.”
- “Our call for an inclusive new civic commitment to the recognition and well-being of diverse households is neither utopian nor unrealistic. To those who argue that marriage equality must take strategic precedence over the need for relationship recognition for other kinds of partnerships, households, and families,

we note that same-sex marriages ... were approved in Canada and other countries only after civic commitments to universal or widely available healthcare and other such benefits.”

- “While same-sex marriage has taken center stage the past few years, benefits to unmarried partners are largely ignored.”
- “An unfortunate consequence of the approval of same-sex marriage has been that states that did offer domestic partnerships often eliminate them when same-sex marriage laws pass.”

The counterhegemonic potential of the messages in these concordances is their unabashed support for not only family diversity, but also for non-marriage based citizenship rights. For the UE, access to things like health care and government support programs should have absolutely nothing to do with one’s marital status. This orientation is drastically different from MEM’s position, which argues that since marriage confers citizenship rights (examples include health care benefits, adoption, immigration, pensions and Social Security, and more), same-sex couples should therefore have access to marriage. Unlike UE, the MEM does not question that marriage should have such power in the first place. By engaging with, rather than resisting, tactics of dominance in movement framing, MEM perpetuates inegalitarian citizenship.

As I discussed in this chapter, MEM framing decisions are strategic, particularly since they are largely driven by the highly professionalized framing processes of large staff-driven organizations and the Freedom to Marry. Because the movement is interested in capturing the attention and support of “middle” Americans who likely find affinity with much, if not all, of hegemonic marriage, it is perhaps not surprising that MEM framing more closely aligned with hegemonic marriage constructs over time. As UE and the “beyond marriage” perspective illustrates, however, marriage equality claims on the state are not the answer to citizenship if they reify repressive elements of heteropatriarchy.

CHAPTER 6: THE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

In this chapter I assess the longitudinal framing choices of the traditional marriage movement (TMM), beginning with careful evaluation of online movement materials dating as far back as the mid-1990s. I also closely evaluate interview data with movement organization leaders from five traditional marriage movement SMOs: Liberty Counsel, Marriage Law Project, American Family Association, Concerned Women for America, and the National Organization for Marriage.

Research confirms that the year 2003 was a significant punctuating event for the TMM, as it was for the marriage equality movement (MEM). This time period was marked by a shift in framing away from a generalized focus on threats to marriage and the family – moral corruption, perversity, sexual liberalization – to a sustained focus on homosexuality, and particularly the threat posed by “the homosexual agenda.” The year also signified the rise in a prognostic frame of *policy*, as more and more TMM messages addressed the need for adherents to raise their voices in support of a federal Constitutional amendment to protect marriage. TMM frames targeted not only “middle” or “persuadable” Americans (the same targets of the MEM), but also adherents within the movement. I argue that the point of framing at this critical time was to incite a moral panic that would serve two purposes: 1) to stigmatize and challenge the legitimacy of same-sex marriage activists and those who pursued LGBTQ rights, and 2) to solidify an argument for the social purposes of the movement’s Biblical and moral principles.

Textual analysis of web content of two TMM organizations – the American Family Association and Concerned Women for America – indicates a very strong correlation between the TMM and hegemonic marriage. While TMM framing typically discussed gendered elements of marriage in terms of the public identities of husband and wife, they also acknowledged the Biblical basis of marriage as a hierarchical relationship. Looking to 1 Corinthians 11:3, for example – *But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ* – illustrates a Biblical edict for the submission

of women as wives to their husbands. In much of TMM framing, however, the issue of gender hierarchy remained subdued. The more important element of contention within hegemonic marriage was its heteronormativity. TMM adherents feared that same-sex marriage would radically redefine the institution, such that it risked being deinstitutionalized and becoming completely arbitrary – and, thus, non-hegemonic. As such, the crux of moral panic framing that emerged around 2003 focused on the threat of the homosexual agenda vis-à-vis marriage and the family.

While I argue in Chapter 5 that the MEM moved away from its counter-hegemonic potential by no longer arguing that marriage equality could change the marital institution, most TMM adherents believe this premise to be a given. For example, the arguments I presented in Table 5.1 about the revolutionary potential of same-sex marriage are also quoted by TMM adherents in the web corpus as evidence of the insidious nature of the homosexual agenda. Whereas the MEM stresses finding shared values with potential opponents, the TMM tries to find ways to depict opponents as possessors of incalculable evil. This tactic further suggests the presence of a moral panic frame.

In reality, the fact that the TMM had to spend time framing moral panic to not only people outside of their ranks, but also to supposedly like-minded people within the movement indicates that hegemonic marriage was potentially losing its strength or was in transition. During the period of the punctuating events of 2003, there was a swell of FAQ documents about same-sex marriage published by TMM organizations. These documents clarified TMM positions on homosexuality through reliance on the two disciplinary mechanisms of hegemony – coercion and legitimation (Heise 2012). Public identities of marriage – husband and wife – were legitimated as ordained by God, and gays and lesbians who did not or could not match such identities were subjected to intense stigmatization. The TMM demarcated clear boundaries around accepted relationships – those adhering to hegemonic marriage – using discourse evocative of a moral

panic. I argue that moral panic framing was a reaction of the TMM to perceived changes in hegemonic marriage. I explore this argument in detail in the following sections.

Textual Analysis (Description) of TMM Web Corpus

To provide the narrative context for the TMM, I evaluate the American Family Association (AFA). I choose the AFA primarily because it is “one of the largest and most effective pro-family organizations in the country with over two million online supporters and approximately 180,000 paid subscribers to the *AFA Journal*, the ministry’s monthly magazine” (AFA 2013). In addition to online content, AFA also owns and operates nearly 200 radio stations across the country, has a worldwide syndicated news provider, and numerous activist web sites. The organization also states that its web sites average over 40 million hits and five million visitors each month. According to the AFA, the organization uses these resources “to communicate an outspoken, resolute, Christian voice throughout America” (AFA 2013).

Using the Wayback Machine internet archive, I noticed less consistent reporting on family, marriage, and “homosexual” issues beginning in 2009. I therefore added additional content to the internet corpus from another notable pro-family group, Concerned Women for America (CWA). Because AFA linked regularly to content from CWA, I took that as an adequate indicator of their mission alignment. CWA states that it is “the nation’s largest public policy women’s organization, with a rich 30-year history of helping our members across the country bring Biblical principles into all levels of public policy” (CWA 2013). The organization focuses on six core issues, including the family, the sanctity of human life, religious liberty, education, pornography and national sovereignty. Membership of CWA consists of half a million people who “share in CWA’s vision to restore the family to its traditional purpose” (CWA 2013).

The early years. The original goal of the American Family Association was to address the detrimental influence of television and other media, including pornography, on American society. AFA characterized entertainment industry vice as an affront to American values. Such values were those “on which our country was founded and which keep a society and its families

strong and healthy” (AFA 1997a). A major concern was how media worked to “normalize” and “glorify” premarital sex, which AFA saw as directly leading to social problems like an increase in teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and abortion as a means of birth control (AFA 1997a). Much of AFA’s early strategy involved mobilizing people sympathetic to their point of view, creating petitions, organizing corporation boycotts and picketing, and spearheading letter-writing campaigns to policymakers.

AFA also targeted another threat during the mid-1990s – “the homosexual agenda.” Homosexual activism was of particular concern to traditionalist activists within the AFA because it represented pushing sexual practices inimical to traditional conceptions of sexuality within the family. Publicly acknowledgement of inimical sexual practices also signaled a new-found power for homosexuals, making homosexuality seem even more threatening than before. A 1997 report titled, “Homosexuality in America: Exposing the Myths” offered the following description of homosexual activism:

Are homosexuals in America banded together in order to advance some social agenda?

While not all homosexuals are part of one political movement, there is no doubt that there exist powerful, politically organized groups. As homosexual rights activist Dick Michaels said near the beginning of the homosexual movement:

Homosexuals could be a very potent economic and political force - if united. The time has come for new leadership to rise from the wreckage of the past. Here and there are signs of a new movement --dedicated to achieving a place in the sun for all homosexuals (AFA 1997b)

AFA looked to the 1970s as a time when the status of homosexuality changed from “deviance or perversion to alternate lifestyle or minority” (AFA 1997b). With this new minority status was an opportunity to organize. While AFA identified a number of groups who sought to “improve the public image of homosexuality as a viable lifestyle” or to “effect change in public policy” (AFA 1997b), at that point there was no explicit reference to homosexuals trying to

secure marriage rights or redefine marriage. The social and political agenda of homosexuals, rather, was left vague with hints of a dark, insidious nature. The following passage highlights traditionalist conceptions of the homosexual threat typical of the mid-1990s:

[U]nderstanding that the majority of people do not consider homosexuality a legitimate lifestyle and certainly not a civil right, homosexuals often understate their social goals. Thus, when the homosexual community's agenda is cast in terms of "civil rights" or "rights to privacy" it not only makes it difficult to speak out against such an agenda without sounding bigoted, but it hides the covert agenda. Peter LaBarbera in *Human Events* comments:

Unfortunately, much of the real homosexual agenda – and the realities of "gay" life – remains buried in the homosexual subculture to which the average American is seldom exposed.

Prominent homosexual leaders and publications have voiced support for pedophilia, incest, sadomasochism, and even bestiality. ... What is at stake is the hearts and minds of American people (AFA 1997b).

Beyond perhaps "civil rights" or "rights to privacy," the passage does not spell out specifics of the gay movement's "covert agenda." Rather, it serves as an example of how the AFA, and TMM adherents more generally, often discursively rely on inference and innuendo to characterize the socio-political goals of lesbian and gay activists.

While the AFA acknowledged that there is nothing inherently wrong with special interest groups trying to change circumstances to best serve their interests, they highlighted a specific concern with homosexuals:

... to the degree that the homosexual movement changes society in its favor, (1) it will inevitably lead to an improper violation of the moral and religious sentiments of millions of Americans who oppose homosexuality, and (2) it will contribute to the overall decay of society (AFA 1997b).

This notion of “improper violation of sentiments” as a result of the homosexual agenda worried the AFA and other pro-family groups for a number of reasons, including forced exposure to information about homosexuality. For example, AFA stated:

It is not enough for homosexual activists to debate these issues among adults in the open marketplace of ideas. The homosexual community has engaged the power of government in what some regard as brainwashing our children. More and more Christians will find their values assaulted by the government through the public schools (AFA 1997b).

I go into detail here about AFA’s position on homosexuality not to beleaguer the point, or to suggest that this is the only issue that concerned pro-family activists. That is far from true. Rather I want to introduce early perceptions and preconceived notions that the SMO had about homosexuality, the family, and American values because they shape traditionalists’ reactions to the “gay marriage threat” down the line. The *modus operandi* for AFA and pro-family organizations like it in the latter part of the 1990s was to bring issues back to the notion of family and values. Homosexuality was certainly one concern, but other prominent topics included the sanctity of life, pornography, anti-Christian bigotry, and smut in the media. All of these were seen as attacks on basic Christian values, Christian identity, and functions of the family as the appropriate place for childrearing. Traditionalists tended to view society in one of two ways – either stable and thriving, bolstered by the Biblical principles of traditional family values, or unstable and on a path to self-destruction because of the trappings of perversity. As AFA stated with regard to the homosexual agenda, there was no middle ground.

Clarifying opposition. In the late 1990s, the United Methodist Church created waves in the pro-family movement by taking same-sex allied positions and even performing same-sex union services in the church. This controversy occurred during the same time frame as Matthew Shepard’s brutal murder in Wyoming, and led traditionalists to clarify their principled opposition to homosexuality. Dr. Donald Wildmon, AFA Founder and President, for example, lamented the normalization of homosexuality in secular media, and the fact that “homosexual activists have

captured the support of politicians, educational leaders, entertainment/media elite, business, and sadly, many of our church leaders” (Wildmon 1999). Wildmon was also particularly concerned that people could be labeled as bigots solely by choosing to oppose homosexuality and uphold “traditional values based on Christian teaching” (Wildmon 1999).

As a way to provide traditionalists with common language for opposing homosexuality, Wildmon described ten AFA principles intended to obstruct the homosexual agenda. Principles spanned from Scripture-based arguments to cultural proclamations of threat posed by homosexuality, including a linkage between sexual liberalization and the normalization of deviant behavior. For traditionalists, deviant behavior was often viewed as a causal path to family destruction. I offer Wildmon’s principles in abbreviated form:

1. The scripture declares that homosexuality is unnatural and sinful. ...
[Homosexuality] rejects God’s design for mankind as heterosexual beings.
2. ... the root of homosexuality is a sinful heart. ...
3. It is the duty of individual Christians ... to bring the gospel to homosexuals and to speak out against the acceptance of sin in our culture.
4. We oppose the homosexual movement’s efforts to convince our society that their behavior is normal because we fear the judgment of God on our nation.
5. The homosexual movement is a progressive outgrowth of the sexual revolution of the past 40 years and will lead to the normalization of even more deviant behavior.
6. The homosexual movement’s promotion of same-sex marriage undermines the God-ordained institution of marriage and family which is the foundation of all societies.
7. We oppose the efforts of the homosexual movement to force its agenda on our sentiments in schools, government, business and workplaces through law, public policy and media. Our strong opposition is a reaction to the homosexual movement’s aggressive strategies.

8. We oppose the effort to convince our culture that because individuals participate in homosexual behavior, they have earned the right to be protected like racial and other minority groups.
9. While we are resolute in our opposition to the homosexual movement, we recognize the importance of maintaining Christian integrity. ... we will reject the temptation to become bitter or hateful in our words or actions.
10. Finally, we seek faithfulness more than victory. We work with the confidence that ... God of the Bible will fulfill His purposes (Wildmon 1999).

AFA got into the anti-same-sex marriage arena full speed in 1999 by promoting a petition for the Protection of Marriage Initiative, a California coalition supporting the mini-DOMA Proposition 22 ballot initiative that eventually defined marriage in the state as between one man and one woman. Rhetoric around the passage of Proposition 22 was particularly urgent because the vote loomed at the same time the Vermont Supreme Court considered same-sex marriage. AFA characterized their support of Proposition 22 by stating, “A fair-minded person’s exercise of freedom of conscience in support of traditional marriage is not hatred, bigotry, discrimination or extremism towards any person or their family, but affirms the irreplaceable role of marriage between men and women in our society” (AFA 1999). To show that influential elected officials shared their perspectives, AFA also offered a list of quotes from like-minded policymakers (AFA 1999):

- From Dr. Shakhib Mishherghi, President of the Muslim-American Voter Association: “Preserving the traditional definition of marriage as a union of one man and one woman sends a needed signal to our children that family strength is alive and well. It is a common sense idea that transcends religious or political boundaries.”
- From Julio Calderon, Former President of the Mexican-American Political Association: “Now more than ever, we need to re-affirm the importance of Mom and

Dad in our children's lives. By saying, "Yes" to marriage between a man and a woman, we are saying, "Yes" to our families' future."

- From Alveda King-Tookes, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and founder of King for America: "I believe in families and in marriage as a union between a man and a woman. It is a timeless foundation on which human civilization is built."

Throughout the early 2000s, AFA continued to report on homosexuality issues and the homosexual agenda (now mostly clarified as the insidious influence of homosexuality on American youth), as well as other priority areas of marriage and family, decency and morality, sanctity of human life, stewardship, and media integrity. A more sustained focus on same-sex marriage was becoming apparent, however. In May 2000, AFA included a blurb under a column titled "Homosexuality Issues" that included the Freedom to Marry logo and the following statement:

The ultimate goal of homosexuals is the legalization of homosexual marriage as seen from the information taken from The Marriage Project, of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund web site. . . . This issue is not going away anytime soon. AFA promises to continue to bring you up to date information to help you stay informed (AFA 2000).

Later AFA documents clarified that same-sex marriage access was threatening because it redefined marriage. Redefining marriage to include same-sex couples was not the primary cause of family breakdown – divorce, infidelity, lack of moral decency, and more were already doing that. Traditionalists believed, however, that redefining marriage razed the concept of family itself because it irrevocably changed one of the most fundamental institutions of social organization (Vitagliano 2001).

An August 17, 2001 article titled, "What is a Family? New Video Introduces Kids to Same-Sex Couples" posed an interesting perspective on how TTM adherents viewed family diversity. The article critiqued a video titled *That's a Family!* created by filmmakers Helen Cohen

and Debra Chasnoff and designed to teach elementary-aged children about tolerance of diverse family forms. In the video, children spoke in their own words about their parents' different racial or ethnic backgrounds, their physical disabilities, or the fact that some were in same-sex relationships. AFA took issue with the latter representation, and argued against the discursive strategy of suggesting legitimacy by association – if other diverse types of families are okay does not necessarily mean that gay parents must be, too. Ed Vitagliano, AFA Research Director and News Editor of the *AFA Journal*, wrote:

It is true that most of us think of our families in terms of togetherness, love, and caring. However, this strategy of legitimacy by association involves a classic fallacy. Just because all dogs are mammals doesn't mean that all mammals are dogs; likewise, just because families love each other doesn't mean that all people who love each other are families (Vitagliano 2001).

The logical fallacy argument is an important one to consider with regard to my discussion in Chapter 5 about the recent MEM push to build alliances through talk and sharing personal narratives. While MEM activists perceive such efforts as attempts to build common ground – *My family members love each other; love characterizes family* – TMM activists likely hear that message differently. Family has its own specific meaning, and even efforts to identify shared values can be perceived as exercises to redefine the family.

At the heart of worries over family redefinition were concerns about gender and homosexuality. Vitagliano shared a story of gay men who were both legally named the parents of a child born to a surrogate mother. Vitagliano quoted one of the fathers, Barry Drewitt, as saying, “We are celebrating a legal victory. The nuclear family as we know it is evolving. The emphasis should not be on being a father and a mother, but on loving, nurturing parents” (Vitagliano 2001). Vitagliano concluded that homosexual activists insist on redefining marriage so as to eliminate the need for a father and mother:

... [they] understand intuitively that such a model excludes them—and their relationships—from legitimacy. ... The traditional model, after all, is a strictly heterosexual construction. The nuclear family is built around the marriage of one man and one woman, who are sexually complementary beings. Any society which adopts that model as the basic building block for its culture will—even without realizing it—effectively lock out of the circle of legitimacy nonmarried cohabitating couples, homosexual variations, and even polygamous combinations. ...

That is why the type of approach used in **That's a Family!** becomes so instrumental Through the soft voices of children, the concept of family becomes so blurred as to become virtually meaningless. After all, if by family we mean nothing really specific—or if we define it in the most malleable of terms—then family really comes to mean nothing at all. It is like a formless, intangible vapor that can enter and fill a jar of any shape (Vitagliano 2001).

It is also notable that traditionalists at this time not only deployed anti-homosexual marriage information, but also sampled from other media sources about the status of the family. Examples of the latter approach were data from the 2000 Census, as well as studies about fatherhood, the likelihood of divorced mothers facing financial struggle, health impacts of divorce, social factors promoting or inhibiting abstinence, and more. While much of this reporting was generated internally and closely adhered to AFA's Biblical focus, some of it was the work of TMM "outsiders." Examples include links to work by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead of infamous *Dan Quayle was Right* fame, David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values, and others that I characterize in this project as members of the Marriage Movement camp. Cross-movement sampling does not mean complete co-terminality with principles or values of other movements, but rather is evidence of some degree of interdiscursivity between the TMM and the MM. It is unlikely that people within the TMM would find much at fault with MM adherents, and particularly not with the social science researchers (marriage educators might be in more iffy

terrain – particularly those who view skills-based approaches as equally applicable to married and non-married couples alike). However, the TMM's very strict, religious orientation might not be a good fit with MM adherents. This suggests that even if interdiscursivity in movement framing is apparent, I cannot assume that connections across discourses maintain at similar levels. The direction of discursive flows matter.

Even though traditionalists borrowed from family research discourse of the MM, pro-family groups tend to not overly rely on scientific findings about the family. For example, current MM research suggests that children do best if raised by their own two married biological parents. But traditionalists fear that research evidence can be fleeting. If such findings bolster the social position of heterosexual marriage, what happens if new evidence finds that children do equally well in a variety of settings (Vitagliano 2001)? To avoid this risk, traditionalists say that God is final authority. AFA staff member Ed Vitagliano quoted Paul in Romans 3:4 on this point, "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar."

Defining moment in history. Up until 2003, the AFA worked to inform traditionalists about Biblical principles against homosexuality; to "love the sinner, hate the sin" and assist homosexuals on a spiritual journey back to embracing their God-given heterosexuality (e.g., through the support of organizations like Exodus International or activities like the Focus on the Family's "Love Won Out" conference); and to identify instantiations of the homosexual agenda and direct consumer boycotts of corporations who supported it. The year 2003 ushered in a new era of political activism, however, largely oriented around the marriage equality victory in Massachusetts and the potential passage of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

An example of new anti- same-sex marriage activism was AFA launching the nogyammarriage.com website, which as of October 2003 claimed over 725,000 signatures on a petition to support the Federal Marriage Amendment. The same petition had over 2 million signatures approximately a year later. The purpose of the petition was to prevent the complete and radical redefinition of marriage. The petition stated:

Traditional marriage between a man and woman is the God-ordained building block of the family and a bedrock of a civil society. Therefore, I urge your support of a federal marriage amendment to protect traditional marriage between one woman and one man (AFA/nogaymarriage.com Oct 2003).

An article by Jody Brown and Bill Fancher (2003) further described a meeting of a coalition of pro-family leaders called The Arlington Group. The more than two dozen organizations who participated in the convened meeting—including the Southern Baptist Convention, the AFA, Focus on the Family, and the Christian Coalition of America—were “ready to fight like never before to defend the biblical concept of marriage: the union of one man and one woman” (Brown and Fancher 2003). Pro-family leaders stated that “same-sex marriage is the issue for our times” (Brown and Fancher 2003). Sandy Rios of the Concerned Women for America highlighted the critical juncture of issues that made a coordinated fight against same-sex marriage necessary, namely the conflux of same-sex marriage legalization in Canada, the *Lawrence v. Texas* Supreme Court decision, the Episcopal Church sanctioning a homosexual bishop, and the looming Massachusetts same-sex marriage decision (Brown and Fancher 2003).

Robert H. Knight, drafter of the Defense of Marriage Act and then-director of the Culture & Family Institute, an affiliate of Concerned Women for America, wrote talking points for traditionalist activists. Talking points clarified the definition of marriage – “the union of the only type of couple capable of natural reproduction of the human race – a man and a woman. Children need both mothers and fathers, and marriage is society’s way of obtaining them” (Knight 2003). Knight explained why a gender-differentiated model is important for children:

Children learn crucial things about family life by observing our crucial relationships up close: interactions between men and women; husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and parents to children of the same and opposite sexes. ... It is wrong to create fatherless or motherless families by design (Knight 2003).

Knight also stressed that traditionalists should be suspicious of the motives behind calls for marriage equality. For example, granting recognition to homosexual marriage risks that “other groups, such as bisexuals and polygamists, will demand the right to redefine marriage to suit their own proclivities” (Knight 2003). Additionally, because “homosexual relationships ... usually lack both permanence and fidelity,” they are “unlikely to change to fit the traditional role of lifelong, faithful marriage” (Knight 2003). Knight speculated that homosexual couples, in fact, do not want to “fit” into the traditional role – they want to change it: “some homosexual activists have acknowledged that they intend to use marriage mainly as a way to radically shift society’s entire conception of sexual morality” (Knight 2003).

The year 2003 also marked a well-spring of FAQ/Q&A documents regarding same-sex marriage. One document, “What’s Wrong with Letting Same-Sex Couples ‘Marry’?” by Peter Sprigg, clarified the nature of the issue: “The debate over ‘marriage’ for same-sex couples has been framed as an issue of ‘equal rights’—but it is not. The real issue is the definition of what ‘marriage’ is” (Sprigg 2003). Central to Sprigg’s definition of marriage is its procreative purposes. But merely the biological conception and birth of children into the world is “not sufficient for the reproduction of a healthy, successful society”—that is the role that marriage plays (Sprigg 2003). Sprigg looked to Paul Nathanson (a “homosexual scholar”) to identify five functions of marriage:

- Foster the bonding between men and women
- Foster the birth and rearing of children
- Foster the bonding between men and children
- Foster some form of healthy masculine identity
- Foster the transformation of adolescents into sexually responsible adults (Sprigg 2003).

An FAQ by Glenn Stanton (of Focus on the Family) titled, “Is Marriage in Jeopardy,” further explained the implied need for gender differentiation within marriage:

The most loving mother in the world cannot teach a little boy how to be a man. Likewise, the most loving man cannot teach a little girl how to be a woman. A gay man cannot teach his son how to love and care for a woman. A lesbian cannot teach her daughter how to love a man or know what to look for in a good husband. Is love enough to help two gay dads guide their daughter through her first menstrual cycle? Like a mom, they cannot comfort her by sharing their first experience. Little boys and girls need the loving daily influence of both male and female parents to become who they are meant to be (Stanton 2003).

A very real risk, according to Stanton, is that allowing same-sex marriage would direly affect gender:

Gender would become nothing. The same-sex proposition cannot tolerate the idea that any real, deep and necessary differences exist between the sexes. It must rest on a “Mister Potato Head theory” of gender difference (same core, just interchangeable body parts) (Stanton 2003).

The battle that took shape in 2003 was about saving the institution of marriage. For traditionalists, the boundaries of marriage were under attack. This meant that their shared understandings of civil society, gender, and even civilization were in perilous territory as well.

The calm after the storm. While the AFA maintained a focus on same-sex marriage after its legalization in Massachusetts and the defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment, traditionalist discourse seemed to lose a bit of its edge. Traditionalists described same-sex marriage advances almost with a sense of resignation. AFA, however, continued to pursue activist strategies – establishing churchcoalition.com, for example, as a place for pastors to express opposition to homosexual marriage and to pledge to defend the Biblical concept of marriage. The pastor’s pledge was in reaction to homosexual activists “already boasting that they have the votes to get ‘homosexual marriage’ approved by Congress” (churchcoalition.com 2005). Yet, this and

other activist strategies – including those associated with nogaymarriage.com and marriageprotectionweek.com – disappeared by 2006.

An AFA website redesign at the end of decade removed the family and homosexual agenda tabs, which made the issue of same-sex marriage seem even less pressing. Publications addressing marriage and homosexuality were still there, of course, but they more embedded, less out in the open, and certainly not encapsulated in stand-alone petition websites with millions of signatories. The content of AFA concern about the family also seemed to shift back to family breakdown and moral decency. A 2009 article by in the *AFA Journal*, for example, highlighted preacher Paul Tripp’s description of current threats to marriage:

Anything that redefines the major institutions that God has set up is a threat. Right now, the greatest threat to marriage in the church is not outside the church; it’s inside the church. The presence of separated and divorced couples in the church of Jesus Christ is the greatest scandal of the Gospel in our generation (Grace 2009).

This explanation is a far-cry from the anti- same-sex marriage discourse of six years prior. Traditionalists seemed fatalistic about losing the homosexuality culture battle. Ed Vitagliano, for example, wrote in a 2009 commentary about what to expect in the new Obama administration: “In any case, with or without same-sex marriage, homosexual activists are about to hit the jackpot. This nation cannot really sustain itself with two warring parties that firmly stand upon two mutually exclusive views of sex, marriage and family” (Vitagliano 2009). Despite this negative prediction, Vitagliano did not follow with a call for action.

To ensure that I am not misreading AFA’s feelings of defeat, or that I missed something important in my random searches of archival content, I look to content from the Concerned Women for America (CWA) beginning in 2009. CWA very clearly lists family as their top issue, and states: “CWA believes that marriage consists of one man and one woman. We seek to protect and support the Biblical design of marriage and the gift of children (CWAa 2009). Many articles appearing on their website during and after 2009 continued to deal with same-sex marriage

issues. A 2011 article by Wendy Wright, for example, detailed evidence that 62 percent of Americans believe in the traditionalist definition of marriage. Wright stated, “Don’t buy it. When people say that same-sex ‘marriage’ is inevitable, recognize it for the peer-pressure, crowd-mentality, intimidation tactic that it is” (Wright 2011). This commentary suggests that rhetoric of inevitability dissuaded some traditionalists from continuing to fight the marriage battle. The article ended by stating, “It’s time to find our voice—and this is great information to speak out on” (Wright 2011). Saying that it is time to *find* our voice implies that it has been lost on this issue.

Textual Analysis (Description) of TMM Interview Corpus

As I did in chapter 5, I first textually analyze interview transcripts and then focus on social process analysis/interpretation by coding transcripts for diagnostic and prognostic frames. Finally, I end with corpus linguistic analysis to test my coding assumptions, and to make sure that my interpretations are reflected in the lexicogrammatical and structural choices of interview participants and online SMO documents.

Textual analysis thus far suggests three primary TMM frames: 1) a commitment to naming marriage as a heterosexual union between one man and one woman; 2) a preoccupation with the socially destabilizing effects of sexual liberalization; and 3) a fear that redefining marriage away from its traditional foundations will usher in a new detrimental sexual morality and destroy the family. Keeping these in mind, textual analysis of the interview corpus will provide insight into the processes that make such collective action frames visible. By paying attention to the details of movement framing processes, I am better positioned to understand how hegemonic marriage can influence movement framing practices.

Culture war. Traditionalists find themselves in the midst of a culture war. Activists who are “either conservative or religious, or both” (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009) want to “restore religious culture and freedom and preserve the sanctity of human life and the traditional family” (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20,

2009b). There are two competing and potentially mutually exclusive worldviews at odds in the culture war:

One would be based on the Judeo-Christian worldview. It's religiously oriented and traditional in terms of its values. The other is secular, and is generally ordered around individual perspectives, experience, rather than appealing to any kind of tradition. ... [T]he sexual revolution, out of which the homosexual movement has come, is ... the flashpoint of that ideological conflict – human sexuality and how we order our sexual lives and the outgrowth of that ... marriage and family (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

Within this definition, two sources of ideological conflict attribute to the secularists: an overly-heightened sense of individualism at the expense of tradition, and sexual liberalization. Of special concern is how secular views, once thought to be deviant, attained mainstream positioning early in the twenty-first century: “Now to some extent the counter-culture view has become the status quo and you have the pro-family movement in a strange kind of way attempting to be the counter-culture” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

For the TMM, the threat of rampant individualism is its interconnectedness with sexual liberalism. In reality, there is a social continuum of perspectives about marriage that may not map completely on one or the other end of the culture war spectrum. But traditionalists argue there is a risk associated with prioritizing the individualist marriage equality perspective:

It really runs the gamut, from people who take the position of one man and one woman and that's that, to people who say it really doesn't make any difference. You have to accommodate people in accordance with their own self-definition. ... You'll get these questions like, where do you stop? ... If you're looking at all seriously at the literature of the marriage equality side, you find very clearly, well, you're not supposed to stop. You're supposed to be accommodating people – the divergence of the many ways of

people defining their own sexuality should be accommodated (Marriage Law Project, personal communication, February 6, 2009).

TMM actions desire to re-establish the privileged, default status of marriage in society. Traditionalist SMOs strive to be strategic with regard to winning the culture war, and at the very least, for their actions to be divinely purposeful. For example, an interviewee from the Liberty Counsel explained that, for the organization to become involved in a case a criterion that must be met is the case's potential to impact culture: "It has to be legally defensible. It has to have a good client, and it has to have a potential impact in the culture beyond just the parties involved" (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009).

Such purposeful framing functions as tool of hegemonic marriage. In order for any hegemonic construction to maintain its power position, it must encourage tactics that reinforce its common-sense nature and diminish those that undermine it. Recall my discussion in chapter 1 that hegemony is sustained through practices of coercion and legitimation (Heise 2012). Both practices are evident in attempts of the TMM to "win" the culture war. Non-normative sexual practices – those that value individualized conceptions of sexuality and that engage in behaviors supported by beliefs of the sexual revolution – are policed through TMM framing. Traditionalists identify individuals with liberal sexual beliefs as the key problematic in the culture war, and target them for their detrimental social influence. Similarly, TMM discourse legitimates *traditional* marriage as the only valid sexual relationship form. Marriage is the only type of relationship providing clear boundaries to shape social functioning. If hegemonic marriage relaxes to legitimate other forms of relationships, all sexual boundaries become arbitrary. Without cultural understanding that marriage is a heterosexual institution with clear roles for women and men within it, the ability to label and regulate any/all types of relationships becomes elusive.

Message targets. The same-sex marriage debate required the TMM to re-focus their core messages. No longer could activists assume that marriage tradition held sway with the American public. This is an interesting disconnect with the marriage equality movement, whose framing

strategies suggest that tradition still matters to certain, crucial population demographics (the persuadable “middle”). The MEM recognizes that American relationships are diverse, yet MEM framing choices often discursively dance with hegemonic positions rather than make calls to fully embrace family diversity in all forms. Both TMM and the MEM understand that the social erosion of marriage began in the 1960s, and its boundaries continue to disintegrate. Public perception of the institution certainly used to be hegemonic, but TMM adherents argue that fact cannot be taken as given any longer, largely because of the influence of sexual liberalization, including the normalization of same-sex relationships. Interestingly, even with its appeals of shared values with “middle” Americans, same-sex marriage activists may be having a counter-hegemonic effect after all:

[T]he success of the homosexual movement has forced us to fine-tune our message.

There was a time when you simply said, marriage is between a man and a woman. It’s always been that way. Then more and more people said, why has it been that way? ... It has forced us to clarify that message and to make it more specific. Because the days when you could simply say, well, that’s because that’s the way it’s always been – those days are over. ... There’s no tendency in our culture to accept tradition for tradition’s sake.

That began to erode in the ‘60s and has continued (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The TMM tries to engage potential movement adherents so that they pay attention to traditionalist issues and follow through with persuasive conversation and votes at the ballot box. The movement recognizes that people are largely passive receivers of information, and even if secular realities do not mesh with their worldviews, most will let disjunctions slide. Interrogation at a deeper level is relatively rare. Playing on such passivity is an example of disguising contradictions as a tactic of dominance. Even if adherents are solely attracted to the TMM based on what their gut instincts tell them about marriage, it is not in the best interest of the movement to tease out possible contradictions and help adherents work through them. Rather, glossing over

incongruence and fortifying traditionalist beliefs is a more efficient framing strategy. Working to “attempt to influence cultural debate from a traditional family and traditional morality perspective” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009) includes two steps. First, informing people “about what is happening” and second, encouraging them to:

...talk accurately and passionately around the water cooler or at the ball game, anywhere that they might interact with their neighbors... and hopefully convince people who might disagree with you to change their minds or to fortify the beliefs of people who might initially agree with you but not really have any idea why something is right” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The goal for traditionalist SMOs is to persuade the “mushy middle” – the same group of “middle” Americans targeted by the MEM. Both sides of the culture war struggle to access “middle” Americans because “the people in the middle don’t live, eat and breathe this stuff. ... They may have some gut feelings about it, but they’re too busy” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009). Through strategies of continual engagement, organizations like the AFA want “to at least be kind of a part of the background noise in their lives” so that the organization can “capitalize on that when a particular battle arises” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

TMM organizations acknowledge that “choosing your audience and understanding your audience and targeting your message to the audience is extremely important” (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b). The “middle” is not the only audience, however. Most of the organizations target their own ideologically-aligned adherents as well. Movement leaders suggested that a good deal of work must be done to convince their own movement adherents – those people who self-identify as traditionalist Christians – that the messages of secular culture are wrong. One leader expressed, for example, that a problem with traditionalists in the culture war is that they are too accepting and tolerant:

The whole homosexual movement agenda pushing for marriage, we have to deal with it because it's become so much a part of our culture now. ... One of the biggest problems we face as a Christian organization is that so many people don't want to be critical. They don't want to be harsh or judgmental. They want to stress loving other people... A lot of people say, it doesn't affect me—why should I care? ... A large part of how we deal with the homosexual marriage movement is to teach people to think critically and think Biblically and to think what's best for children and to think about the biology. ... There's an awful lot of Christian people who have become very soft in their thinking (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b).

The fact that some traditionalist adherents do not fully (or actively or forcefully) ascribe to hegemonic marriage may provide insight into the hegemony's influence at the micro, meso and macro levels. I have stated numerous times that everyday Americans do not necessarily live their lives in step with hegemonic marriage. They may think that traditionalist aspects of marriage are a good idea in principle, but in practice they have little or no qualms about contesting traditional gender roles, bypassing marriage as a precursor to sexual relationships, or accepting the validity of same-sex relationships. This suggests that hegemonic marriage has less influence on the micro level, or that active contestation of hegemony is glossed over by SMOs as perspectival fields change. The fact that TMM organizations must spend time and energy convincing adherents that they should care about marriage further supports this conclusion.

On the other hand, TMM organizations move away from tactics of micro-level persuasion and use a different sort of language when framing marriage as the macro level. At this broadest level of perspective, TMM frames focus attention on competing big-picture conceptions of marriage in a field shaped by hegemony. Macro level discourse tends to treat marriage as a hegemonic imperative – *marriage is* a union of one man and one woman, critical to the functioning of society, the lynchpin that will stop moral decline, etc.

Finally, in evaluating the meso level perspective, punctuating events like those in 2003 signify opportunities for SMOs to engage with hegemonic discourse. SMOs discursively react to hegemonic influences in order to shape the terms of the culture war debate. The MEM, for example, might choose to align itself more closely with certain hegemonic principles in order to strategically cultivate greater support among “middle” Americans. The TMM may also react by constructing and deploying a moral panic frame, the intent of which is to reify and legitimate aspects of hegemonic marriage in order to take away potential power from MEM encroachment. All of this happens at the meso level, and may not necessarily reflect micro-level influence or contestation of hegemonic marriage for most Americans.

Reactionary framing. Most interview participants described the work of their organizations in reactionary terms. SMOs did not initiate a specific action agenda, but rather watched trends and reacted to perceived cultural changes according to the principles set forth in their Biblical missions. Concerned Women for American, for example, is “very reactive. ... We pick up on anything that’s happening in the culture right now. We try to see contemporary things that are happening and bring the data to bear to say, wait a minute” (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b). AFA uses a “sifting” process “where we may identify a half dozen issues and themes that are growing and we just decide that we’re best equipped to handle. And what falls closest to what our historical mission has been” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

Though traditionalist SMO framing processes tend to be reactive their approaches are not devoid of strategy. The AFA, for example, highlighted the role of semantic choices in framing by drawing parallels to abortion controversy:

Pro-family is ... a way of framing the debate. It’s the same kind of semantic battle that goes on over the issue of abortion. We call ourselves pro-life, the other side calls us anti-abortion. ... We call them pro-abortion and they call themselves pro-choice. There’s a certain amount of semantics involved in which you try to gain an advantage in framing

the debate. ... [Y]ou automatically put the other side on the defensive if I call somebody pro-abortion. ... [I]t's certainly an old debater's trick. ... Both sides do it. And anything you can do to make the other side work harder to dig themselves out of a hole before they can promote their particular perspective is an advantage (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

Recall the staff-driven framing strategies within the MEM. Such organizations are very proactive in framing – they not only watch for trends, but they also do extensive public opinion research to figure out which frame messages will likely resonate the greatest number among their target groups. The TMM, on the other hand, watches for trends and then looks to their historical mission to direct framing decisions, not comprehensive focus group data. Even with these differences, however, both movements are acting strategically based on their positioning vis-à-vis hegemonic marriage. The MEM began its journey from an outsider position – gay and lesbian rights activists challenged heteronormativity and looked for fissures in hegemonic marriage on which they could capitalize. For example, the state recognizes that civil marriage is a legal contract. By solely pursuing *legal* access to marriage, and deploying tactics of dominance like disguising contradictions, the MEM made inroads into hegemony while seemingly propping it up - a win-win for the movement.

The TMM is a different case, primarily because of its historical affinity with tenets of hegemonic marriage. Because it started from an insider position, the TMM makes framing decisions with an assumption that hegemonic marriage is right and that challengers to it are wrong. This argument is primarily made through reiteration - going back to hegemonic marriage and restating its core principles. When something powerful is questioned, it is generally a good tactic for those aligned with power to reify it and to deploy dominant tactics to undermine opposition in any way possible. This is where the real strategy of TMM framing comes into play. As the passage above describes, the TMM strategically engages in semantic or lexicogrammatical choice. If they can establish the TMM as *pro*- family and the MEM as *anti*-family, there is less

need for the TMM framing decisions to engage in public opinion research of the type conducted by the MEM. The TMM theoretically has hegemony on their side – if marriage is common-sense, then all traditionalists have to do is convince their targets that the oppositional stance is preposterous, dangerous, or immoral. It could also be that the TMM, as defenders of the hegemonic status quo, are not seeking evidence that public opinion is rapidly changing. The interests of the TMM are best served by suppressing, not taking advantage of, emerging hegemonic fissures. Strategy of this sort is a key component in establishing a moral panic frame, which I will discuss in greater detail at the end of this chapter.

Deinstitutionalization and polygamy. Finally, discussion of the specter of polygamy as an impact of same-sex marriage was prominent in the interview corpus. The TMM predominantly claims that demands for polygamy will surface as a result of same-sex marriage rights further deinstitutionalizing marriage to the point that it loses its inherent meaning. Another way of evaluating the use of polygamy is as a demonizing consequence in a moral campaign, which I will discuss at the end of the chapter. The TMM sees the logic of marriage equality as:

if you have the right to marry who you love, if I don't have the right to marry who I love, then I have been denied a civil right, or a human right, or an equal right, some variation of that. And government cannot do that. It's illegitimate to put artificial constraints on who I can marry" (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009).

Delegitimizing constraints around marriage, particularly gender-based constraints of one man and one woman, makes the institution arbitrary and meaningless:

[O]nce you have detached it from the traditional model, then there is no stopping place that is not arbitrary. There's no reason why you should limit it to two people. ... A man could conceivably love three women at the same time, or three men at the same time. And so once you detach it from the traditional, natural law understanding of what marriage is and where it all comes from, then you essentially head towards a view of

marriage in which it can be anything at all, and therefore ceased to be anything (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The foundation of traditionalist fears regarding marriage deinstitutionalization is the link between marriage redefinition and the hegemonic demise. Natural law established marriage as a material institution for giving expression to sexual activity, as a contractual institution requiring social control, and a public institution for the common good (Witte 1997). Traditionalists believe that same-sex marriage uniquely destabilizes these public purposes of marriage. The passage below highlights that religious and historical factors helped to establish hegemonic marriage. However, note that while the speaker acknowledges historical challenges to hegemony, they do so while simultaneously deploying a discursive tactic of dominance. The interviewee disguises contradictions between hegemony (“common-sense”) and the threat of polygamy to bolster or affirm hegemonic marriage despite apparent evidence of historical hegemonic fissures:

[I]t was kind of a common sense religious and historical context that probably was the common source for defining marriage as one man, one woman. Obviously there are exceptions, even Biblical exceptions in terms of polygamy. And obviously homosexuality was around in Biblical times as well. So it’s not that it didn’t exist. It was certainly recognized as not being a positive development ... for society (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009).

For traditionalists, the importance of keeping the institution of marriage strong is that maintaining hegemonic marriage cements critical elements of society that allow for all other social institutions to do their work. The specter of polygamy, therefore, is a way that traditionalists sound the alarm. It acknowledges that even though hegemony is routinely contested, same-sex marriage challenges hegemony at a level too great to tolerate: the very definition of the marriage institution.

Process Analysis (Interpretation) of TMM Interview Corpus

In this section I explore the interview corpus more deeply through coding interview content using diagnostic and prognostic codes. As before, these codes help me to understand how

TMM organizations view the current field of marriage politics (diagnostic), and give me insight into where they believe they should direct their efforts (prognostic).

TMM interview diagnostic frames. I planned to ask all TMM interview participants of their definition of marriage, as I did with the MEM activists, but in many cases I did not have to. TMM leaders were very forthcoming and clearly defined marriage as a central element of their mission-driven work to restore the traditional family. For the TMM, marriage is a union between one man and one woman. This repeated statement is illustrative of traditionalists' core commitment to a heteronormative conception of marriage. At various times, movement adherents added other qualifiers, such as "a lifelong commitment" (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009), or a "covenant with God and with the community" (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b), or "a structure in which kids can be born and raised in" (Marriage Law Project, personal communication, February 6, 2009). Marriage was also described in terms of natural law, and "as evidence of God's will over humanity" (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009). As such, the predominant diagnostic frames answering the question "What type of union is marriage?" state that marriage is a *heterosexual* institution and a *religious* institution. A third important diagnostic frame is that marriage is a *procreative* union. An example of a passage that combines all three diagnostic frames adamantly denies that marriage is a social institution that can be redefined through social means:

[M]arriage stems from our religious beliefs, Christian beliefs. ... [Marriage is not] primarily a social construct. It's not something humankind has simply decided to invent. ... [M]arriage itself actually springs out of nature, and that it takes only one man and one woman to conceive a child (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The second type of diagnostic frame answers the question "What are the problems facing marriage?" The primary frame emerging here is *breakdown of family form*. Obviously, the main

element is the threat posed by same-sex marriage (since 2003, at least). The ultimate risk is that marriage equality will strip marriage of its meaning and make it arbitrary. Arbitrary constructs cannot be the foundation of society; nor are they an effective foundation for social control. There are other risks from same-sex marriage rights for traditionalist families as well: “[It’s] going to make it more difficult for people who believe in traditional family who had a way to kind of insulate their children from a number of realities of the world. They are now going to have to confront same-sex issues at a very early age with their children” (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009). Impacts may also be seen in culture: “It’s going to change the ways things are marketed in stores. The way that billboards are constructed in advertising. The way that curricula happens in schools. It’s an attempt to make it appear as if homosexual relationships are mainstream” (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009).

Not all threats within the frame of *breakdown of family form* relate to same-sex marriage, however. Divorce is also a concern, but it has not been as widely addressed by traditionalists because it is not perceived to be a political issue. Unlike same-sex marriage, which has an entire social movement devoted to promoting its cause, “divorce was simply a reality, kind of like unwed mothers, that nobody out there was promoting” (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009). One TMM leader pointed to the unmooring of marriage from a sacred covenant as a reason why the family form has broken down:

You have to mention people looking at marriage not as a sacred contract between a man and a woman, but any kind of relationship is just as good – whether you’re married or not... It doesn’t have to be marriage. It can be any grouping of people to make a family. So the separation of marriage from family is a big deal (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b).

Two other less prominent diagnostic frames also emerged – *changing norms* and *interpersonal factors*. Concern over changing norms tended to be gendered, and related primarily to women’s decisions to delay marriage, to delay childbearing, or to work outside the home. Such

changes in the relationship of women to marriage were even deemed to be “*THE* biggest problem” facing marriage to the interviewee from Concerned Women for America (May 20, 2009b, emphasis in original). The frame of *interpersonal factors*, finally, related to couples’ lack of knowledge of how to deal with problems that arise in marriage and the resulting problem of divorce.

TMM interview prognostic frames. Prognostic frames answer *why* and *how* marriage should be addressed. While the MEM implicitly assumed that a policy action, whether legislatively or through the courts, was important to secure marriage rights (the *how*), there is not much proactive discussion in the reverse for the TMM. Rather, while the TMM stresses the inappropriate nature of “judicial activism” and seems to look favorably on tactics like ballot referenda, they do not make a proactive argument about doing any one thing in particular to protect marriage. Of course, such framing was present at particular times in the textual analysis of internet content – particularly activism around passage of the Federal Marriage Amendment. Given this, one relevant prognostic frame, then, is *policy action*. But I argue that an equally powerful frame in the TMM would be *prayer*. The *prayer* frame is not evident in interview literature, but content from the web corpus certainly establishes a link between prayerful action and social change.

It is much easier to identify interview framing of the *why* question. There are two primary frames: *morality* and *de-institutionalization*. The two are interrelated, but diverge in terms of their focus. *Morality* frames are geared to the individual, whereas *de-institutionalization* addresses society. The *morality* frame is not reserved merely for the same-sex marriage debate, either. It is a frame deployed to remind traditionalists of Biblical teachings and the role that marriage should play in a Christian life: “One of our responsibilities is to be Biblical and in a loving way point out what the Bible says and what Christian tradition theology has been throughout history” (Concerned Women for America, personal communication, May 20, 2009b). Even one interview

narrative that overtly described homosexual relationships as sinful expanded its scope to include condemnation of other sexually liberalized practices:

[Marriage equality] makes same-sex relationships more socially acceptable and ... may encourage sinful practices to flourish. ... There used to be stigma about bearing children out of wedlock, and the child was referred to as a bastard. ... That has been destigmatized over time, and now children out of wedlock are celebrated and relationships out of wedlock are celebrated. And the numbers increase as the stigma is removed. I would suggest that having a stigma on sinful practices ... helps deter sinful practices. And I think there's a level of experimentation with sin and with homosexuality that will cause its numbers to increase (Liberty Counsel, personal communication, May 20, 2009).

The frame of *de-institutionalization* pays considerable attention to what marriage used to be, and to the detrimental effects of its changing status. It is, in effect, a frame designed to confront the perception that social policy and opposing discursive movements undermine the hegemonic position of marriage. The flip-side to *de-institutionalization* could be classified as a response to the prognostic question of *how* marriage should be addressed. In other words, marriage should be addressed by *re-institutionalizing* it. This position is certainly implied in interview responses, but not elaborated on with many specifics. The premise of both the *why* and *how* frames are the same, however, and separating them out for analysis does not seem to yield any unique insights.

Much of the *de-institutionalization* conversation centers on the threat of redefining marriage. It is primarily through redefinition that the institution of marriage is undermined. The peril of polygamy as a result of arbitrary marriage constraints is one example of this frame. Another example is how secular emphasis on individualism in relationships undermines social functions of marriage such as regulating procreation:

While governments can regulate marriage, and have regulated it differently, they cannot redefine it. The definition of and the reality of marriage almost predates human

governments. It is something that governments merely recognize and believe is important. That's a different perspective than the one that is currently being promoted by, not just homosexual activists, but by secular movements – that is, individuals decide what marriage is, and why it exists, and they detach it from procreation and then make it merely the contract between people that they love (American Family Association, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

Deinstitutionalization highlights interplay between hegemony and framing, and gives insight into the TMM's choice to deploy a moral panic around the issue of same-sex marriage. In terms of my central research question, the TMM perceived the threat of redefining marriage as a significant hegemonic fissure. Because they so strongly believe in the righteousness of their marriage interpretations – it is an institution that *predates* human governments and answers solely to God – it is understandable that they connected individual morality to the social institution of marriage. If part of the threat to hegemony is “individuals deciding what marriage is,” then an important tactic of reinstitutionalizing marriage is to play the same game – to convince people of the *inherent* virtues of traditional marriage and the *intrinsic* wickedness of those who challenge it. Recall the above passage about needed stigma for sinfulness as a perfect example. Notably, moral panic framing can have a significant impact on citizenship claims for those being stigmatized. I will discuss the citizenship issue in greater detail at the end of this chapter.

TMM Corpus Linguistic Analysis

Using corpus linguist software *AntConc*, I investigate the American Family Association and Concerned Women for America web corpus of over 99,000 words. This corpus is much larger than the one I worked with for the MEM, primarily because I took every opportunity to include full text for articles linked to the AFA website from other traditionalist organizations. Freedom to Marry is the frame-generator of the entire MEM, and I have a high degree of confidence that their framing work largely reflects the marriage equality field of protest. The case

is not the same for the AFA. I want to make sure that I am not according preferential and biased status to the opinions of the AFA, and so I err on the side of including additional perspectives.

The diagnostic and prognostic frames identified in my process/interpretative analysis shape my evaluations of the web corpus at a structural level. Relevant frames include:

Diagnostic – definition of marriage: *heterosexual, religious, procreative*

Diagnostic – problems facing marriage: *breakdown of family form, changing norms, interpersonal factors*

Prognostic – why address marriage: *morality, de-institutionalization*

Prognostic – how to address marriage: *policy, prayer*

Guided by a frequency list prepared using the online *Textalyser* tool (see Table 6), I find that the most frequent diagnostic frame is *heterosexual*, with the diagnostic frames of *religious* and *procreative* and the prognostic frame of *de-institutionalization* enjoying similar frequency levels. These findings are not surprising, based on my descriptive and interpretative analysis of the interview content. In this sense, the frequency list confirms what I already identified as primary TMM frames. The most frequent prognostic frame, however, is *policy*. This is despite what I noted earlier about a lack of proactive policy framing in both web and interview data. Still, I tend to think that this frame should be approached with caution. Even though the movement engages in policy discourse frequently, regularly evoking marriage policy is not the same as saying, “marriage *should be* addressed through policy.” Policy language of the TMM tends to be descriptive. Moreover, most traditionalists would likely argue that marriage should not be addressed in any way, unless to bolster its pre-political, foundational position. Traditionalists tend to believe that public policy is only necessary in marriage to the extent that groups trying to undermine marriage force their hand.

Table 6. *Textalyser* frequency of TMM diagnostic and prognostic frame expressions

Expression	Interview Corpus		Web Corpus	
	Number	Frequency	Number	Frequency
Prognostic Frame: Policy	164	2.6%	1,378	3.1%
state(s)	69	0.1%	279	0.1%

legal/litigation/cases/court/Supreme	54	0.1%	258	0.1%
policy/political	15	*	101	*
federal/government/Congress/Senator	9	*	230	*
amendment/constitution(al)	9	*	187	*
equality/right(s)	8	*	182	*
President	0	0	79	*
Diagnostic Frame: Heterosexual	62	0.1%	1,367	3.0%
woman/women**	48	0.8%	238	0.5%
homosexual(s)/homosexuality	14	*	823	1.8%
mother(s)/father(s)	0	0	184	0.4%
Heterosexual	0	0	49	0.1%
lesbian**	0	0	41	0.1%
Gender	0	0	32	0.1%
Diagnostic Frame: Religious	68	1.1%	586	1.3%
religious	24	0.4%	57	0.1%
Christian(s)	20	0.3%	219	0.5%
Catholic	9	0.1%	0	0
Judeo	8	0.1%	0	0
church(es)	7	0.1%	180	0.4%
Biblical/Bible	0	0	94	0.2%
Faith	0	0	36	0.1%
Diagnostic Frame: Procreative	50	0.8%	513	1.1%
children/child	32	0.5%	367	0.1%
sexual(ly)	10	0.2%	146	*
Nature	8	0.1%	0	0
Prognostic Frame: De-institutionalization	71	1.1%	493	1.1%
culture/cultural	31	*	105	*
Traditional	20	*	104	*
define/definition	11	*	43	*
Institution	9	*	71	*
Media	0	0	79	*
Lifestyle	0	0	55	*
Pornography	0	0	36	*
Prognostic Frame: Prayer	0	0	187	0.4%
Christ/Jesus	0	0	154	0.3%
Prayer	0	0	33	0.7%
Diagnostic Frame: Breakdown of Family	18	0.3%	93	0.2%
divorce	9	0.1%	49	*
polygamy	9	0.1%	0	0
Single	0	0	44	*
Prognostic Frame: Morality	9	0.1%	77	0.2%
Stigma	9	0.1%	0	0
Values	0	0	42	*
Moral	0	0	35	*
Diagnostic Frame: Changing Norms	N/A***	N/A***	N/A***	N/A***
Diagnostic Frame: Interpersonal Factors	N/A***	N/A***	N/A***	N/A***

NOTE: *The frequency percentage is below 0.1%. **The skewed gender representation does not mean that the TMM has an overly heightened sense of interest in women. The word frequencies were constrained to words that are a minimum of five letters, which screens out both *man* and *gay*. ***No expressions related to these two framing concepts appeared in the corpora.

While information in Table 6 is useful, keyword lists remain a better tool than frequency lists to assess the significance of particular words. The advantage of keyword lists is that they value the frequency of a particular word in a corpus as compared to its frequency in an aggregated, non-topic-specific reference corpus. For a detailed description of how I conduct CL analysis – including keyword, concordance, collocation, and cluster analysis – using *AntConc* concordance software please see Appendix H.

Keywords show an overwhelming interest in *Christian* identity, as well as *marriage*, *couples*, *relationships*, the *family*, and *homosexual* issues. The TMM keyword list is included in Appendix H, Table H.1. In the keyword list, *same* and *sex* most likely refer to the phrase *same-sex*, although other references are certainly conceivable. *Children* is also identified as a keyword, but it is impossible to tell whether *children* relates to the procreative purposes of the family – a place to bear and raise children – or to the social outcomes that families can provide to children – children do best in families with their own two married biological parents. The latter is an argument often heard in the MM, whereas the former is not.

A keyword that stands out to me as worthy of further exploration is *agenda*. *Agenda* was most often deployed in the TMM web corpus as a threat – a reason to galvanize around Biblical principles in battle. *Agenda* rhetoric was used in two ways in the TMM: first, to describe the threat that homosexuals posed to children through curricula and other tolerance activities in schools and the media. Second, it was used to highlight the general threat of homosexuality to marriage and the family. I talked previously about the TMM developing and deploying a moral panic frame. I pay close attention to the use of *agenda* to see if it fits that logic.

TMM diagnostic frame. I use the search term *homosexual* in *AntConc* concordance and collocation analysis to assess the diagnostic frame that marriage is a heterosexual union. I choose to search for the frame's reverse because of the type of language used by the movement. Adherents rarely describe marriage as a heterosexual institution, but rather default to DOMA

legalese: marriage is between one man and one woman. On the other hand, marriage is often described by what it is not, namely *homosexual*.

The three most frequent concordances with the search term *homosexual* are *activists*, *agenda*, and *movement*. (Please see my discussion in Appendix H on how I determine the most frequent concordance patterns by sorting results on the right and left sides of the search node.) Many of the concordances use active language to convey an oppositional group taking deliberate steps to execute a specific, threatening course of action. A few examples of concordances with *activists* that meet this criterion include:

- homosexual activists accomplished 90% of what they set out
- Homosexual activists are already boasting that they have the
- homosexual activists are pushing harder than ever to get
- homosexual activists are seeking is not a minor shift in
- Homosexual activists have captured the support of politician

Looking to the right side of the search node *homosexual*, many adverb/verbs are additionally indicative of a planned onslaught: *succeeded*, *intentionally disrupted*, *organize/organized*, *attacked/rabidly attack*, *seek*, *teaches*, *moving*, *refuses*, *has engaged*, *has framed*, *has stated*, *is actively promoting*, *dramatically increase*, *infiltrated*, *to force*.

Conducting left-side analysis of *homosexual* – evaluating the words that immediately precede *homosexual* – primarily identifies patterns relating to concepts like *benefits*, *rights*, *protection*, and *support*, most of which are descriptive assessments of the same-sex marriage debate and demands for marriage equality. Those are to be expected. One pattern emerging that is not at all prevalent in the MEM is a focus on *former* homosexuals. One position of the AFA from the very beginning was the possibility of redemption from homosexuality. If homosexuality is a sin, then it can be forsaken and forgiven, just as any other sin.

Four other patterns are also of note. First is the characterization of both *homosexual activists* and the *homosexual agenda* as *radical*. Second, and most likely a result of its radical nature, is the characterization of the AFA and their ilk as *opposition* or being *opposed to*. Third, traditionalists tend to classify groups in society that exhibit tolerance toward sexual diversity as *pro-homosexual* groups – problematic groups identified in *pro-homosexual* concordance analysis include *legal groups, children’s books, activists, sociologists, videos, curriculum, statutes, messages, program, movement, media, show, film, and books*. This list clarifies further that traditionalists find themselves both opposed to and surrounded by offensive cultural elements associated with homosexuality.

Finally, traditionalists frequently use the phrase *legalize homosexual marriage*, rather than something like *seek homosexual marriage rights* or *make claims for marriage equality* as a way of framing the debate. The choice of the term *legalize* suggests a change in legal status such that something that was previously illegal becomes legal. *Legalize* is frequently used in moral debates in public discourse—“legalize marijuana” or “legalize prostitution” come to mind. We hear such terminology less regarding topics without moral relevance—“legalize voting for 16-year-olds,” for example. Even a Google search for that voting rights phrase returns results about legalizing euthanasia and marijuana. Age-based voting rights and same-sex marriage operate in much the same way. Current statutes do not state that it is illegal for 16-year-olds to vote, nor do they state that it is illegal for same-sex couples to marry. Rather, statutes express what is legal and suggest what is illegal by implication (*The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied.... Or, the word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife*). In either case, the word *legalize* does not quite accurately capture the results of expanding the legal definition. For the purposes of the TMM, however, the term *legalize* serves as a useful framing device.

Collocation analysis on *homosexual* tells me which words co-occur at a higher than average frequency as compared to a reference corpus. Detailed data for *homosexual* is in

Appendix H, Table H.2. I see that the top collocate for *homosexual* is *pushes*. *Pushes* tends to occur on the left side of the node *homosexual*, as in the phrase (and likely candidate) *pushes homosexual agenda*. Such a phrase uses an action verb to suggest an unwanted behavior on the part of homosexuals. The second most frequent collocate, *legalization*, most likely references granting same-sex marriage rights. Given my concordance analysis, *legalization* can also potentially be evidence of a moral panic frame.

In fact, a number of the collocation results on *homosexual* indicate evidence of a moral panic frame, including *manipulation*, *normalize*, *agenda*, and *exposes*. (Again, see Appendix H, Table H.2). Evidence also suggests that efforts at undermining traditional values are the work of an organized campaign (relevant collocates are *activists*, *organized*, and *movement*). It is clear that much of this collocation is a description of the field of marriage politics, but not all anti-homosexual opposition relates to the battle over marriage rights. Words like *taxpayer* could suggest antipathy of traditionalists toward private dollars going to fund causes that are pro-homosexual, like curricula promoting tolerance or the National Endowment for the Arts (a common target of traditionalist groups). Inclusion of *ex* signifies importance of the work of traditionalist groups in homosexual redemption and ex-gay organizations like Exodus International. Finally, words like *openly* and *practices* show distaste for those who desire to make same-sex relationships or behaviors mainstream. All of these, however, indicate discursive choices that portray homosexual people as morally suspect or immoral.

To illustrate the degree to which these insights from collocation analysis of *homosexual* are movement-specific, I also do a collocation search of *homosexual* in the Corpus of American English reference corpus (Davies 2008-). See Appendix H for a description of the search parameters for the reference corpus. The collocation list for the reference corpus is in Appendix H, Table H.3. The TMM corpus and the reference corpus do not share any collocates at all, which suggests that the general public may not be as concerned with the effects of an insidious homosexual agenda to the same extent as the TMM. This supports my argument that the TMM is

the generator of a moral panic frame because the evidence does not suggest that they are merely reflecting popular discursive trends. There are words, however, that might suggest that general American discourse around homosexual issues tends to be cast in morality terms, such as *closeted*, *sinful*, *condemns*, *propensity* and *tendencies*. There are also words that suggest a rights discourse, perhaps aligned with the claims of the MEM: *anti-discrimination*, *harassing*, and *prejudice*.

Finally, cluster analysis on the search node *homosexual* in the TMM corpus further affirms my moral panic argument. See Appendix H, Table H.4. Results tell me that the most likely content-rich two-word phrases that collocate with *homosexual* are *homosexual activists* and *homosexual marriage*. The phrases *homosexual agenda* and *pro-homosexual* follow close in frequency after those, as well. This supports the same conclusions I made in previous analysis that traditionalists are concerned with homosexual and pro-homosexual activists pushing a homosexual agenda containing, in large part, demands for homosexual marriage.

Traditionalist adherents view their mission as righteous, and pursue both symbolic and instrumental goals. Symbolic goals include those that attempt to bolster normative boundaries and moral standards. Instrumental goals attempt to provide relief to victims and punish evildoers (Weitzer 2007; Becker 1963). Concordance analysis of the node *norm* within the TMM web corpus provides examples of symbolic goals:

- No human society, not one, has ever tolerated marriage between members of the same sex as a norm for family life.
- Heterosexuality is always fostered by a cultural norm that limits marriage to unions of men and women.
- [T]he goal is to baptize you into their lifestyle where it becomes normal for you to hear and see it, making you accept eventually that it is a non-threatening norm in our society.

- If marriage is not a shared norm, and if successful marriage is not socially valued, do not expect it to survive as the generally accepted context for raising children.

Similarly, one way to provide relief to victims of the penalizing influences of secularization and the threat of homosexuality is to preserve the institution of marriage that traditionalists hold dear. Concordance analysis on the node *preserve* in the TMM web corpus offers examples of instrumental goals of a moral crusade:

- [T]he leaders of many of the pro-family groups composing the coalition said they are ready to do whatever it takes, as long as it takes, to preserve the traditional view of marriage, which they call the foundation of American society.
- Banning the “marriage” of same-sex couples is therefore essential to preserve the nature and purpose of marriage itself.
- Amending the Constitution now appears to be the only way to achieve two indispensable goals: preserve a uniform national standard for something so fundamental to our civilization as the definition of marriage; and prevent the imposition of same-sex civil “marriage” or marital benefits through acts of undemocratic judicial tyranny.

To further test the possibility of a moral panic frame existing, I do concordance analysis on the search term *traditional*—the type of marriage and family worth preserving. Analysis on the right side of the node shows that *traditional* is most often a signifier for *family*, *definition of marriage*, *family*, *family values*, *gender norms*, *institution of marriage*, *marriage*, and *values*. Patterns on the left side of the node overwhelmingly depict a morally-laden struggle. For example, there are corporate programs *attacking traditional family values*. Traditionalists have a *commitment to defend traditional marriage*. Traditionalists ask members of Congress to *take a stand for traditional marriage*. Traditionalist activists *stand for traditional family values*. Efforts are needed *to protect traditional marriage*. Conservatives are *defenders of the traditional family*.

People are needed to *preserve the traditional Judeo-Christian institution of marriage*. Same-sex marriage activists pose *significant threats to traditional marriage laws*. All of these exemplify battle rhetoric – a zero-sum, us-them mentality with the key element being Judeo-Christian morality in need of defending.

TMM prognostic frame. Guided by the keyword results of the TMM corpus (see Appendix H, Table H.1), I use *AntConc* to assess the search node *amendment* as representative of the prognostic frame of *policy*. Concordance analysis for *amendment* shows that almost all of the occurrences refer to a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and woman. Most of the occurrences refer to the Federal Marriage Amendment proposed in 2003. There are only three occurrences that address the second major attempt at amending the Constitution in the 109th Congress, the Marriage Protection Amendment.

Of additional interest in the concordance of *amendment* is the way in which texts relay information rather than act as arguments for mobilization. In fact, a number of traditionalist organizations characterized their missions as such – to inform. Consider the following concordance example:

The American Family Association believes the best hope of saving marriage from redefinition is a constitutional *amendment* to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage as between one man and one woman. A federal marriage *amendment*, supported by members of both political parties, will soon be introduced in Congress.

This statement is clear, concise, and informative. It states the organization's position. It defines marriage. It evokes the presence of a threat (“the best hope of saving marriage”). It prescribes a policy action that will stop the threat. It stresses that the policy action has bipartisan support so that a movement adherent, regardless of their political stripes, can position themselves politically vis-à-vis the information. The statement, however, does not include a call for action.

A last trend emerging from concordance analysis of *amendment* in the TMM corpus regards the need for an *amendment* because of the potential threat of homosexual activists

redefining marriage. This notion is clearly evident in the passage quoted above. There are definite patterns associating *amendment* and *protecting*, as well as between working *to protect* traditional marriage and what *defines* marriage.

Results for collocation analysis for the search node *amendment* are in Appendix H, Table H.5. The most relevant collocation terms suggest foundational motivations for believing in the necessity of a constitutional amendment—*defines* and *defining*, as in marriage—and detail actions that individual activists can take to support or protect traditional marriage—signing a *petition* and *voting*. The imperative for individual activists to stand up and defend marriage is evidence that both diagnostic and prognostic frames are steeped in moral panic. The difference between the two is that diagnostic moral panic framing defines the subject of moral danger, and prognostic moral framing guides how people should react to it. Cluster analysis of *amendment* also supports that a constitutional amendment is needed to protect traditional marriage. See Appendix H, Table H.6 for data. However, a new insight from cluster analysis is a focus on the *first amendment*. This illustrates another aspect of the threat of same-sex marriage rights, namely threats to the first amendment freedom of speech rights of faith communities. In some instances, traditionalists expressed fear that normalization of homosexuality would lead to speech suppression because anti-homosexual sentiments could then be cast as bigoted. I discussed this briefly in my textual analysis of the web corpus as a fear expressed by the AFA President, Don Wildmon.

TMM Social Practices Analysis

Evidence suggests that hegemonic marriage is the basis for a TMM moral panic frame positing the destruction of traditional marriage at the hands of homosexual and pro-homosexual activists. The moral panic frame is constructed by reifying the marriage union; stating that the institution is fundamental and natural, in fact, part of God's design, such that threats to marriage are an abomination to God. Adam (2003, 260) argues that understanding a gay moral panic frame requires "picking apart complex historical processes of hegemony formation." This project is

uniquely positioned to elucidate how hegemony and moral panic discourse shape framing decisions within the TMM. See Figure 9 for my critical discourse analysis of TMM positions.

While the homosexual threat loomed large seemingly since the beginning of time, I argue that 2003 served as a flashpoint for the movement and ushered in an era of battle rhetoric that pitted traditionalists against secularists in a war for Americans' souls. Previously, defining marriage within Christian communities was not necessary, but Americans no longer appeared to think much of tradition for tradition's sake. Calls for same-sex marriage rights made it necessary

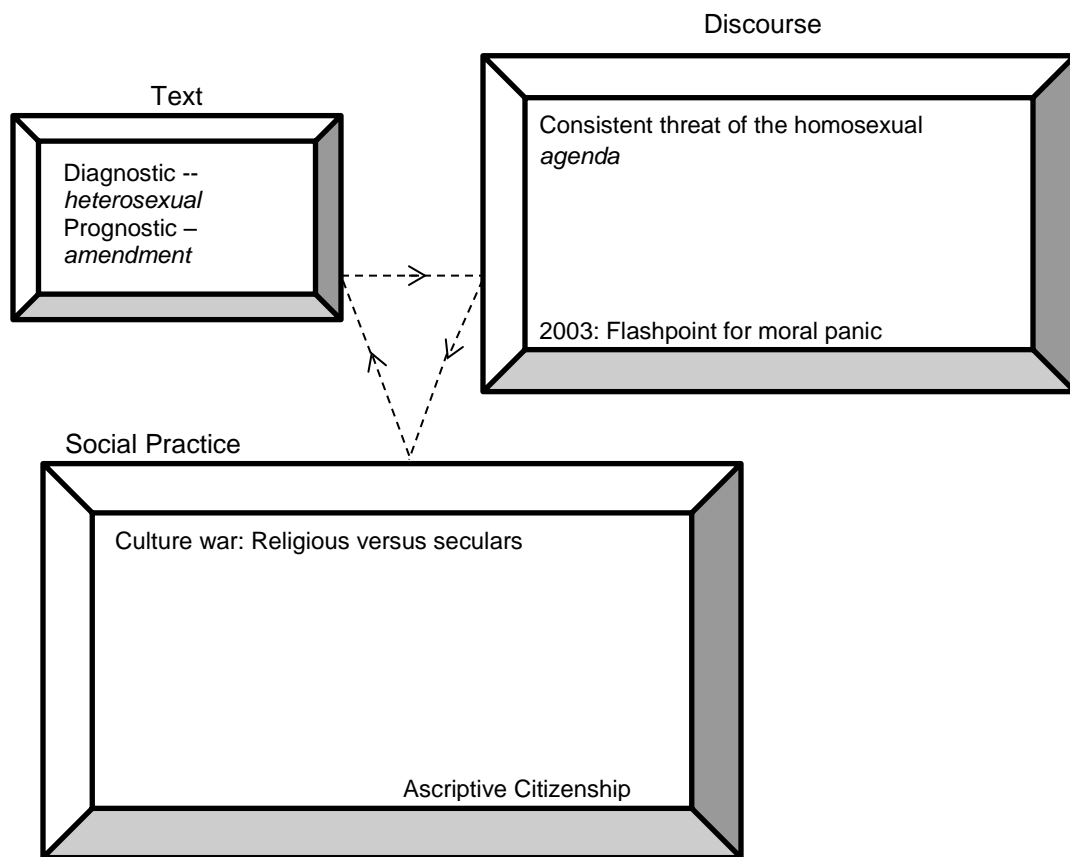


Figure 9. Application of Fairclough's (1995) CDA model to the TMM

to argue why *heterosexual* marriage, in particular, was the foundation and bedrock of society. Such a definition was almost always cast down in front of the shadow of "the" homosexual agenda that threatened relationships, children, the church, and society. The threat was so great not merely because of its potential for altering the fabric of American life, but also because so many traditionalists themselves did not readily recognize the insidious nature of same-sex marriage.

The movement was forced to respond to questions like, *I'm not gay, how does this affect me?*, by focusing framing efforts both within its boundaries as well as outside. Mobilization techniques largely took three forms: 1) re-stating the fundamental nature of heterosexual marriage and adherence to beliefs of the Judeo-Christian tradition that views it as such, 2) demonizing homosexual identities and behavior, and 3) calling for others to take up religious arms against the same-sex marriage threat. Such mobilization tactics inform a hetero-centric notion of citizenship suggesting that "heterosexuality is a necessary ascriptive characteristic for full citizenship status" (Josephson 2005; Phelan 2001).

For traditionalists, citizenship references belongingness to a "privileged 'stage' ... for the benefit of humankind as a whole" (Stephanson 1995; Adam 2003). This sense of nationhood as messianic is constructed through heteronormative and masculinist discourses (Adam 2003), suggesting precisely why forsaking the hetero-patriarchal foundation of American society risks so much:

Marriage has long been implicated in a politics of exclusion. It has been commonplace for ecclesiastical authorities ... to attempt to maintain religious endogamy by ruling nonbelievers outside the pale. Nation-building rhetoric employing analogies of the nation to the family (and thus marriage) inevitably manufactures a series of "others" thrown out of the national family and uses marriage laws as a tool to mark exclusion. ... Lesbians and gay men find themselves unavoidably placed at the nexus of ... forces intent on capturing national identity, social privilege, or the moral high ground (Adam 2003, 274).

A primary strategy to preserve foundational meanings of American citizenship is to deploy a moral panic frame or to launch a moral crusade. Weitzer (2007, 448) argues that moral crusades work by transforming social conditions into "problems" of "unqualified evil." Quick enactment of repressive social policies is often the result of moral panics (Irvine 2006), as was seen in the U.S. with the rapid adoption of mini-DOMAs even in the face of an existing federal law that said essentially the same thing. Typically, in the trajectory of a moral panic, the

perceived threat diminishes and the panic recedes (Irvine 2006). Textual and interpretative analysis of TMM web content indicates less intensity in moral panic framing within the TMM beginning in the mid-2000s. Diminishment was not because mini-DOMAs were effective in halting the procession of same-sex marriage rights. Rather, moral panic seemed to abide because it never achieved a level of institutionalization (Weitzer 2007). Traditionalists were largely unable to capture the imagination of policymakers to the extent that members of the Christian Right had in the past. Despite having millions of petition signatories, calls for constitutional amendments did not come to fruition.

Irvine (2006) argues that understanding sex panics requires evaluation of the power of emotion in affecting the panic moment. Weeks (1981) and Rubin (1984) describe sex panics as “the political moment of sex,” or the point where moral values surrounding sex and sexuality are translated into political action (Irvine 2006). The legitimating power of emotions, at this transformative point:

... naturalizes sexual hierarchies, establishing some sexualities as normal and others as disgusting or unspeakable. Affective conventions of sexuality – in particular, sexual shame, fear, disgust – enforce and reinforce this regulatory system and are therefore political. In its wake, the *panic* of moral panics legitimizes enhanced state power through fostering the illusion of a singular public mobilized in support of traditional values (Irvine 2006, 3).

Evaluating the moral panic frame clearly shows how the TMM negotiated hegemonic marriage in its framing. Movement adherents already believed marriage to be an important, natural part of American life. Connections to the fate of the nation, to a need for political action, to an imperative to hold homosexuality up as a scapegoat for all that sexual liberation entailed—those were not a given. The movement was forced to create a sex panic in order to reify heterosexuality and marital gender norms; it was the most viable recourse they had to gain political sway in the face of an opposition that was steadily growing stronger. The TMM was no

longer dealing with freedom-seeking gay alliances of the 1970s who merely asked for the right to be left alone. Because the new fight was about equality – the right to be treated the *same as* heterosexual marriages – a new tactic was in order. Yet, keep in mind that framing is process – the discrete moral panic frame I discuss was actually continuously constructed by targeting messages both within and outside of the movement. The aforementioned flurry of FAQ and Q&A documents are a testament to the ongoing framing process.

The discourse of sex panics used in framing relies on the use of scripts that operate as “sticky signs” (Ahmed 2004; Irvine 2006). Such discourse affects value by “sticking” signs on bodies. Sticky signs highlight deviance and perversion as compared to a non-perverse norm (Irvine 2008). Some sensory signs rely on scapegoating scripts, which usually entail evoking unfamiliar sexual terms, unpleasant sensory images, and a heightened general “ick” factor. Miller (1997) calls such factors “the idiom of disgust,” a powerful tool in moral politics (Irvine 2006). The emotive response to sticky signs fortifies moral panic discourse, and propels it forward. The following scapegoating scripts (with nodes in italics) are examples from concordance analysis of the TMM web corpus. The scapegoating scripts illustrate the deployment of sticky signs in the moral panic frame:

- *Sodomy* Can Never Depict the Relationship Between Christ and His Church
- Prominent homosexual leaders and publications have voiced support for pedophilia, incest, sadomasochism, and even *bestiality*.
- Groups promoting *pedophilia* (sex between adults and children) have already cited the study in an effort to gain public acceptance for their deviant behavior.
- Transvestite teachers. Boys kissing boys in restrooms. Teens taught about *anal sex*. "Gay" fairy tales for children.

Irvine (2006, 24) argues that sex panics are a form of citizenship politics – struggles endemic to panics “determine which sexualities will be recognized and valued, what will be

spoken, and what remains excluded and silenced.” This was certainly the goal of the TMM. By reifying hegemonic marriage norms, and explicitly valuing the public gendered norms within the marriage institution (“To make a marriage, what you need is a husband and a wife”), “the hated” is expelled from social proximity” (Irvine 2006, 27; Ahmed 2004). If the object of scorn is rendered so perverse as to be unintelligible, then it can have no claim to citizenship.

Yet, textual and interpretative analysis of the web corpus indicates that TMM moral panic framing declined following defeats on the two proposed constitutional amendments in the mid-2000s (although new iterations are certainly possible, particularly given the landmark Supreme Court cases on DOMA and California’s Proposition 8 occurring as I write these words). Irvine (2006) suggests that shifts in the broader culture can exhaust certain scripts. Think of the MEM strategy of late to focus on personal narratives and emphasizing personal stories. The intent behind such a strategy is to convince the moveable middle – the same middle that drew the focus of the TMM – that gay and lesbian families *share similar values*. By reframing the very *moral* part of the moral panic – building conceptions of paralleled commitments, responsibilities, hopes and dreams for all families – the MEM has effectively diminished the power of idioms of disgust and the stickiness of signs. By deploying the same tropes despite growing acceptance of gay and lesbian relationships and identities – fears of societal ruin, the moral corruption of children, the unhinging of the family to allow polygamy – the TMM may unwittingly be lessening the impact of such framing strategies (Irvine 2006). Americans perhaps cannot help but say: *Those people don’t seem all that different from me and I’m not gay, so how does this affect me?*

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

At its inception the Marriage Movement was loosely comprised of two key elements – family researchers concerned with promoting marriage as a key regulating institution for the benefit of children, and marriage educators. With the introduction of President Bush’s Healthy Marriage Initiative, federal “healthy marriage” champions closely affiliated with the marriage education perspective joined the MM as well. Marriage educators and scholarly MM adherents share many ideas in common, except that perhaps marriage educators more broadly apply the word “healthy” to encompass all types of intimate relationships potentially affecting children, not just marriage. Given the “loose” configuration of this movement, I analyze two distinct web corpora in this chapter. First, I conduct detailed textual and corpus linguistic (CL) analysis on a corpus comprised of documents from the Institute for American Values website. I use the IAV corpus as the bulk of my analysis because it offers a comprehensive perspective of the core MM’s trajectory. In order to be sensitive of potential significant issues related to how the marriage education movement may differentially negotiate hegemonic marriage, I also conduct CL analysis on a web corpus of randomly-selected archive content from representing the marriage education subsector of the MM. This corpus is composed of Smart Marriages archive content from 2000 to 2010.

Following the same procedure as the previous two chapters, I assess the longitudinal framing choices of the Marriage Movement (MM) by looking to both web content and interview data. Interviewees include a representative of the Administration for Children and Families and movement leaders from eight SMOs: Institute for American Values, National Marriage Project, Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, Smart Marriages, The Dibble Institute, Wedded Bliss Foundation, National Fatherhood Initiative, and National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.

Again, research confirms that the year 2003 was a significant punctuating event for the MM, as it was for the other two movements. This time period was marked with an intentional decision of movement leaders aligned with the Institute for American Values (IAV) to reject

same-sex marriage. IAV played a convener role within the MM. While IAV's scholarly marriage research focus initially shared a leadership spotlight with MM adherents aligned with a marriage education perspective, the choice of scholarly-oriented adherents to oppose same-sex marriage caused an irrevocable rift in the MM. Adherents prioritizing marriage education approaches effectively split off from the main MM. Even despite this parting of ways, my research suggests that marriage educators still share similar core beliefs with the MM – an interest in the well-being of children, and a fundamental belief that marriage is an important social institution (although marriage educators are much more likely than scholarly MM adherents to be flexible on the latter presumption).

Textual analysis of Institute for American Values web content indicates significant instances of negotiation with hegemonic marriage, particularly regarding the ethic's heteronormative imperatives. The MM very strongly believes in a heteronormative marriage ideal with the core function of socially organizing heterosexual relationships to optimize outcomes for children. The MM also supports gendered roles for women and men within marriage, particularly with relation to parenting. Women are not explicitly described in MM framing as innate caretakers, but the MM does deploy gendered frames regarding the responsibilities and contributions of mothers and fathers for child-rearing within the context of marriage. Even though the MM expresses hetero-patriarchal beliefs, the movement still demonstrates considerable negotiation with the marriage ethic. I attribute such negotiation to tension between the movement's commitment to marriage as an *ideal* and its commitment to building a broad-base of support. The fact that the MM welcomes diverse perspectives means that they open themselves up to discursive appropriation and co-optation. The implications of interdiscursivity and hegemonic negotiation will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Textual Analysis (Description) of MM Web Corpus

To provide the narrative context for the MM, I look to the Institute for American Values. I choose the IAV because of its role as the MM's initial convener. The original MM *Statement of Principles* was hosted on the IAV website, and the IAV gathered *Statement* signatories to demonstrate support of marriage strengthening initiatives. The IAV also consistently described itself as an MM adherent, unlike organizations like Smart Marriages who more closely identified with the marriage education movement. Because the MM is a broad-based movement, however, in building the web corpus I intentionally included numerous full-text articles linked to the IAV website from external sources – popular media reports, scholarly research, and more – in order to capture a robust and complete picture of the MM trajectory from its inception in the year 2000.

Building a movement. Early web snapshots include the following statement at the top of the IAV website: “Over 2,500 people have joined the Marriage Movement – have you?” The statement was linked to a document, *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles* (IAV 2000). The *Statement of Principles* launched the MM, an action originally undertaken in sponsorship between the IAV, Smart Marriages (also known as the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education), and the Religion, Culture, and Family Project of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

While I earlier stated that there were two main components to the MM, a reading of the *Statement* suggests many more “movements,” including not only the aforementioned marriage education movement, the scholarly marriage movement, and the federal marriage movement, but also the faith based marriage movement, the marriage-friendly fatherhood movement, the school-based marriage skills movement, the divorce law reform movement, the Governor's marriage movement, and the civic marriage movement. Most of these are not really independent social movements, but I use the term to echo MM language choice in the *Statement*. Because of the broad-based and inclusive nature of the MM, it is not necessary for me to treat these separately—

IAV attempted to describe key tenets of all of the above perspectives in the *Statement*. One note of clarification may be helpful, however. The faith based marriage movement mentioned in the *Statement* is not the same as the traditional marriage movement discussed in the previous chapter. The faith based movement is more aligned with the marriage education movement, using faith based marriage skills approaches, like the *Marriage Savers* ministry, to promote healthy marriage among Christians. The TMM, on the other hand, aims to protect and defend traditional marriage in a culture war from the threat of sexual liberalization and secularization. While most in the TMM would view the marriage promotion work of the faith based marriage movement as a good thing, it would be fair to say that not all in the faith based marriage movement would necessarily view the problem as defined by the TMM in the same light. This may be particularly true among more liberal versus evangelical Christian congregations.

The *Statement* represented a grassroots effort to encourage Americans to admit that they are “concerned about the state of marriage in America today” (IAV 2000), and one of its hallmarks was that organizers wanted the movement to be explicitly broad-based and bipartisan. The *Statement* was originally released at the Smart Marriages conference on June 29, 2000, with over 100 religious and civic leaders and scholars pledging that “in this decade we will turn the tide on marriage and reduce divorce and unmarried childbearing, so that each year more children will grow up protected by their own two happily married parents and more adults’ marriage dreams will come true” (IAV 2000). The following is an excerpt from the *Statement* that explains why the movement formed, and for what purposes:

We come together to affirm that marriage is not a special interest. Whether an individual ever personally marries or not, a healthy marriage culture benefits every citizen in the United States: rich or poor, churched or unchurched, gay or straight, liberal or conservative, parent or childless, African American, Hispanic, Anglo, Asian, or Native American. Marriage is not a conservative or liberal idea, not a plaything of passing political ideologies. Marriage is a universal human institution, the way in which every

known society conspires to obtain for each child the love, attention, and resources of a mother and a father (IAV 2000).

Notably, this excerpt includes a potentially contradictory statement that foreshadows fissures in how the MM negotiates hegemonic marriage. The contradiction notes that not only does a healthy marriage culture benefit both gay and straight people, but also that it is a universal human institution involving the resources of both a mother and a father. The excerpt indicates slippage between heteronormative and gendered elements of marriage, and suggests some degree of negotiation between those issues occurring even at the time that the movement was born.

Unlike the two prior movements I analyzed, the MM pays considerable attention to problems affecting marriage and family breakdown. According to the *Statement*, for example, “The divorce revolution hasn’t delivered on its promise of happier relationships and families...” Children are also suffering “when marriages between parents do not take place, when parents divorce, and when spouses fail to create a 'good-enough' family bond.” Also, increases in unwed childbearing have not “produced greater equality and justice for women...” (IAV 2000) The statement looks to scholarship to identify a variety of cultural, legal, and economic changes that led to the weakened marriage institution. These factors include:

increases in intimacy expectations, greater social approval of alternatives to marriage, the greater economic independence of women, “no-fault” divorce reform, the rise in social insurance programs that make individuals less dependent on families, the expansion of market and consumer mores into family life, and lesser social supports and pressures to get and stay married from family, friends, professionals, churches, business, and government (IAV 2000).

Through recognition of facts such as these, signers of the *Statement* wanted to convey that marriage is a public, not merely a private, institution. Indeed, the IAV mission underscored this commitment as well: “The Institute’s mission is to examine the status and future of the family as an institution and the sources of competence, character, and citizenship” (IAV 2001a). Society

bears costs associated with poor outcomes for children raised outside of marriage, such as poverty, health and psychological disorders, increased likelihood to commit crimes or exhibit conduct disorders, poor relationship formation with family and peers, lower levels of education, less job success, and unstable family lives. MM researchers stress that these impacts persist even after controlling for race, income and socioeconomic status. Also, both divorce and unwed childbearing create substantial public costs as well. These costs are paid by taxpayers, and include “increased education, welfare, Medicare and Medicaid, day care, child support collection, foster care and child protection services costs.” (IAV 2000)

Early explanations of IAV’s involvement in marriage highlight the organization’s role in as a “meeting place for a wide range of scholars and leaders interested in strengthening marriage,” with the purpose of helping “to break open and develop the issue of marriage in our public debate” (IAV 2000). At the beginning of the 2000s, IAV identified the “next vital phase of work” in marriage promotion as “developing the moral-intellectual resources for a broad-based movement to strengthen marriage” (IAV 2000). The Institute hoped that the *Statement* would “create a common vocabulary and framework for public discussion of marriage,” both for the MM and for the American public (IAV 2000). The *Statement* began the work of establishing shared discourse around marriage by defining what it is. According to the MM, marriage consists of six key components: a legal contract, a financial partnership, a sacred promise, a sexual union, a personal bond, and a procreative bond (IAV 2000).

Additional work of establishing a common vocabulary involved reorienting and reframing social problems into marriage problems. For example, the Institute released a report titled *The Age of Unwed Motherhood: Is Teen Pregnancy the Problem?* positing that adolescent girls were given the wrong message. Rather than teen pregnancy being a problem about age, the report, written by Maggie Gallagher, made the argument that a better and more effective message should focus on the disadvantages of bearing children before marriage. Similarly, Gallagher condemned teen pregnancy prevention efforts that primarily focused on the self-interest of the

teenager to the exclusion of concern about the well-being of children they might parent (Gallagher 1999).

A strategy for creating a new culture of marriage in America involved conducting social science research on marriage, and then widely sharing those studies that yielded results in favor of their cause. Organizationally speaking, IAV claimed to be “an institute without walls” or a “think tank without a tank” (IAV 2001b). IAV conducted its work with a very small paid staff, heavy reliance on volunteer scholars who believed in the cause, and part-time paid “Affiliate Scholars” who worked for small periods of time on Institute initiatives. IAV explicitly linked fragmentation of American society to a decline in civil society, at times using descriptors like “the American experiment in self-government,” “increased tolerance for self-centered and selfish behavior,” and “loss of confidence in the possibility of public moral truth.” In order to affect change in both the character of the American family and its relationship to civil society, IAV adopted the strategy of “influencing the influential” and launched the MM as an endeavor of a “network of citizen-scholars” representing a confluence of marriage-minded actors from a variety of sectors (IAV 2001b).

This organizational style, according to the IAV, was critical for the movement to respond quickly to issues. Leaders of the IAV were able to gain “a sense of where the cultural elites have stationed their troops, determining where the debate on an important issue might be moving” (IAV 2001b). This ability to anticipate “subtle cultural and public opinion shifts” and to respond thoughtfully and quickly was attributed as a factor to IAV’s, and as a corollary the marriage movement’s, success (IAV 2001b).

Typical causes of family breakdown—divorce, cohabitation, overly heightened sense of adult choice at the expense of concerns over child wellbeing—continued to characterize the work of IAV and the MM in the early 2000s. In 2002, IAV published *Why Marriage Matters: 21 Conclusions from the Social Sciences*, a joint report from thirteen family life scholars about the financial, emotional, and health consequences of marriage for men, women, children and society.

Maggie Gallagher also published a policy brief in 2002 titled *Marriage and Public Policy: What Can Government Do?* that made suggestions to the Department of Health and Human Services about ways to promote marriage among men and women. Gallagher argued that government interventions could be of two types, targeted provision of services or broader public information campaigns to change attitudes about the importance of marriage (Gallagher 2002). I share these examples of IAV scholarship to illustrate that same-sex marriage was not on the movement's radar when discussing marriage and the family in the early 2000s.

A forced hand. In 2003, IAV founder David Blankenhorn published an assessment of the Marriage Movement's success thus far, as well as a roadmap for the strategic priorities of the movement moving forward. According to Blankenhorn, the MM made impressive progress "in changing U.S. elite and public opinion, as well as in stimulating political and grassroots action, on the social importance of marriage" (Blankenhorn 2003). Blankenhorn quoted media elite, like syndicated columnist Jane Eisner, who stated that the question – *How do we strengthen marriage as the primary social institution to rear children?* – is now "the central question of American life" (Eisner 2003; Blankenhorn 2003). Blankenhorn also pointed to the work of IAV that helped to "shape public arguments, conduct and disseminate scholarly research, incubate key books and articles, convene leaders, and launch initiatives that have contributed to building the marriage movement" (Blankenhorn 2003).

By 2003, the MM had over 3,000 signatories to the *Statement of Principles*. Blankenhorn assessed that the movement's strengths just a few years post-*Statement* included intellectual and scholarly progress in making the case for marriage; increases in media and state governors' attention to marriage issues; steady growth in grassroots initiatives; academic and political recognition of the positive effect of welfare reform on marriage; federal funding for community-based marriage programs; positive connections between fatherhood programs and marriage; a broad base of support, including less characterization of marriage as solely a "right-wing" and

“Christian” concern; and tentative evidence that the trend of marital disintegration slowed or came to a stop in the late 1990s (Blankenhorn 2003).

Blankenhorn also identified a number of challenges for the MM. These “challenges” were barriers or hurdles facing the movement that prevented the prioritization of strengthening marriage in (primarily elite) discourse. Challenges included the difficulty of keeping marriage on the national agenda, dealing with weak and inconclusive demographic evidence of a marriage turnaround, cultural perceptions and lifestyle issues related to divorce, and more. Some of the particularly notable challenges were:

- Advocates for same-sex couples are making dramatic progress in the United States and internationally in the spheres of law and public opinion. (This is a topic the marriage movement is divided on and has sought largely to avoid).
- Intellectually, the marriage movement seems to be running out of gas – lacking fresh ideas and especially lacking a broadly shared understanding of the public policy, intellectual, civic, and cultural contests that the marriage movement should seek out, and seek to win, in the coming decade (Blankenhorn 2003).

While Blankenhorn acknowledged that the issue of same-sex marriage was largely ignored within the MM, beginning in 2003 the issue appeared more often in IAV publications. For example, one instance related to controversy over the adoption of a report titled *Living Faithfully with Families in Transition* by the Presbyterian Church. A main concern from IAV scholar Elizabeth Marquardt was that the Presbyterian report ignored children’s suffering in non-marital family arrangements. She wrote, “The authors of the report offer a laundry list of family forms,” and then further specified:

One of the newest, growing types of family forms is same-sex couples raising children. Here, the authors of the report cite the limited number of studies on these families (which tend to be conducted by advocates and have small samples) to say that these children are

doing “fine.” In the 1970s, similar types of small studies were cited by experts to say that the children of divorce are doing fine. It took decades for larger studies, and grown children of divorce themselves, to reveal the suffering that is apparent to any sensitive observer of these children. Must we wait decades for the same thing to happen for children of same-sex families? For instance, no matter where one stands on the issue of same-sex marriage, shouldn’t we ask how these children fare, emotionally, with the loss of connection to at least one of their biological parents? (Marquardt 2003).

The objections were not to same-sex marriage *per se*, but rather to same-sex couples raising children. The citizen-scholars of the MM took the same-sex marriage debate and placed it into the same mold they used to assess heterosexual relationships – that children experienced better outcomes when raised by their own two biological and married parents. In no world could same-sex families ever meet that criterion.

A 2004 article titled, “Marriage Lost in Culture War,” again by Elizabeth Marquardt, indicated that same-sex marriage debate discourse was co-opting MM efforts. Marquardt cited a *New York Times* article that characterized the Bush administration’s Healthy Marriage Initiative as a response to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. Reporters quoted within the article speculated that the Initiative was a way for the President to solidify his conservative base. By making such a connection to the same-sex marriage controversy, *The New York Times* ignored context and the fact that a federal healthy marriage initiative significantly predated the post-*Goodridge* same-sex marriage maelstrom. Marquardt described how this erroneous link snowballed in the digital age:

Within days of the *Times* story, Reuters issued its own take that even more strongly portrayed the Healthy Marriage Initiative as a conservative attack on gay marriage. It read, “The Bush White House is definitely marriage-minded: healthy marriage, sanctified marriage. Except for the ... marriage of gay and lesbian partners. ...

In London, the liberal Guardian newspaper warned, “Avoiding the words ‘heterosexual marriage,’ [Bush] administration officials are referring to ‘healthy’ marriages. . . .

Back at home the *Boston Globe* chimed in, quoting one pollster, “‘Healthy marriages’ sounds like a traditional value, which is red meat to married voters” (Marquardt 2004).

A notable problem of equating MM work with anti-same-sex marriage activism was beginning. The initial reaction of the MM is summarized in Marquardt’s assessment “[I]t would be a huge loss if all other discussions about marriage and its importance for children were drowned out by our newest culture war” (Marquardt 2004). As the movement continued to face the conflation problem, they were forced to assess same-sex marriage more directly even though “the numbers of gays and lesbians raising children are so small relative to the population” (Browning and Marquardt 2004). One concern that emerged was the familiar redefinition problem: “Legalizing same-sex marriage does not simply extend an old institution to a new group of people. It changes the definition of marriage, reducing it primarily to an affectionate sexual relationship accompanied by a declaration of commitment” (Browning and Marquardt 2004). The key change for some (but still not all!) in the MM was the argument that same-sex marriage changes the institution such that it no longer serves to direct sexual and parental behavior in order to achieve public goods (such as raising the next generation of citizens, for example), but rather extends marriage privileges to a particular group of sexual partners (Browning and Marquardt 2004).

With this backdrop in mind, the MM released a key report in 2004 titled *What Next for the Marriage Movement?* The report started by saying that the MM was facing a crisis on two fronts. First, many family law leaders were calling to blur or eliminate entirely many of the legal distinctions between married and unmarried couples. Second, the same-sex marriage controversy asked “whether it is possible, and in what ways it could be possible, to reconcile two important

social values — one value being the importance of equal dignity and treatment for all citizens, and the other being the importance of marriage as a vital, pro-child social institution” (IAV 2004). The document also clarified the mission of the MM: “We unite around a vision of America where more children are raised in nurturing homes by their married mother and father, and where more adults enjoy mutually fulfilling and lifelong marriages” (IAV 2004).

At root of both identified challenges was the deinstitutionalization of marriage. Dan Cere, author of a 2005 report titled *The Future of Family Law: Law and the Marriage Crisis in North America* explored implications of the idea that marriage is only a close personal relationship between adults, and that marriage is not a pro-child social institution (Cere 2005). Cere argued that “further fragmentation of parenthood means further fragmented lives for a new generation of children who will be jostled around by increasingly complex adult claims,” and that what is missing is a historical understanding of marriage as a social institution that “secures the basic birthright of children, when possible, to know and be raised by their own mother and father.” The MM objection to same-sex marriage had little to do with sexuality and everything to do with biological parent-child connections. The same arguments could be, and were, lobbied against cohabitation, family formation using reproductive technologies, and adoption.

A significant example of how the MM interdiscursively engaged the problem of marriage deinstitutionalization was the publication of a book by IAV President David Blankenhorn. The impetus for Blankenhorn to further explore the biological aspect of parenting and marriage came as a result of a conversation he had with Evan Wolfson of Freedom to Marry (FTM). Blankenhorn replied to Wolfson’s request to endorse the work of FTM by saying that “Every child deserves a father and a mother.” The resulting book was *The Future of Marriage*, and in it Blankenhorn stressed that the same-sex marriage debate must affirm that all persons are “equal in dignity,” but it must also “help us to rediscover and renew marriage as the main protector of our children and our primary social institution” (Blankenhorn 2007a). Blankenhorn borrows from equality discourses (“equal in dignity”) of the MEM to temper his argument against same-sex

marriage. This interdiscursive choice likely aligned with his own social justice proclivities (Blankenhorn self-identifies as a liberal, and served as an anti-poverty community organizer with President Lyndon Johnson's VISTA program), but also worked to make it more palatable for other liberal-minded folk to reject same-sex marriage as well. Publication of *The Future of Marriage* marked the transformation of Blankenhorn, and by default the MM, away from healthy marriage crusader to same-sex marriage adversary.

Blankenhorn saw same-sex marriage activists using the institution of marriage as a means to achieve a particular end: reducing homophobia. Blankenhorn characterizes such an enterprise as trading off with efforts to protect children through strengthening marriage:

Many people today—and I am one of them—believe that reducing homophobia is in fact a worthy, important goal, and so there is real conflict in how we evaluate the current push for gay marriage. The issue is not good versus bad, but good versus good—that is, one good goal, protecting marriage, in conflict with another good goal, reducing homophobia. To me, in this trade-off, it's ultimately more important, when it comes to marriage, to try and protect and strengthen the institution, primarily because of how it affects children.

That's why, with some reluctance, I oppose same-sex marriage. (Blankenhorn 2007b).

Blankenhorn clearly recognized the public nature of the marriage relationship as it relates to procreation and child-bearing. The reason why he ultimately characterizes a "good versus good" scenario as a zero-sum relationship relates back to the deinstitutionalization problem, and the heteronormative purpose of marriage as a site for procreation. For Blankenhorn, reducing homophobia by opening marriage and disavowing its fundamental procreative purpose is an end not justified by its means. Blankenhorn also mischaracterizes the goal of marriage equality (reducing homophobia), and as a result simultaneously diminishes the public nature of marriage with regard to citizenship while curiously making an argument against marriage's deinstitutionalization. In this sense, Blankenhorn is making tries to both highlight *some* of the public purposes of marriage (procreation), while downplaying others (granting citizenship rights).

Lessening homophobia is certainly a goal pursued by same-sex marriage activists, but perhaps a minor goal in relation to the potential citizenship gains achievable through same-sex marriage.

Citizenship rights may not have been at the forefront of Blankenhorn's mind because of the persistence of "'wafer thin' definitions of marriage" evident in "court decisions and polemical articles about same-sex ties, such as: 'a unique expression of a private bond and profound love;' 'a private arrangement between parties committed to love;' and 'the exclusive commitment of two individuals to each other'" (Steinfels 2007). Such definitions certainly do not conjure a fundamental connection between marriage and citizenship rights. Regarding redefining marriage:

Mr. Blankenhorn readily admits that the "deinstitutionalization" of marriage that he fears – the redefinition of what he considers the nation's "most pro-child institution" as a private adult relationship stripped of public meaning – has been underway for a long time. Deeply rooted in American individualism and the quest for self-fulfillment, that redefinition "has been growing for decades, propagated overwhelmingly by heterosexuals." Same-sex marriage only further erodes marriage as a pro-child institution (Steinfels 2007).

New directions. By the end of 2010, the IAV website touted a new, simple mission for the Institute: "to study and strengthen civil society." An essay was approved by the IAV Board of Directors to explain the organizational purpose. Three priorities were identified – marriage, thrift, and the "nest and the nest-egg." These three priorities are inter-linked. Family is the "seedbed institution of civil society, and marriage is the basis of the family." For IAV, "marriage is the main human institution governing the link between voluntary spousal association and the biological parent-child association." Thrift involves using money and resources wisely. While thrift can equally apply to both individuals and institutions, IAV says that marriage and thrift work best when they stand together: "Forming stable marriages and building economic independence over time—marriage and thrift, the nest and the nest egg—are the indispensable

and interconnected pathways to the American mainstream and the linked prerequisites for a thriving civil society” (IAV 2011).

But perhaps the biggest change facing the MM occurred in 2012, when David Blankenhorn changed his view on same-sex marriage. Blankenhorn published his opinion reversal in *The New York Times*. He began by saying that he recanted none of his previous statements about the pro-child nature of marriage, that all children have the right to be raised by their own biological parents, or that same-sex marriage contributes to the further deinstitutionalization of marriage, which he defined as “marriage’s steady transformation in both law and custom from a structured institution with clear public purposes to the state’s licensing of private relationships that are privately defined” (Blankenhorn 2012). He continued, however, to state that “there are more good things under heaven than these beliefs.” The three “good things” that swayed his opinion were “the equal dignity of homosexual love,” comity and an interest in conciliation rather than further fighting in the “culture wars,” and the emerging consensus, particularly among younger Americans, in favor of marriage equality (Blankenhorn 2012).

Blankenhorn also admitted that attempts to fight same-sex marriage under the guise of helping marriage failed. First, he recognized that such attempts may have only furthered “anti-gay animus.” But he also made a pragmatic acknowledgment that “if fighting was going to help marriage overall, I think we’d have seen some signs of it by now” (Blankenhorn 2012). His intention was to usher in a new strategy for the MM:

... to help build new coalitions bringing together gays who want to strengthen marriage with straight people who want to do the same. For example, once we accept gay marriage, might we also agree that marrying before having children is a vital cultural value that all of us should do more to embrace? Can we agree that, for all lovers who want their love to last, marriage is preferable to cohabitation? Can we discuss whether both gays and straight people should think twice before denying children born through

artificial reproductive technology the right to know and be known by their biological parents? (Blankenhorn 2012).

The fallout from Blankenhorn's decision has been huge. The Institute lost at least one important Board member and 60 percent of its unrestricted operating budget – approximately \$560,000 of an unrestricted-fund budget of roughly \$900,000 (Rauch 2013). New people joined the Board, however, including long-time marriage equality advocate Jonathan Rauch and Clinton administration domestic policy advisor William Galston. The IAV website now asks for people to join in “launching a new conversation on marriage” (IAV 2013). Rauch explained that the task going forward is to “move beyond zero-sum rhetoric (if gays win, straights must lose) and develop positive-sum agendas for American families and children” (Rauch 2013). What that means for the Marriage Movement, only time will tell.

Textual Analysis (Description) of MM Interview Corpus

As in the previous two chapters, I first textually analyze interview transcripts and then focus on social process analysis/interpretation by coding transcripts for diagnostic and prognostic frames. Finally, I end with corpus linguistic (CL) analysis to test my coding assumptions, and to make sure that my interpretations are reflected in the lexicogrammatical and structural choices of interview participants and online SMO documents. Because of the notable rift between marriage educators and MM citizen-scholars, I conduct CL analysis on two corpora – first, a corpus of documents from the IAV website, and second, a corpus of Smart Marriages listserv archive material from 2000 to 2010.

Textual analysis thus far suggests one primary MM frame that incorporates both diagnostic and prognostic elements: marriage is a key social institution that best serves the interests of children and their biological, married parents. I separate out the diagnostic and prognostic components of this frame by evaluating how the MM defines marriage, threats that jeopardize marriage's institutional footing, and the imperative to address marriage for the sake of the children. Because the MM holds traditional marriage as a social ideal, my research indicates

that the movement is conceptually supportive of hegemonic marriage. It is also true, however, that the MM tends to approach the ethic in a pragmatic manner. The MM demonstrates willingness to re-envision aspects of the marriage ethic if convinced that hegemonic negotiation best serves the well-being of children within the marriage relationship.

Broad-based movement. The MM prides itself on its diversity. Organizers hope that the broad-based nature of the movement demonstrates that it is a “whole that was greater than the sum of its parts” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). An interviewee from the National Marriage Project (NMP), another arm of the scholarly marriage subsector, described the make-up and purpose of the MM:

I think that the marriage movement is a pretty heterogeneous movement. ... to ... cultivate a deeper appreciation in the media and in the public at large and other kinds of elite organs of opinion ... a greater appreciation for the role that the institution of marriage plays in fostering stability among adults who are in some kind of intimate relationship, and more importantly, fostering the stability and just general welfare of children in our society. Children tend to benefit, on average, from growing up in intact, married households. So, I think there are different parts to the marriage movement, and there has been a good bit of attention given to marriage education and to relationship skills training by a variety of different institutions and actors. And I would say that both NMP and the IAV are less likely to focus on that dimension because ... it's less about perfecting a certain technique in anyone's marriage that's going to help regenerate or renew marriage, it's really more fostering a renewed appreciation in the public at large and among elites at large of the role that norms, beliefs, attitudes about strengthening marriage as well as policies... that can be tweaked or overhauled in ways that are more marriage friendly (National Marriage Project, personal communication, May 7, 2009).

Despite viewing marriage education as less worthy than promoting marriage as an institution, the IAV assumed a “convener” role for the MM, including initially bringing together

marriage educators of all different stripes (generalists, faith-based, school-based, and federal “healthy marriage” programmers, for instance). IAV was the agent that brought people together and encouraged them to “try and put down on paper what we were trying to do,” including “the philosophy and goals” of the movement (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). Of particular importance was trying to “convene people to come together across organizational lines and across sectors... the church people, and the people who are secular, the marriage education people and people in therapy, scholars, business leaders, etc.” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

In the *Statement of Principles*, IAV chose to name subdivisions in the MM, and to highlight their unique contributions. This strategy was not universally favored. The Smart Marriage interviewee explained:

I’m a little uncomfortable with how they parceled it all to be like there was a marriage education movement and there was the scholarly marriage movement, like they were something different. And then there was the marriage family fatherhood movement, there was the school-based marriage skills movement, as if that was something different. It felt like they took my whole marriage education movement and gave it different headings, as if they were all different. ... But I was busy and so I thought this was a good thing (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

Because many members of the MM came from different professional sectors as well as diverse ideological backgrounds, much of the movement’s initial work lay in language – trying “to frame a public argument about the importance of marriage and to offer some ideas about what we were trying to do about it” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). Such work involved thoughtful deliberation across social divides, as explained by the IAV interviewee:

On the issue of marriage we’ve gone through at least two formal processes of trying to get some of the key leaders together. I mean not everybody is all that interested in sort of the public argument dimension of things. ... We still tried to bring them and the scholars

and writers together to get a sense of: Can we name what we are trying to do? Can we give it a vocabulary? Can we come together to think for a minute about what some of our goals might be?" (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The goal of the MM was never to become a professionalized entity. The movement valued its "spontaneity" as evidence that "it wasn't just some planned out thing that got hatched in someone's office or a PR thing" (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). The IAV interviewee further explained that "we were never trying to, and we certainly never did, make it into some kind of structure with leaders and boards or that kind of thing. ... There wasn't a headquarters or a leader, etc. etc. We chose the word movement to connote those concepts" (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The choice of the MM to address same-sex marriage, however, caused internal divisions. The Smart Marriages interviewee pointed to the *What's Next for the Marriage Movement* document as source of the conflict. There was "a huge parting of ways in 2003 because ... they wanted to redo [*The Statement of Principles*]" (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009). The resulting document was:

... this incredibly conservative document that was not anything that we discussed. It was saying, same-sex is the big threat to marriage in America. I was like, not to us, it isn't. That's not where we are. And divorce law. And I was like, No. And I let all my people in the coalition know that I was not able to sign it, and they didn't sign it. ... David Blankenhorn has not been willing to speak to me since then (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

Perhaps as a result of this falling out, some adherents perceived qualitative changes at the Smart Marriages conference during the mid-2000s. Without identifying the same-sex marriage controversy by name, the interviewee from The Dibble Institute acknowledged that "early on there used to be more ... people from all of those areas represented, all those various groups. ... Maybe they're someplace else, but they don't all necessarily show up there anymore" (Dibble

Institute, personal communication, May 19, 2009). The interviewee particularly lamented lack of involvement from researchers, the same scholarly leaders who initially convened the MM:

I would say that the Smart Marriages conference has moved more to just marriage education. And now at Smart Marriages you get mostly, at least this is my bias, new program stuff, which is all very exciting. But I'm finding, I wish Diane would go back to a few sessions on just the basics – why does marriage matter and the social science research. Because I think there's a new generation... who are attracted to the field but aren't getting that really solid grounding in social science (The Dibble Institute, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The cause of discord between marriage education and scholarly MM adherents was not merely a disagreement about same-sex marriage. The disagreement was fundamentally about the movement's framing choices in the face of changes in hegemonic marriage. Punctuating events in 2003 indicated a significant shift in American popular and legal tolerance for same-sex marriage. Scholarly leaders within the MM chose to negotiate the ethic in a manner that affirmed hegemonic heteronormative principles, a decision that offended marriage educators' sense of inclusion. What changed was that the movement could no longer side-step or avoid explicitly stating their relationship to the marriage ethic. This fact focused attention of various movement sectors on the processes of hegemonic negotiation underway. Internal fissures emerged relating to how different movement subsectors, and the actors within them, perceived appropriate tactics for negotiating hegemony.

Healthy marriages and the federal government. Another branch of the MM worthy to explore is made up of actors who support an active governmental role in promoting healthy marriages. The primary goal of this branch – healthy marriage – is fairly coterminous with the goals of marriage education. The federal healthy marriage branch, however, significantly differs from the MM as a whole with regard to its constraints regarding hegemonic negotiation. Marriage educators, for example, are predominantly independent activists motivated to encourage healthy

or smart marriages for a variety of personal reasons. Federal marriage movement representatives, on the other hand, can only negotiate with hegemonic marriage to the extent that their negotiations align with federal policy dictates. This is particularly relevant with regard to same-sex marriage issues because the existence of DOMA literally ties their discursive negotiation capabilities.

The Smart Marriages interviewee sees governmental interest as laudable, but argues that funds allocated from welfare reform initiatives are a tiny drop in the bucket: “It was an insult when we’re spending \$150 million a year, and that’s a small, small, small estimate on what family break-down costs us. And that’s not even counting the human suffering, mostly to women (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009). The same interviewee had reservations around the way that “healthy” marriage rhetoric supplanted “smart” marriage rhetoric:

The government came up with that. I didn’t like it. But I’ve given into that. It’s ubiquitous. It’s almost taken over from smart marriage. The reason I didn’t like it is because ... I was afraid that people would say, oh, this isn’t healthy for me not to be happy in this marriage. ... I was just worried that healthy was too idealized, and that getting smart about marriage was about realizing that there will be sometimes when this marriage doesn’t make you feel all that healthy, it makes you feel depressed and discouraged and it feels like the love died. But that’s also normal stages. That’s why they say “for better or for worse” (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

In addition to policymakers’ apparent preference for “healthy” marriages more so than “smart” marriages, there is another relevant framing trend in marriage policy at the federal level. A shift from talking about “marriage promotion” to “healthy” marriages was, in fact, a rebranding effort to respond to pushback encountered with initial policy marriage promotion attempts coming out of welfare reform. The interviewee for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center described pragmatic elements of the new brand:

It's partly a political rebranding, quite frankly. But it reflects the fact that in the field the programs have been serving many, many couples who are not married, and most or many who will not intend to get married, although they certainly are given an opportunity to learn more about it. ... And so if you say you're pushing marriage, you're not to get people to come to the program. ... It also politically, at this point, a good idea. Because we were losing a lot of potential interest and support and getting a lot of criticism by seeming to simply promote marriage. And we don't use the word "promote" much at all anymore (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

The initial pushback alluded to by the interviewee from the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center primarily came from the left, particularly feminists and those in the domestic violence movement, who were concerned about women – poor and vulnerable women – being encouraged to stay in abusive marriages. The effect was not merely the rebranding of marriage promotion to healthy marriages, but also a deliberate focus on collaborating with domestic violence experts to “make sure that the program is sensitive to this issue” (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009). Another effect of rebranding, however, meant changing the way those in the federal marriage movement subsector counted success: “We're not just counting the number of people who get married or get divorced. We're saying that ... that sometimes it can be successful if an individual or couple back out of a relationship or marriage, or leave a marriage” (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

The inclusion of federal level healthy marriage initiatives represents an interesting dynamic with regard to hegemonic marriage. Feminist critics of including marriage promotion in welfare reform were quick to point out that such initiatives made problematic gendered assumptions about the role of women in both marriage and the public sphere of work. Gwendolyn

Mink offers these examples of how federal marriage promotion bolstered patriarchal assumptions of hegemonic marriage:

The rights won by women since the 1960s are at risk here. George Bush wants to “improve fathers’ ability to manage family business affairs.” Will Marshall and Daniel Lichter want to prevent unmarried women from having babies. Evan Bayh wants to teach men “not to bring children into the world” until they can pay for them. One way or another, perpetrators of marriage promotion designate marital fathers the kingpins of legitimate family life (Mink 2002, 71).

Interviewees indicate that such feminist pushback led to the abandonment of the marriage “promotion” frame and the adoption of “healthy” marriages for couples who voluntarily seek marriage education programming. The healthy marriage frame is an example of how counter-hegemonic opposition shaped federal marriage promoters’ negotiation of the marriage ethic. They certainly back-pedaled on their overt support of traditional gender roles in marriage, but that does not necessarily mean that this sector of the MM changed their gendered views of the role of women in marriage.

Additionally, federal marriage programmers were not required to deal with same-sex issues to the same extent as other subsectors of the MM (although Bush’s announcement of the formation of the Healthy Marriage Initiative at the same time as he pushed the Federal Marriage Amendment certainly did create problematic perception issues). But in terms of the actual use of federal dollars for healthy marriage programs, same-sex marriage had (or has had) little effect because “the federal program was constrained by the DOMA act. Officials made it pretty clear that DOMA applied to this program and that you could not advertise services for gay couples or set up special programs for gay couples” (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009). The interviewee also stressed, however:

On the other hand we are also governed by a nondiscrimination law, so at the community level if a gay or lesbian individual or same-sex couple wanted to come to our programs,

nobody can keep them out. And we also believe in this relationship education, and this marriage education is equally beneficial to people of whatever orientation” (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

Silence on the issue of same-sex marriage – or even being compelled to include same-sex couples or risk violating nondiscrimination laws – also represents an hegemonic negotiation strategy. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the definition of marriage set forth in DOMA is very closely aligned with the TMM hegemonic definition of marriage. Remembering that acquiescence to dominant interests is a tool of hegemony suggests that healthy marriage promoters, even those touting the applicability of marriage skills for diverse relationship forms, are speaking from positions firmly rooted in hegemonic marriage.

Same-sex marriage and discourse co-optation. MM adherents from a marriage education background were more likely to take an inclusive position about same-sex marriage, arguing that the relationship skills that form the backbone of a healthy marriage can apply to anyone in any relationship context. The Smart Marriages interviewee said that marriage educators merely ask for the opportunity to provide relationship tools, and then “you can use the information ... to design whatever kind of relationship you want” (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009), including same-sex relationships. The purpose of the work of this arm of the MM is to “help people ... who intend to raise children to stay together as long as they possibly can, in the most stable, satisfying, sexy, healthy relationship that they can” (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009). The same interviewee later stated, “It just boggles the mind that [legislators] can be for marriage because it’s good for the children and then not allow same-sex couples who have children biologically” (Smart Marriages, personal communication, April 28, 2009). In this instance, the interviewee is referring to same-sex couples who either have biological children present at the formation of their relationship, or who utilize assistive reproductive technologies to conceive and rear children who are biologically related to at least one same-sex parent.

Unlike the TMM, which took on same-sex marriage from a defensive position as the other half of a “culture war,” most scholarly MM adherents took up the debate with resignation. Of course there were some in the MM, however, who tried to proactively respond to same-sex marriage. The Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, for example, was launched in 2003 because, as the interviewee described it:

[T]he people who heard about and thought about marriage were absent from that debate. ... [I]t was dominated both pro and con by people whose primary issue was homosexuality or gay and lesbian civil rights. It was almost in a drive-by way that they were talking about changing the public meaning of our most basic social institution for protecting children (iMAPP, personal communication, January 27, 2009).

Overall, most MM framing reactions to same-sex marriage were compelled by perceived significant shifts in marriage discourse. The IAV interviewee explained with regard to the *What's Next for the Marriage Movement* document, “[We talked about gay issues] in the second statement because we felt we had to. At that point there was so much in the public discussion that it just looked funny if you didn’t say anything. But we tried to approach it very carefully [W]e wanted to make our group open to people who were on both sides of that issue. ... [W]e tried to stay true to our principles without taking a hardline on the policy aspects of it” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

Despite not trying to take a hardline stance on same-sex marriage, debates surrounding the controversial issue co-opted MM efforts. The IAV interviewee stated:

[T]he single biggest blow that I’ve felt in all of this is the debate about same-sex marriage because it has just sucked all the oxygen out of the room for years now. It has completely dominated the discussion. .. [I]t’s almost like it put everything else on hold. I don’t know if there’s a particular end in sight. ... [I]t has been a very punishing influence on our work. I’m not saying that the issue of gay marriage is not a very important issue on its own, but ... for anybody who’s looking at marriage as an institution—which under any

definition is always going to be an overwhelmingly heterosexual institution—even if gay marriage was legal in every state and every gay person got married, marriage would still be mostly a heterosexual affair. But just about everything we were saying about [marriage] got put on hold while the country went through a big debate about gay marriage which hasn't ended yet. That has been a very challenging experience (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The force of same-sex marriage discourse was even felt at the high school level among MM adherents trying to teach school-based marriage skills. The interviewee from the Dibble Institute stated:

And in terms of how the gay, lesbian issue, gay marriage, has affected our work currently, unfortunately I think in some communities and some states where we used to be able to do this work the word “marriage” or the concept of marriage has become so potentially polarizing that people who used to teach it, like staff teachers, have just pulled way back. Like almost rather not deal with it than to have a shouting match, or to have to deal with that. So, and I think that is really unfortunate (Dibble Institute, personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The fact that the MM approached the same-sex marriage debate with resignation indicates that the movement struggled with how best to negotiate perceived changes in hegemonic marriage. Such struggles left frontline MM adherents feeling frustrated, and opened the door for appropriation and co-optation of MM discourse. Partisan divides were reintroduced that the MM long thought had been overcome. Father absence, for example, was a controversial topic in the 1980s because it was viewed as denigrating single mothers. Once the debate was reframed from fatherlessness to responsible fatherhood, discussing the issue became less divisive. But as the IAV interviewee explained, “then the gay marriage issue comes along and that statement goes back to being controversial because it gets caught up in the gay marriage debate” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). A federal marriage movement interviewee also

agreed, “For a while there it was extremely irritating that people were getting these two agendas confused. The virulent debate about same-sex marriage was kind of swamping the debate about healthy marriage for a huge majority of the population” (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 30, 2009).

Yet despite such divisiveness, scholarly marriage movement actors spearheading the MM indicated an unwillingness to give up. They were searching for a “‘post-gay’ marriage agenda that can in some ways get beyond this fairly sterile and exhausting debate we’ve been in for the last few years. . . . I have a feeling that we’ll be able to apprehend the new reality and be able to stay true to our values in terms of what’s next” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

Definition of marriage. When asked whether the MM has had to face issues about the definition of marriage, the IAV interviewee offered a very candid glimpse into how the definition of marriage issue affected the work of the MM. At the beginning of the scholarly marriage movement, definitional issues were not at all relevant:

And the definitional issues . . . at the formal level of the definition, we could kind of bypass that. We didn’t have to dwell on that. We didn’t have to go back into history and anthropology and get ourselves all tortured about that. . . . We didn’t have to argue over first principles of what, you know, well what do you even mean when you say these words? (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The influence of the same-sex marriage debate, however, changed the nature of discourse around marriage for reformers and social activists. Speaking only from his perspective, the IAV interviewee stated:

So for people who have my argument to make, every word becomes tortured. When you say father . . . well, all of a sudden that word becomes completely problematized. Five minutes ago when you said “father,” everyone knew what you meant. But now, . . . For goodness sakes, . . . what do you mean, “father?” What’s that? What is a father? Well what about if the mother and her partner is a guy who’s donated sperm to make a baby, is

he the father? ... For me the whole everything depended on being able to make an argument about what marriage is, and it's an argument that we've lost (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

Another interviewee added that what needs to be addressed is the pro-child public purpose of marriage, a focus that David Blankenhorn from IAV was correct to take on:

Where I think that there is important overlap is this debate about the purposes of marriage. And so I think that David [Blankenhorn] ... is right that we should be talking more about that. ... [S]ome of the conservatives really think that homosexuality is a sin, but there are so many aspects or rationales in their thinking that don't hold water. But the purposes of marriage, I think it's a debate that we are kind of backing into a bit (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, personal communication, April 28, 2009).

The IAV interviewee was also quick to state, however, that the "losing" characterization of the MM definition is not the result of the marriage equality movement alone. Losing began with "no-fault divorce and mainstreaming out-of-wedlock childbearing and Murphy Brown and everything else" (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). Gay marriage was just the final thing that caused marriage to topple. The IAV interviewee offered this final anecdote:

I think you're really onto something with this framing issue, or this definition issue. It just brings all of this to the surface. ... I have this great friend, an old man, my mentor. ... Sweet, sweet man. Not a mean bone in his body. He's just torn up by the gay marriage issue. I was talking to him one day and he said the real problem, the real loss for us is that we can't use the words that we want to use any more. We can't say the words that matter to us anymore. You just can't. We can't assume that when we say simple words that we're actually communicating any more. And he brought up father as an example, but parent is an example, mother is an example, marriage, natural, nature. The concept of what is natural, which used to be a concept in law ... Forget that. You'd better run for cover if you say that nowadays. So the whole vocabulary that many of us have depended

on to communicate with our fellow citizens is now no longer available to us (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

This anecdote highlights how hegemony structures meaning in words associated with marriage. The MM faced an uphill battle because they referenced traditional public identities and purposes of marriage, and then attempted to negotiate those ideals in a world marked by factors that erode the hegemonic positioning of marriage. Anecdotes like this one are indicative of a weakening marriage ethic, and note that tools of dominance like coercion and legitimation seem to be losing their edge. The MM argued, for example, that natural law, a legitimation tool heavily relied on by the TMM, has lost its meaning and that arguing for its relevance can incite oppositional reactions. The MM fears that an individualized notion of marriage will supplant the traditional hegemonic ideal, and their frustrated tone indicates that they are uncertain of how to frame their reactions in such a period of hegemonic transition.

The privatized definition of marriage is troubling because it has been absorbed deeply in American society, “especially the notion that it’s a private act. . . . The meaning is determined by the participants. It has no necessary relationship to sex or children” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). Privatization signifies a weakening hegemony – that marriage is losing its hegemonic status. Fading fast is the idea that “marriage has a monopoly on heterosexual procreative conduct,” and the definition that is left is “stripped down, thinned out, very abstract” and emphasizes that marriage is fundamentally private (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The scholarly marriage branch is invested in the marriage ethic, a position relating to their ideological belief that marriage is a social ideal. On the other hand, because marriage educators routinely confront issues dealing with diverse relationship forms, their understandings of marriage tend to be fairly accommodating of popular conceptions of marriage and relationships in practice. Americans’ individual sexual and romantic choices are often counter-hegemonic in nature. Children are born out of wedlock. Mothers are breadwinners. Homosexual couples raise

children. Given these realities, marriage educators recognize the value of marriage as a social ideal, but are willing to act pragmatically in their negotiations of the marriage ethic.

Process Analysis (Interpretation) of MM Interview Corpus

As in previous chapters, this level of analysis begins by coding interview content within each theme using prognostic and diagnostic codes. Because there is so much diversity within-movement, I try to highlight frames that are broadly shared in common. There are certainly examples of frames with varying degrees of adherence. I try to be sensitive to their nuanced nature.

MM interview diagnostic frames. Recall that diagnostic frames answer two questions – the definition of marriage and primary problems facing marriage. On the first question, there is general agreement among MM adherents who are concerned with definitional issues that marriage is a *public institution*. A large segment of the MM –namely the marriage education and skills-focused sectors—do not engage with this frame at all. It is not that they necessarily disagree with the public assessment – some may and some may not – but rather that the definition is not important in their work. By defining marriage as a public institution, the MM does not express it as solely a legal union (like the MEM), or a religious or procreative union (like the TMM). The MM is more concerned with the purpose of the public institution, which for them is an institution that best serves children’s optimal development. For this reason, the diagnostic frame of public purpose and the prognostic frame of child well-being are closely linked.

With regard to how the MM negotiates hegemony in their framing, the choice of marriage education adherents to *not* deploy frames about the public nature of marriage is actually a telling example of a fissure within the MM’s hegemonic negotiation. Both marriage educators and scholarly movement adherents agree that marriage is best assessed in terms of child outcomes. Marriage educators, however, do not tend to use discourse alluding to the social or public role of the marriage institution. Marriage educators tend to acknowledge a diverse array of relationships that can be formed between romantic partners, with the caveat that children do best

in low-conflict relationships with both biological parents present. Marriage is optimal, but if it is not a viable option for couples then marriage educators do not tend to decry the unraveling of the critical marriage institution. Scholarly marriage movement adherents, on the other hand, do.

One way of characterizing this fissure is that the marriage education camp is fairly tolerant of counter-hegemonic marriage practices, and such tolerance translates into differential value assessments of certain types of frames. One could also argue that marriage educators are less invested in maintaining hegemonic marriage, or that their relationship to hegemony is less central than that of the TMM or the MEM. They are willing to forego putting their framing eggs into the marriage *public institution* basket so long as they believe their choice best serves the interests of children. Scholarly movement adherents, rather, posit that children are best served when their biological parents are married because childrearing is the very purpose of marriage. Such a public procreative imperative is the reason why same-sex marriage was such a threat to scholarly marriage adherents. Framing decisions relating to the *public* diagnostic frame are heightened for scholarly adherents by the success of same-sex marriage advocates in defining marriage in individual terms—“two people who are in a committed relationship” such that “marriage is ENTIRELY a matter of private ordering” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009; emphasis in original).

The *public* diagnostic frame references a definitional issue. The scholarly camp of the MM does not define marriage as individual or private commitment, but rather as “an institution that is intended to serve public as well as private purposes and that it is essentially public recognition and regulation of a male-female sexual relationship, primarily in the interest of regulating parenthood” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). The interviewee from the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy stressed the fact that marriage is a social institution:

[Y]ou can't reduce marriage. Marriage is a kind of cross-disciplinary and complex thought. It is a legal institution but it was not created by legislators. It's an economic union. It's a moral and spiritual union for most Americans. It's a parenting union. It's an emotional and

psychological union. . . . Men and women decide to do this but they don't make up what marriage means. That's something that society either does or doesn't do for them (iMAPP, personal communication, January 27, 2009).

The benefit of the core MM definition is that it is "thick, institutionally specific, historically rooted," and describes marriage as "bigger than the couple" (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). The definition also defends a hegemonic conception wherein the institution of marriage is even credited with having discursive power to direct behaviors. For MM adherents, such a defense is necessary in a time when individual practices are challenging the common-sense nature of the marriage institution. The IAV interviewee explained:

Marriage shapes the couple. The marriage is almost like a third party, intruding into things, telling the couple what to do. You know, you're supposed to act married. For earlier generations this was just given. Everybody knew this. But the new argument on the other side from mine is that those were the bad old days. And the good old days which are here now is that marriage is two private individuals in love with another and the content of that love to be determined by them and them alone, and affirmed by society, carrying with it full rights regarding parenting and everything else. So there you have it. Two different views of what marriage is (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009).

The MM pays the most in-depth and complex attention of any of the movements to the diagnostic framing question of problems facing marriage. A good deal of that focus is driven by the movement's use of social science research as a grounding force in their efforts. In terms of the problems facing marriage, most MM frames fall into the category of *erosion of family form*. Key examples of these frames concern divorce, cohabitation, teen pregnancy and other non-marital child-bearing, and the breakdown of black families. Same-sex marriage is a concern here only so much as the same-sex marriage debate ignored the purposes of marriage, and presented a vacuous version of the institution. Most MM adherents do not make claims that same-sex relationships are

inherently bad, and in fact many of them arguably would support domestic partnerships or civil unions as an alternative to full marriage equality.

Some adherents stressed disdain at *changing norms* as well, particularly regarding delayed marriage and fertility for women, and a need to encourage responsible fatherhood rather than the norm of father absence. More than the other two movements, the MM refers to the roles that particular identities play within the marriage relationship, particularly fathers and mothers and not so much husbands and wives. The focus on fathers and mothers most likely relates to the master frame of child well-being – the roles that women and men take on as parents is more important to the MM than the public identities of husbands and wives that result from marriage socially sanctioning sexual relationships. I must note, however, in discussing issues of delayed marriage and fertility for women, the MM seems to still focus on gendered roles that very much align with hegemonic marriage. Delayed marriage and fertility are a problem because women are pursuing careers and activities outside of the realm of the family, and taking on duties and obligations that extend beyond caretaking roles traditionally associated with wives/mothers. Even though the MM does not specifically admonish career choices for women, they do tend to characterize such developments as less than optimal.

Finally, for a large number of marriage education proponents, a main problem is *interpersonal factors*, namely a lack of relationship skills that lead to high-conflict relationships and marriage breakdown. A split emerged in the movement post-2003 regarding whether a relationship skills focus was beneficial in culturally shoring up the institution of marriage. For instance, the interviewee from the National Marriage Project said, “we think that marriage education *per se* is a valuable thing... but I think there is much more than just trying to perfect a certain characteristic within one marriage. It’s [not really going] to be a force for positive social change on this issue” (National Marriage Project, personal communication, May 7, 2009).

The MM split between marriage education and scholarly movement adherents was not solely about the effectiveness of a marriage skills approach, however. Another cause for the split

was reticence on behalf of marriage education proponents to take a stand on the same-sex marriage issue and to update the *Statement of Principles* with content they deemed to be overly conservative. The impact of the split essentially meant that marriage educators and federal healthy marriage proponents went in one direction, and the scholarly movement adherents chose a different path. Although I have primarily relied on the scholarly perspective up until this point to give the background story for the MM, I intentionally use interview data from a variety of MM sectors to ensure that I present a complete picture. In my corpus linguistic analysis, I will also include documents from Smart Marriages in order to assess potentially relevant discursive differences between the scholarly and marriage education elements of the MM.

MM interview prognostic frames. Prognostic frames address both why and how marriage should be addressed. There is overwhelmingly strong MM framing on the former question, and virtually none on the latter. Generally, core MM adherents seem to feel that marriage is best addressed by calling more attention to and raising awareness about marriage and the challenges it faces. They seek awareness and hope that public elite support of marriage will strengthen the institution. Similarly, marriage education practitioners hope that awareness of marriage skills will improve relationships and outcomes for children. There is no one type of action suggested, however, like securing marriage rights for the MEM or pursuing a constitutional amendment for the TMM. Given this lack of specificity, I classify this prognostic frame as *awareness*.

Prognostic framing regarding *why* marriage should be addressed, however, is very clear. The MM ascribes to a child-centric prognostic frame. The IAV interviewee said that such a focus has been present since the founding of the Institute: “we set as our main anchoring idea increasing the proportion of children who grow up with their own two married parents. So that has been pretty much a constant of our work. ... and ... our general way we’ve tried to conceptually frame our inquiry has not really shifted” (IAV, personal communication, June 5, 2009). The interviewee from the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy stated that “the most important reason it matters

is because marriage is important to children's wellbeing" (iMAPP, personal communication, January 27, 2009).

Marriage is able to best provide for, nurture and protect children because it is a social institution with public purposes. The work of the MM is directed at achieving two goals: 1) to be an advocate for the institution of marriage so that there is an increased likelihood "that a child will be raised by his own married mother and father in a single family unit, and that family is a reasonably decent, average, good-enough marriage" (iMAPP, personal communication, January 27, 2009); and 2) to encourage public policy to strengthen marriage—"we should look for ways that we can strengthen marriage so that fewer children are hurt by having their families fall apart or fail to form" (iMAPP, personal communication, January 27, 2009). An interviewee from the National Marriage Project further clarified, "we are basically trying to alert members of the media and the broader public as well as other kinds of interested parties, policymakers and the like, that there is a body of evidence that suggests that many of our current family trends—cohabitation, single parenthood—are problematic for the welfare of children" (National Marriage Project, personal communication, May 7, 2009).

The focus on child wellbeing is shared by all sectors of the MM. A representative from the National Fatherhood Initiative, for example, described this focus in terms used by marriage-friendly fatherhood groups:

There's a powerful connection between responsible fatherhood and marriage in that the research tells us that the best situation in which children can be raised, the ideal situation in which children can be raised in terms of outcomes for those kids, is to be raised by their two married parents. And research also tells us that the institution that provides the best probability, the best chance that a father is going to be involved in his children's lives for the long term is marriage. In other words, married fathers tend to be more equally involved in their children's lives, more consistently and for a longer period of time than unmarried fathers do. ... It really just shows you how significant that the

institution of marriage is in allowing fathers to be the kinds of dads that their children need them to be (National Fatherhood Initiative, personal communication, May 27, 2009).

Although working with a different task in mind – encouraging marriage in the black community – an interviewee from the Wedded Bliss Foundation shared the same concern:

Because most black people are not married, and most black children don't have the gift of a two-parent family and we're really trying to work to change that. 70% of Black children are born outside of wedlock. ... [W]e're trying to make a connection – we're trying to reconnect marriage and childbearing, and to give more black children the gift of a two-parent family (Wedded Bliss Foundation, personal communication, May 15, 2009).

MM Corpus Linguistic Analysis

I once again use corpus linguistic software *AntConc* to conduct corpus linguistic analysis on two different corpora: the Institute for American Values web corpus with over 88,000 words, and the Smart Marriage listserv archive corpus of over 414,000 words. I compiled the corpus by randomly selecting one month of archive content per year. The Smart Marriage listserv corpus is very large because it was typically published as often as once a day, with each thread containing multiple full-text articles typically gathered from popular media sources, academic research, and other marriage-related listserv lists or newsletters. Some listserv content also included responses by members of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education (aka, Smart Marriages) to previous shared content. All listserv content was moderated by Diane Sollee, founder of Smart Marriages. It is notable that many articles shared on the Smart Marriages listserv were research produced by scholars associated with the Institute for American Values or their ilk, even after the alleged falling out between the two sectors in 2003.

I use diagnostic and prognostic frames gleaned from interviews to guide my investigation of the IAV web corpus. Recall that interview data represents a wide array of MM sectors and suggests parameters for applying CL analysis. I limit my evaluation of the Smart Marriages

corpus, on the other hand, to simple analysis of *marriage*. This straightforward search is sufficient for me to evaluate core semantic trends for marriage educators. With this in mind, primary framing themes identified by a close reading and coding of interview transcripts are:

Diagnostic – what is marriage: *public institution*

Diagnostic – problems facing marriage: *breakdown of family form, changing norms, and interpersonal skills*

Prognostic – why address marriage: *children*

Prognostic – how address marriage: *awareness*

I begin by compiling a table of word frequencies clustered by framing themes in both the IAV web and interview corpora. See Table 7 for the number and frequency of expressions related to each diagnostic and prognostic frame.

Table 7. *Textalyser* frequency of MM diagnostic and prognostic frame expressions

Expression	Interview Corpus		Web Corpus	
	Number	Frequency	Number	Frequency
Diagnostic Frame: Institution	162	1.2%	1,358	2.7%
society/social/culture/cultural	22	0.2%	897	1.8%
Public	71	0.5%	217	0.4%
Institution	39	0.3%	141	0.3%
Private	13	0.9%	53	0.1%
Strengthen	0	0	50	0.1%
Definition	17	0.1%	0	0
Prognostic Frame: Children	135	1.0%	1,038	2.1%
children/child	116	0.8%	641	1.3%
Born	0	0	52	0.1%
parenting/parent(s)	19	0.1%	345	0.7%
Prognostic Frame: Awareness	373	2.7%	862	1.7%

research/scholars/university/science/study	127	0.9%	419	0.8%
program(s)	120	0.9%	133	0.3%
Government	44	0.3%	63	0.1%
Policy	25	0.2%	104	0.2%
Conference	24	0.2%	0	0
Welfare	17	0.1%	51	0.1%
Media	16	0.1%	0	0
Leaders	0	0	92	0.2%
Diagnostic Frame: Erosion of Family Form	70	0.5%	683	1.4%
Divorce	29	0.2%	349	0.7%
Black	21	0.2%	0	0
Single	20	0.1%	94	0.2%
childbearing/pregnancy	0	0	128	0.3%
unwed/unmarried	0	0	112	0.2%
Diagnostic Frame: Changing Norms	174	1.3%	487	1.0%
father(s)/fatherhood/responsible	106	0.8%	241	0.5%
women/mother(s)	68	0.5%	246	0.5%
Diagnostic Frame: Interpersonal Skills	289	2.1%	414	0.8%
education(al)/teach/learn	108	2.%	262	0.5%
health(y)	59	0.4%	103	0.2%
Skills	43	0.3%	49	0.1%
Information	40	0.3%	0	0
Smart	20	0.1%	0	0
Training	19	0.1%	0	0

As before, textual coding and word frequencies only provide an entry point into discursive analysis. Neither tool can structurally evaluate which terms are important or unusually

frequent at the level of language. I turn to *AntConc* again to build a Keyword list as I did in the previous chapters. See Appendix I, Table I.1 for the Keyword list. Because the MM is so loose and tends to take a more complicated and nuanced view of marriage issues in American society, keywords helpfully clarify which concepts are likely to be most content-rich. Based on this list, *institution* and *society* both support the diagnostic frame that marriage is a public institution. The keyword *children* obviously illustrates the prognostic frame of child wellbeing. With regard to the diagnostic frame of *erosion of family form*, keyword analysis suggests two trends that the MM finds particularly troubling: *divorce* and unwed *childbearing*. The inclusion of *mothers* on this list could go hand-in-hand with childbearing concerns, or it could represent another diagnostic frame—*changing norms*. At this point in the analysis, the referent of *mothers* is unclear. *Fatherhood* is a keyword that more clearly signifies the *changing norms* frame, primarily because it has largely become a term of art, with its own movement dedicated to addressing the frequent contemporary reality of absent fathers. Finally, the keyword list gives some credence to scholarly aspects of the prognostic *awareness* frame with the inclusion of words like *educated*, *percent*, and *report*.

There are two other important things to note from this list. First, there is no reference at all to the diagnostic frame of interpersonal skills. Although IAV acknowledged that marriage education had a role to play in the MM up until at least 2003, the marriage skills approach and its accompanying healthy marriage programming on the federal level are not frequently discussed by the IAV, which I characterize as the main organizer of the MM. Second, the inclusion of *gay* as the ninth ranked keyword suggests that the same-sex marriage debate did have discursive effects on the MM. These effects are significant, but do not represent phenomena that primarily shaped the discursive choices of the MM. For instance, *divorce* had a keyness score twice that of *gay*, and the keyness score of *children* was over 1.5 times as much.

Looking at the frequency chart in Table 7, I see the following words in common with the keyword list (Appendix I, Table I.1) for each of the following frames:

Diagnostic – what is marriage: *institution*

Diagnostic – erosion of family form: *divorce, childbearing*

Diagnostic – changing norms: *fatherhood*

Prognostic – child well-being: *children*

In conducting concordance analysis on the IAV web corpus, I left out the prognostic frame *awareness* because the nodes will most likely yield descriptions of research papers that do not yield meaningful insights into movement framing choices or how the MM negotiates hegemonic marriage. Similarly, because no keywords correspond to marriage education or marriage skills, I do not address the diagnostic frame of interpersonal factors. I will evaluate linguistic choices of the marriage education or marriage skills perspective, rather, through assessing the Smart Marriages listserv archive corpus after I complete analysis of the IAV.

MM diagnostic frames. Concordance analysis for the term *institution* yields 144 occurrences. Analysis on the right side of the node reveals that *institution* typically appears in the phrase *institution of marriage*. Similarly, analysis on the left shows the phrases *marriage as an institution*, *pro-child institution*, and *social institution* as the most common patterns. To get at what is going on with these institutions and descriptive modifiers, I search each of them in turn. What results is a picture of marriage on the edge of a precipice – both subjected to forces that *undermine* or *weaken*, as well as *strengthen* and show *commitment* toward. Marriage is also recognized as a *vital, fundamental, core, key* and *primary* institution. The fact that the institution is *pro-child* is what makes action to preserve marriage so critical. For example, “we can strive to maintain and strengthen marriage as a primary social institution and society’s best welfare plan for children (some would say for men and women too).”

The significance of these concordance insights further bolsters my claim that much of the framing work of the MM is conducted as a reaction to perceived unprecedented shifts in hegemonic marriage. The MM greatly fears the deinstitutionalization of marriage because it seems as if marriage – the core social institution for governing procreation and ensuring the

wellbeing of children – will be unmoored. Language such as *undermine* and *weaken* are indicative of the MM's perception of rifts in the current hegemonic marriage iteration, and words like *strengthen* and *commitment* indicate what the movement thinks is a necessary course of action to halt the slide from an intelligible common-sense status quo to a post-marriage world that they have a difficult time fathoming. Much of the interview material, particularly from the IAV interviewee, evoked frustration and exasperation at forces that seemed to co-opt marriage discourse in such a way that makes it difficult to characterize marriage as *vital, fundamental, core, key, and primary*. The choice to use such words in concordance with *institution* is not accidental, but rather reflects a framing strategy of the MM to defend a hegemonic construction that makes sense to them.

Factors threatening the institution of marriage are varied, including the same-sex debate, divorce and bearing children out of wedlock, as well as an individualistic turn in American society that views marriage as a private relationship between two romantic partners with no public purpose. These factors are evident in IAV concordance analysis around nodes relating to the diagnostic codes of *erosion of family form*. Searching for *divorce*, for example, yields 371 occurrences. Of those, the most common co-texts on the right are a variation of either *divorce and unmarried childbearing* or *divorce and nonmarital childbearing*. The two go hand-in-hand with regard to their erosive effect on marriage. Another large pattern deals with *divorce education, divorce mediation, and divorce education programs*, many court-ordered and displaying mixed results as to their effectiveness on decreasing divorce acrimony. Finally, a large number of occurrences are concerned with high *divorce rates* and the *divorce laws* that make them possible. Such laws are viewed as “undermining marriage” and as “too lax.” Concordance analysis on the left of *divorce* reinforces the prognostic child wellbeing frame, with the largest pattern reflecting concern over *children of divorce*. Concordance analysis on *childbearing* yields the same familiar connections with divorce, as well as mixing in the term *unwed* to add to concerns over *unmarried and nonmarital* childbearing.

Evaluating the frame of *changing norms* involves looking at concordance of the term *fatherhood*. There are 104 occurrences. The most common patterns on the right make specific reference to the marriage-friendly fatherhood movement, an important early avenue of work for David Blankenhorn, leader of IAV. Words that suggest such meaning include *movement*, *activists*, *initiatives*, and *programs*. Analysis of the left side of the node suggests why fatherhood is categorized as an issue related to changing norms. Fatherhood is need of *nurturing*. Marriage is needed to foster a *renewal* and *restoration* of fatherhood. It is important to *promote responsible fatherhood*, and to focus on *strengthening* and *sustaining* it. Such is not the language of stasis, but rather is evidence of a shift from some preferred characterization of fathers in the past to a new and less desirable social role. The goal of the MM is now to make fatherhood return to its first principles.

The highest ranking collocates by Mutual Information score for all of the diagnostic nodes are in Appendix I. The collocates list for the node *institution* (Table I.2) does not yield any surprises – the MM seems to be concerned with bolstering the institution of marriage, primarily because they view it as natural, primary, pro-child, and key to social functioning. Cluster analysis used to identify the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences in the IAV web corpus supports this interpretation (See Table I.4.). Patterns emerging from cluster analysis all indicate that the top two concerns for the MM about marriage are that it is a *social institution* (with public purposes) and a *child institution* (the best place for childrearing).

Collocation analysis for the node *divorce* (Table I.5) once again shows a correlation with *child bearing*, indicating that the two iterations for the *erosion of form* frame highly relate to each other. The same results are indicated in collocation analysis for the node *childbearing* as well (Table I.7). The other main observation from *divorce* is a focus on prevention or other action to stop detrimental social impacts: *reductions*, *preventing*, *reduce*, and *avoid*. There again is language suggesting a social science interest in divorce, with co-texts such as *rate* and *rates* as well as correlational language like *connected*. Also, there still remains a focus on both

mediation and *education* as potential ways to stem the *tide* of divorces in the United States.

Cluster analysis tells me that the most frequent 2-word clusters containing the node *divorce* support these observations (Table I.6). The most content-rich clusters are *divorce rates*, *divorce education*, *divorce rate*, and *reduce divorce*.

Collocation analysis of *childbearing* (Table I.7) primarily associates childbearing with marital status – *nonmarital*, *unwed*, *unmarried*, and *delaying childbearing* until marriage. Social science language is again present as well, both with regard to current statistics, behavioral trends, and social impacts – *substantial*, *rates*, *increases*, *increasing*, *costs*, *risk*, and *costs*. Cluster analysis (Table I.8) distills from these observations that the most frequent 2-word clusters all relate to marital status – *unwed childbearing*, *unmarried childbearing*, and *nonmarital childbearing*. It is additionally important to recognize a gendered subtext to the term *childbearing*. Women bear children, and as such, terms relating to *delaying* childbearing, or being *unwed*, *unmarried*, or *nonmarital* all primarily apply to women. In thinking about the tools of hegemony – coercion and legitimation – it is evident that social science language regarding childbearing strongly hints at such tactics. Modifying the term *childbearing* suggests that the behavior should be subjected to disciplinary power in order to highlight that the *costs* and *risks* are too great for society to bear.

Finally, collocation on the *changing norms* node of *fatherhood* (Table I.9) suggests calls for sustained social movement action. Words like *initiative(s)*, *national*, *call*, *action*, *movement*, *project*, *conference* and *activities* all place discourse around fatherhood away from individual fathers and into the discursive realm of social action, in contrast to the implicit discussion of motherhood in terms of childbearing. The only word that suggests a specific characteristic of individual fathers is *responsible*. But looking at cluster analysis (Table I.10) reinforces that *responsible fatherhood* is actually a modifier for a specific type of *fatherhood movement*. Textual analysis suggests that the responsible fatherhood movement is an allied movement of the MM, but not one that is necessarily coterminous. The responsible fatherhood movement shares a focus

on child well-being, but is less likely to view marriage as a foundational issue. The absence of the collocate *marriage* in Table I.9 reinforces this conclusion. In fact, *marriages* is ranked 32 on the collocates list, with a Mutual Information score that is less than half of the top collocate. As such, analysis of the *changing norms* frame does not suggest that the role of fathers is a main discursive focal point for the MM.

MM prognostic frame. The most prominent prognostic frame relates to child wellbeing. Concordance analysis on the node *children* yields 572 occurrences. Language on the right side of the node gives a nod to the MM's scholarly basis by offering comparative statements: *more likely*, *less likely*, some percentage *more likely*, *more or less likely*, and *do better*. These comparisons are most often made between children's outcomes based on their family environment type. Words like *growing up*, *raised in*, *raised by*, *born to*, *born out of*, *born outside of*, *born without*, *growing up with*, *in intact*, *in non-intact*, *in single-parent*, *in traditional* and *in same-sex* demonstrate this as well, among many others. There is also a great deal of focus on children's abject state – how they *suffer* and their *suffering*, as well as their lowered sense of *well-being*.

Concordance analysis on the left side of the *children* node reinforces that concern for child well-being was not plucked out of thin air. The vast majority of patterns refer to research – *percentage*, *proportion*, *number* and *percent*. Other patterns indicate that there is a particular focus on reconnecting the concept of marriage to childrearing, such that couples understand that marriage is the “normative context for raising children.” One phrase that shows up four times is, “not every family form is equally likely to protect children's well-being.”

Turning to collocation analysis, the top 20 words frequently co-occurring with *children* are fairly random, and it is not easy to identify meaningful patterns (Table I.11). Words like *protected*, *suffer*, and *suffering*, however, appear on the list and certainly indicate concern with child wellbeing. Additionally, the words *proportion* and *outcomes* reinforce the social science focus of the MM, and the desire of the movement to measure social problems and then to improve the conditions of children in measurable and quantifiable ways. The word *raising* continues to

emphasize that marital status or family make-up is an important factor to consider in relation to children. Finally, cluster analysis (Table I.12) supports this observation, with the most content-rich clusters being *children living*, *their children*, and *children in*. All of these clusters suggest that the types of adults rearing a child and the child's family environment are key factors.

Trends from CL analysis of the IAV web corpus, therefore, suggest strong diagnostic frames associated with marriage deinstitutionalization and erosion of family form, particularly as it relates to divorce and unwed childbearing. The predominant IAV prognostic frame is child well-being. I compare these results to CL analysis of a corpus comprised of Smart Marriages listserv archive documents, beginning with keywords associated with both corpora. IAV keywords are in Table I.1 and Smart Marriages keywords are in Table I.13. The two lists have a number of unsurprising terms in common: *marriage/married*, *couples*, *divorce*, *family/families*, and *children*. This data is in line with everything I previously discussed about the two sectors of the MM maintaining a child wellbeing focus, as well as being concerned about marriage and family breakdown because of divorce. What is more interesting to me is what the two lists *do not* have in common. I chose the most content-rich words (excluding words like *list* and *says*, for example) and included them in Table 8.

Table 8. IAV and Smart Marriages Corpora Keyword Differences

<u>IAV/MM Keywords</u>	<u>Smart Marriages/Marriage Education Keywords</u>
gay	Conference
movement	Smart
fatherhood	Healthy
institution	Relationship
childbearing	Relationship
society	Sex

parents	
mothers	

The results in Table 8 are notable because they highlight framing differences beyond the shared foci of child wellbeing and marriage/family breakdown. The results also suggest different patterns of negotiation with hegemonic marriage. For instance, neither *gay* nor *institution* appears on the Smart Marriages list. When thinking about hegemonic marriage, it is conceivable to imagine the punctuating events of 2003 accelerating the MM's perception of challenges to hegemonic marriage, such that they ramped up their discourse and framing around risks of marriage deinstitutionalization. Similarly, only the IAV/MM keywords list includes any gendered roles: *fatherhood* and *mothers*. *Parents* additionally rounds out the list, which supports my previous argument that the MM is more concerned with gendered caretaking roles of mothers and fathers than they are with the roles of husbands and wives. Similarly, I argued that the term *childbearing* is also gendered and conjures identities that are subject to hegemonic disciplinary powers. *Childbearing* is also absent from the Smart Marriages list.

The Smart Marriages keyword list, on the other hand, reflects the individual/couple level focus of the marriage education approach. *Conference* refers to Smart Marriages' primary strategy for bringing like-minded people together to talk about marriage, but the terms *relationship/s* underscore that marriage is not their only topic of conversation. I previously argued that marriage educators likely negotiate hegemonic forces differently than the MM, primarily because they have a wide vision encompassing an array of relationship types. Child wellbeing is still an over-arching frame for Smart Marriages, but marriage education adherents can be quite tolerant to diverse relationship forms as long as they strive to be *healthy* and *smart*. There is no discussion, as with the IAV/MM, that marriage is a key social *institution*.

Concordance analysis of *marriage* in the Smart Marriages web corpus yields over 4500 occurrences. Because keyword analysis suggests significantly different marriage priorities

between marriage educators and scholarly MM adherents, I primarily look for concordance patterns relating to the phrase *marriage is*. My assumption is that marriage education concordances will include sentiments like “marriage is a relationship that requires work” and not many statements like “marriage is a key social institution.”

The *marriage is* concordance search yields a manageable 183 occurrences. Unlike my assumptions described above, concordance results support two primary conceptions of marriage: 1) marriage is an important social institution, and 2) marriage is good for children. Examples of such concordances are in Table 9. These results lead me to believe that although marriage educators give lip service to being inclusive and tolerant of different relationship types, and even potentially accepting counter-hegemonic relationship practices, they actually place considerable stock into arguments of the foundational nature of marriage. The marriage institution imagined and projected by the MM places its primary emphasis on the biological parent-child link, and as such tends to be supportive of hetero-patriarchal marriage roles as an ideal. The MM exhibits a degree of pragmatism, however, through their willingness to negotiate with hegemonic marriage if they believe that such negotiations will preserve the parent-child relationship at the core of marriage and best promote child well-being (e.g., David Blankenhorn’s recent calls to build coalition with same-sex marriage advocates to strengthen marriage as a normative place for raising children).

Table 9. Examples of Concordance Results for *marriage is*, Smart Marriages Web Corpus

<u>Frame: Marriage is a Key Social Institution</u>	<u>Frame: Marriage is Best for Children</u>
<i>marriage is</i> a concern that transcends religious	<i>marriage is</i> a good thing, a good situation for

<p>differences</p> <p><i>marriage is a public good</i></p> <p><i>marriage is a social institution</i></p> <p><i>marriage is an essential institution for building strong and safe communities</i></p> <p><i>marriage is an ideal</i></p> <p><i>marriage is an institution that should be promoted</i></p> <p><i>marriage is the foundation of family</i></p>	<p>children to be in</p> <p><i>marriage is better for kids and for parents too</i></p> <p><i>marriage is best for children in every way</i></p> <p><i>marriage is the social context in which fathers father best</i></p> <p><i>marriage is so important for the parents and the kids</i></p> <p><i>marriage is probably the most important way to ensure economic security and even success - for you and your children.</i></p> <p><i>marriage is the best foundation for raising children</i></p>
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Collocation and cluster analysis of *marriage* within the Smart Marriages web corpus still suggests that marriage educators situate their understanding of the purpose of marriage (normative institution for optimal child outcomes) within the framework of *healthy* marriages or relationships that are strengthened through *education*. Collocation analysis results are in Appendix I, Table I.14, and cluster analysis results are in Table I.15. A quick glance at cluster analysis results, for example, shows that the most content-rich two-word cluster is *healthy marriage*. This demonstrates not only a relationship-skills orientation, but also supports claims made by marriage education interviewees that once the federal government got into marriage promotion, that *healthy* marriage supplanted *smart* marriage.

MM Social Practices Analysis

Setting aside the issue of the marriage education sector, the MM as a whole spends considerable time describing how deinstitutionalization of marriage contributes to negative social

outcomes for children. They are primarily interested in framing marriage as an institution with public purposes. Deinstitutionalization can take many guises – divorce, unwed childbearing, and same-sex marriage, to name a few. A factor that all those hold in common, however, is that they reflect a fundamental reordering in society toward a highly individualized notion of sexual relationships.

The MM undoubtedly supports hegemonic marriage as an ideal, although they have exhibited willingness to negotiate counter-hegemonic charges to the ethic. Their anxiety relating to hegemonic negotiation reflects on the one hand their core belief that marriage is the best institution for raising children, and on the other hand the apparent value they ascribe to building a broad coalition in support of strengthening marriage. Recall even in the initial *Statement of Principles* document there was a contradiction between the MM's assertion that a strong marriage institution was best for both gays and lesbians and for children who need to be raised by their own two biological parents. As the MM developed, they vacillated on how to engage heteronormative elements of the marriage ethic – first, by not taking a position on same-sex marriage, then becoming same-sex marriage adversaries, and now calling for coalition with marriage equality proponents as a strategy to strengthen marriage. There has been minimal negotiation, however, with gendered roles within the marriage ethic. In fact, the MM values specific roles associated with mothers and fathers within institutionalized marriage. The MM views such roles as critical to helping children develop and flourish.

Descriptive analysis from the IAV web corpus indicates that for first few years of the movement, MM leadership believed they were on the right track and saw gains in their cultural project. Punctuating events of 2003 caused the issue of same-sex marriage to rear its head, and the MM was forced to explicitly endorse an aspect of hegemonic marriage previously taken for granted – heterosexuality. Post-2003, marriage equality rhetoric was effectively co-opting MM discourse, at once making everything seem controversial and framed in opposition to same-sex marriage. The result of such discursive co-optation was that the MM had a very difficult time

finding success with their deinstitutionalization frame. Social purposes of marriage took a back seat to valuing the private sexual decisions of couples, a turn perceived by the MM as particularly threatening because it undermined their belief in marriage as common-sense, ideal institution. Recent MM attempts to extend an olive branch and forge new alliances with the MEM do not resolve the problem of individualism and marriage deinstitutionalization. Rather, it represents a move toward bolstering a form of ascriptive sexual citizenship that holds the marital union, however defined, at the center of citizenship claims in the United States. See Figure 10 for my critical discourse analysis of MM positions within the field of marriage politics.

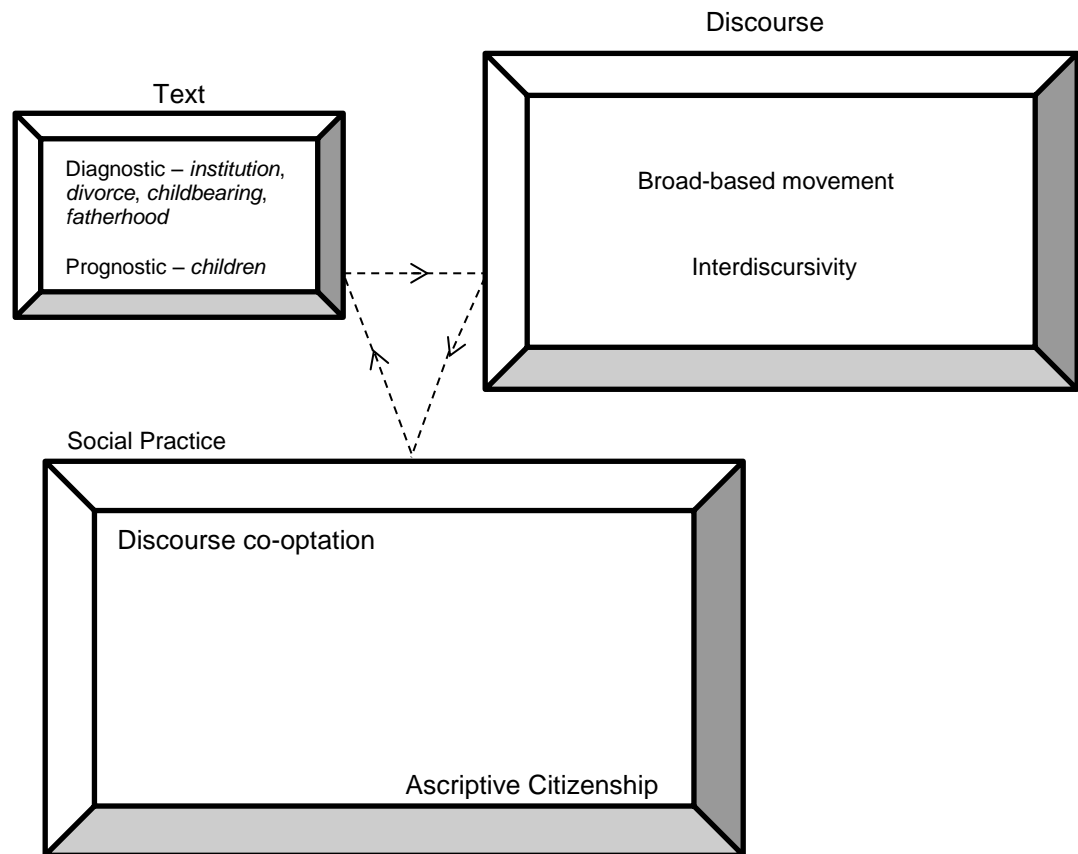


Figure 10. Application of Fairclough's (1995) CDA Model to the MM

Discourse co-optation is relevant to understanding MM social practices because it highlights the interdiscursive nature of the field of marriage politics and the fact that hegemony is maintained through its discursive relationships with a variety of discursively connected social movement actors. Jensen (2012) argues that discourse co-optation operates by incorporating the

views and thinking of oppositional groups – to bring outsiders in such that their opinions are rendered intelligible (Chan and Lee 1991). Co-optation happens through appropriating the insiders' critique, and thus rendering it harmless (Jensen 2012). Co-optation is a strategy, “the rationale of which is to neutralize challengers, renew legitimacy and re-establish authority and political support” (Jørgensen 1997, 77; Jensen 2012; Straume 2001).

The MM is particularly susceptible to discursive co-optation because of their commitment to building a broad-based movement. Because the movement strives to include all marriage-friendly perspectives, it may be easier for outsiders such as marriage equality advocates to use interdiscursive tactics to shape or constrain how the MM can respond to shifts in hegemonic marriage. Fairclough's (1992) concept of interdiscursivity, for example, argues that when multiple genres or types of discourse are deployed, the likelihood that some discursive threads will be appropriated by a counter-discourse may be greater. For example, the MM-founding *Statement of Principles* gave a 6-part definition of marriage. The definition drew from six different discursive strands – legal, economic/financial, religious, sexual, personal/individualistic, and procreative. Any one of these discursive strands may be interdiscursively sampled in order for a movement challenger to gain legitimacy among MM adherents, or co-opted in order to lessen the strand's discursive power.

In discursive appropriation, actors promoting one discourse benefit from losses suffered by actors promoting an alternative discourse (Jensen 2012). Jensen introduces the analytical term *discourse co-optation* as a means to describe how “one discourse burrows into the heart of a counter-discourse, turns its logic upside down and puts it to work to re-establish hegemony and re-gain political support. One discourse is strengthened by the addition of a new, powerful argument; the other is weakened almost to the same degree” (Jensen 2012, 35-36). Whereas interdiscursivity involves actors sampling tenets of different discourses, discourse co-optation suggests a zero-sum relationship wherein interdiscursivity results in tangible losses to one actor as the other gains.

My analysis in chapter 5 does *not* suggest that the MEM specifically targeted MM discourse and tried to strategically co-opt it in order to achieve particular movement objectives. Evidence in this chapter, however, certainly suggests that the MM *perceived* the MEM as doing just that. There are four discursive elements of the definition of marriage given in the *Statement of Principles* that are valued by both the MM and MEM: marriage is a legal, financial, sexual, and personal institution. At a minimum, the fact that both movements deploy discourse promoting these beliefs indicates interdiscursivity. Analyzing the definitional element of *procreation*, however, suggests a basis for MM perceptions of discursive co-optation.

From the MM perspective, MEM framing problematized and co-opted *procreation* in order to bolster its highly individualized interpretation of marriage as a state-sanctioned sexual relationship. Looking back to the interview corpus, examples abound regarding how the MM thought the MEM was able to do this – words like father, single parent, biological parent, and more had all become so highly stigmatized that they either immediately incited controversy or were avoided by the MM altogether. By extension, Blankenhorn’s call for coalition with same-sex marriage advocates evokes the *procreation* issue and specifically asks:

... once we accept gay marriage, might we also agree that marrying before having children is a vital cultural value that all of us should do more to embrace? ... Can we discuss whether both gays and straight people should think twice before denying children born through artificial reproductive technology the right to know and be known by their biological parents? (Blankenhorn 2012).

If discursive co-optation of *procreation* was a goal of the MEM – and not merely a ruse manufactured by the MM to draw criticism away from the movement’s fledgling success – then the best way to evaluate discursive co-optation is as a strategic framing choice. Problematizing heterosexual procreation as a core element of marriage would be a strategic way for the MEM to minimize the most threatening discursive aspect of the MM (and the TMM too) –

heteronormativity. Heterosexual procreation is the one discursive construct of the MM definition of marriage that excludes same-sex marriage advocates 100 percent.

Thinking of discursive co-optation as framing strategy also provides insights into counter-hegemonic engagement with the marriage ethic. Such discursive co-optation can be a tool through which to transform a repressive hegemony – the hetero-patriarchal marriage ethic – to a progressive hegemony. Doing this requires creating a new common-sense understanding around marriage – one without heteronormative imperatives and natural gendered roles for mothers and fathers. It also means valuing the choice to pursue state recognition for a private sexual relationship, rather than primarily viewing marriage as an institution with core public purposes. Clayton explains progressive hegemony as something that to eliminate exploitative ideas and replace them with more equitable thought processes (Clayton 2006; Femia 1981).

The question remains whether co-opting MM discourse about heterosexual procreation is truly a path to challenging hetero-patriarchy and building a new progressive hegemony. This question directly relates to citizenship. At the outset, the MM bought into the same ascriptive tradition of citizenship as the TMM: the United States is a heterosexual regime, and heterosexuality is a necessary characteristic for full citizenship status (Phelan 2001; Josephson 2005). The fact that the MM perceives processes of discourse co-optation regarding the heterosexual procreative imperative of marriage, however, fundamentally problematized this core aspect of citizenship. It does not matter whether discourse co-optation was an actual strategy of the MEM, or whether it was all in the heads of MM adherents. The fact is that in order to shift away from the punishing discursive effects of the same-sex marriage debate, one option was for the MM to eschew heterosexuality and make the argument that all couples, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – have equal marriage rights. (This may or may not lead to a more progressive hegemony, recall my discussion in chapter 5 about internal LGBTQI community objections to privileging marriage rights.)

The MM did not choose to abandon the heteronormative imperative of marriage, however. In fact, in his “reversal” on the question of same-sex marriage, IAV leader David Blankenhorn specifically did *not* recant claims that marriage is inherently procreative, that all children have the right to be raised by their own biological parents, or that same-sex marriage contributes to the further deinstitutionalization of marriage. Blankenhorn’s “reversal” actually represents a shift in how he views citizenship—he no longer sees heterosexuality as a central component, but rather endorses ascriptive citizenship based on marital status (Josephson 2005). In *A Call for a New Conversation on Marriage* (2013) IAV states:

The new conversation does not presuppose or require agreement on gay marriage, but it does ask a new question. The current question is, Should gays marry? The new question is, Who among us, gay or straight, wants to strengthen marriage (IAV 2013)?

A shift toward conceptualizing the marriage union, rather than heterosexuality, as the core of citizenship requires the MM to loosen objections to viewing marriage as a state-sanctioned ordering of private sexual relations. It is a nod toward the primacy or triumph of individualism, but still with the collectivist goal of strengthening America. In *A Call for a New Conversation on Marriage* (2013), IAV decries that the current conversation about middle-class marriage, in particular, is “largely therapeutic and psychological, focusing on gender roles and ‘soul mate’ issues.” Yes, this may be a dig against the marriage education movement. But a broader point is that by saying, “we propose a new conversation that re-establishes the link between marriage and money. . . . [M]arriage and thrift, the two great engines of the American middle class since the nation’s founding, stand best when they stand together” (IAV 2013), the MM reifies age-old ideas of marriage for the broader good of a strong middle class.

Reifying traditional marriage and positing marriage as the core unit of sexual citizenship bolsters patriarchal elements of the marriage ethic. The relegation of women within marriage to private caretaking endeavors is the hallmark of a gendered social system that renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation, and abuse (Okin 1989). Some scholars posit that marriage

makes women vulnerable through the suggestion and expectation that they will one day be primary caretakers of children (the mother's nurturing role). As I mentioned repeatedly in this chapter, the mother/father dichotomy is central to MM understandings of what it means for marriage to be the normative institution for raising children. Caretaking expectations within marriage compel women to attract and keep the economic support of a man. Women are disadvantaged through the division of work within marriages. Finally, they are disadvantaged at work because the system assumes a family wage model wherein workers are expected to have "wives" at home (Okin 1989). The latest MM project – their call for a new conversation on marriage – does not transform any of these gendered vulnerabilities. By asking for same-sex marriage advocates to join in coalition to support children through strengthening marriage, the MM asks for the MEM to abandon discursive efforts that undermine the procreative status of mothers and fathers within the marriage relationship, and instead to laud a notion of citizenship that privileges the marital union. This tactic can be seen as an effort of the MM to co-opt MEM's discursive strategies, and reinforces hegemonic marriage in a new way – it gives space for same-sex couples to challenge the ethic's heteronormativity, but only to the extent that they leave unchallenged the gendered roles of mothers and fathers as natural and innate to marriage functioning.

Recent attempts of the MM to welcome the MEM into their fold can also be viewed as a discursive strategy to reinforce the movement's investment in the importance of institutionalizing marriage. I discuss in this chapter how critical the hegemonic status of marriage is to core adherents of the MM. They are placated when stable, hetero-patriarchal, common-sense meanings are attached to marriage, particularly at the level of elite discourse as my discussion of movement targets in the descriptive analysis section reveals. Even if Americans choose to live their lives in ways that challenge the ethic, the MM is mollified when the marriage is predominantly referred to in traditional terms. They want to go back to being able to take such meanings for granted. Maintaining or bolstering the notion of marriage as central to citizenship – moving toward

ascriptive citizenship based on marital status – is a way to reinforce the institutional status of marriage. This is a notable departure from Blankenhorn’s early rejection of same-sex marriage that was silent on the issue of citizenship as a public function of the marriage institution. Perhaps the MM hopes that their call toward coalition will stop discursive questioning of all the other common-sense meanings of marriage. They will be able to return to their work of arguing for responsible fathers and married mothers without losing the crux of their argument to the same-sex marriage debate.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DENOUEMENT

The whole idea that marriage has a monopoly on heterosexual procreative conduct, that's just gone. I mean, not gone, but that is fading fast. And the new idea is much more streamlined, stripped down, thinned out, very abstract. It is a HIGHLY abstract notion of marriage as fundamentally private. ... It's the difference between an institution that has a public dimension and an institution that does not have a public dimension. ... it just comes down to society celebrating acts of private commitment and that's all, really. That is IT. And I believe that definition that was gaining ground before the gay marriage issue ever came up, but it's certainly gaining ground now.

-- Interviewee from the Institute for American Values, 2009

I stated at the onset of this project that I intended to evaluate how hegemonic discourse contours the collective action framing of social movement organizations active in the contemporary field of marriage politics. I begin discussing my project's outcomes by reflecting on what brought me here. I was initially one of those feminists opposed to federal marriage promotion in the wake of welfare reform. I was unsettled by the idea that marriage was a panacea for poor women. My opposition was not to the act of marriage *per se*, but rather reflected my disapproval of promoting certain marital elements that could disadvantage poor women, such as economic dependence on a husband/breadwinner. This interest in social justice for vulnerable women led me to the work of scholars like Abramovitz (1988), Smith (1993), Cott (2000), and Mink (2002). Their thoughtful examinations of dominant forces that shape marriage, family, and sexual citizenship influenced my understanding of marriage as a hegemonic construction that idealizes a heteronormative imperative and patriarchal gender roles. As I watched (largely feminist) debates against marriage promotion unfold in the early part of the 2000s, I was struck by disconnects between elite arguments about the promise of marriage and the lived experiences of many Americans who were choosing non-marital romantic paths. Even though hegemonic marriage carries with it the force of tradition, more and more Americans are challenging the disciplinary power of the traditional marriage institution and forging new types of relationships:

egalitarian or peer marriages that challenge gender stereotypes of dependency care; single parent and female-headed households; same-sex unions; kinship arrangements; marriages that are childfree by choice; and more.

Hegemony contours both perspectives of marriage as a heterosexual union between one man and one woman for procreative purposes as well as challenges to this traditional construct. The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter suggests what I repeatedly established in my research: hegemonic marriage is in flux. This means that traditional definitions of marriage – including heteronormativity and patriarchal assumptions – are being challenged. The author of the epigraph identifies that the main challenger is the move away from theorizing marriage as an institution with public purposes (regulating sexual relationships and procreation) to valuing marriage as a purely private individual choice.

Challenges to common-sense understandings of marriage signify that Americans are living in a unique moment in which one hegemonic regime may be transitioning to establish a new hegemony. Some perceive such transition joyously – an opportunity to shed repressive elements of a tradition that never really was (Coontz 1992) by moving to a progressive marriage/family diversity construction. For others, the institutionalization of traditional marriage is so fundamental to their understanding of social relations that hegemonic transition is nothing short of terrifying.

While there are likely other common-sense social constructions currently undergoing hegemonic transition, I am hard-pressed to think of another example that is as firmly rooted in popular discourse. The social movement field of marriage politics emerged in the 1970s, largely as a conservative, christianist response to perceptions of sexual liberalization run amok. My research indicates that marriage activism marched along for many years, drawing on its hetero-patriarchal foundations to react to social trends like unwed childbearing, cohabitation, and the divorce revolution. Then in 2003, however, there was a new game in town. The punctuating events of 2003 – legalization of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts, the landmark anti-sodomy

Supreme Court decision, and the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment – literally reshaped the marriage politics landscape. These co-occurring punctuating events had considerable power because they represented intensifying challenges to heteronormative elements of hegemonic marriage as well to the uncontested, hegemonic status of marriage “as we know it.”

The primary contribution that this research project makes to collective action framing literature and to studies of hegemony is a nuanced, empirical evaluation of how hegemony contours the framing decisions of SMOs discursively operating in the same field of contention. My research elucidates how movements deal with a central puzzle of hegemony – the fact that hegemonic constructs simultaneously exist as both stable and contested. Close examination of the three movements in question shows that they engage with each other, interdiscursively sample a variety of discourses, both within and outside the field of marriage politics, and variously utilize tactics of dominance to make strategic gains. Sometimes, tactics of dominance are even used counter-intuitively to achieve what would typically be considered counter-hegemonic ends. Movements are neither unwavering hegemonic defenders, nor are they focused counter-hegemonic revolutionaries. Instead, as I stated in chapter 1, negotiation is a discursive tool for movements – a way in which they read the hegemonic terrain, identify threads that speak to their core beliefs or their strategic senses, and determine how to incorporate their hegemonic understandings into framing decisions in order to relate to targets, and to each other, perhaps, most effectively.

Evaluating discursive SMO engagement is critical to understanding how SMO framing negotiates hegemony. It would be easy to point to the punctuating events of 2003, note the upsurge in discourse around same-sex marriage, and conclude that the marriage equality movement (MEM) – the primary counter-hegemonic challenger to the marriage ethic – was poised to usher in a new marital order. The results of my research, however, suggest that jumping to such a conclusion would be rash.

My research indicates, rather, three key conclusions. First, when movements closely aligned with a hegemonic social order unwaveringly support that order during a period of hegemonic transition, they may do so at their detriment. A likely strategy of such movements is to amplify coercive and legitimation tactics in their framing choices so as to construct those who oppose the hegemonic ethic as evil or immoral. I argue that this strategy was undertaken by the traditional marriage movement (TMM) in their moral panic framing of same-sex marriage. Such a framing strategy, however, can backfire because moral panic frame success requires considerable buy-in from elite actors such as policymakers, media representatives, and scholars. Because those same actors also feel pressures by those who oppose elements of the hegemonic ethic, such buy-in is far from given. Moral panic framing, therefore, is a risky strategy in a period of hegemonic transition. Yet, as this study demonstrates, hegemony can be upheld and even fortified through other, perhaps more subtle means of negotiation.

Second, movements negotiating hegemony through their collective action framing strategically deploy discursive tactics of dominance and jockey for position through interdiscursivity, discourse appropriation, and even discourse co-optation. The lesson that we can draw from this is precaution against over-simplifying framing analysis by pre-assigning movements into either a hegemonic or counter-hegemonic camp, as many are inclined to do. The reality of hegemonic negotiation is messier than that, and often involves strange bedfellows. Subtle tactics of silence and minimizing contradiction, for instance, do considerable work in maintaining hegemony, and can be deployed by any movements for a variety of strategic purposes. For SMOs develop a variety of discourses to challenge or sustain hegemonic understandings of the social world. Common discourses relating to marriage, as identified in chapter 7, are legal, economic/financial, religious, sexual, personal/individualistic, and procreative. Some movements are more likely to advance certain discourses than others. For example, religious discourses are the largely the discursive territory of the TMM. Interdiscursivity, however, is also possible and occurs when similar discourses are deployed by

different movements and for different ends. The MEM, for example, argues that marriage is a legal institution as a means of accessing marriage-based citizenship rights. The MM, on the other hand, also argues that marriage is a legal institution as a means of highlighting its social regulatory functions. There is also the possibility that a movement will try to appropriate or co-opt discourse of another movement in order to achieve particular gains. I provided a prolonged discussion of these processes in chapter 7, and I discuss the theoretical implications of this conclusion in the subsequent section.

Third, because hegemony is maintained by consent, SMOs use framing to motivate a critical mass of support for their particular social vision. With regard to counter-hegemonic framing, however, some targets may be ambivalent about hegemonic transition. I argue this is the case with the marriage equality movement (MEM). In trying to walk the line between challenging heteronormativity within the marriage ethic and not offending the marital common-sense perceptions of “middle” Americans, the MEM actually reifies aspects of hegemony. It may be very likely that Americans are looking at a future – perhaps a very near future – in which same-sex marriages are legal, socially sanctioned, and normalized. The degree to which the *same sex-ness* of such unions will be responsible for marriage deinstitutionalization remains to be seen.

In the following sections I evaluate both theoretical and practical insights of this project. As I did in chapters 5 through 8, I apply Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model in order to visualize key elements of hegemonic negotiation. This chapter presents macro level social analysis for the entire field of marriage politics. Macro level analysis focuses attention on struggles over competing conceptions of marriage in a field shaped by hegemony. Meso level analyses I conducted in the movement-specific chapters, on the other hand, primarily examined framing choices to elucidate the discursive nature of movement framing. The purpose of expanding my vision to the macro level is to get a clearer picture of the nature of social power and dominance. With regard to hegemonic marriage, one of clearest way that discourse contributes to the reproduction of social power is through the relationship between marriage and citizenship. The

practical implications of such a relationship will be explored in this chapter to assess the potential of counter-hegemonic challenges to usher in a new progressive hegemony.

Theoretical Insights

Figure 11 illustrates my final application of Fairclough's (1995) model. Remember that embedded boxes in the model are all interrelated. The directional triangle in the center represents interconnectedness of three levels of discourse. At the textual level, I identify diagnoses and prognoses that movements champion as a result of collective negotiation. These are manifest as discrete frames. But while frames are identifiable, they are not fixed. A continual process of discursive negotiation occurs within movements and with other elements of the field of protest. Such processes are trying to fix the meaning of cultural signs ("floating signifiers," Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Laclau and Mouffe 1985), to re-establish or challenge hegemony, and to identify interdiscursive elements that best promote particular current and future diagnoses and prognoses.

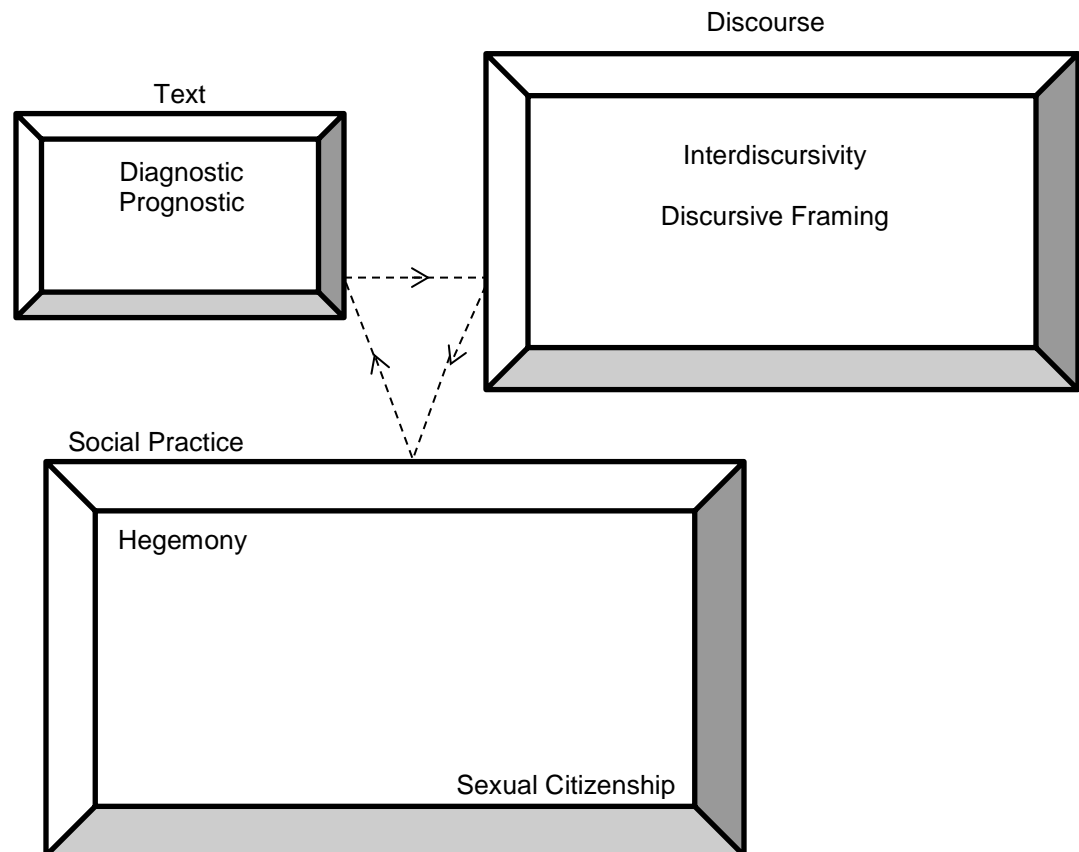


Figure 11. Fairclough's (1995) CDA Model to the Field of Marriage Politics

For example, beginning in 2003 the MM drew from discursive repertoires and genres that served them in the past – responsible fatherhood, social science research, and child wellbeing— but also had to anticipate changes that same-sex marriage would pose. The discursive process of framing in that moment led to a rift in their movement and, more or less, the disengagement of the marriage education movement from their ranks. At that point, the boundaries of the field of marriage politics shifted a bit; became a little fuzzier. Yet, all movement actors played on, continuing to discursively negotiate their discursive environment under altered conditions.

SMOs interdiscursively negotiate hegemonic marriage by treating *marriage* as a floating signifier and approaching the marriage ethic in a discursive manner. This means, first, that the field of marriage politics matters. SMOs make their framing choices on a field of contention, and the field contains all repertoires that movement adherents can draw upon to construct diagnostic and prognostic frames. The boundaries of the field, however, are “inherently partly disorderly or fuzzy, since the actual structuring of meaning is done in *use*. ... [C]ollective action processes bring order and structure to the elements in a field by creating action-specific discursive repertoires” (Steinberg 1999, 856). Consider this example: often invoked repertoires available to movement adherents include religious and natural law principles; the American legacy of civil rights struggle; the historical and contemporaneous movement toward sexual liberalization; social science family research; marriage education and therapy concepts; policy mechanisms – from the Healthy Marriage Initiative to activist judges and proposed Constitutional amendments; the legacy of criminalized sexual expressions and behaviors; individualistic liberalism; hetero-patriarchy; and more. At any given time, all of these factors shape the contours of the marriage field of protest, but none of them define it.

An additional “fuzzy” factor is the way in which movement adherents treat *marriage* as a floating signifier. Marriage is a nodal point in discourse – a point of crystallization where different worldviews and ideologies converge (Christian/secular, public/private, conservative/liberal, freedom/equality). As my research demonstrated, movement adherents

discursively construct meaning for the word *marriage* by adding particular overlays, i.e., all of the various “definitions” offered throughout the course of this research. Marriage achieves hegemonic status when a critical mass fixes particular cultural meanings to the concept. In a time of hegemonic transition, however, the marriage signifier seems less rigid. There are heightened efforts on both sides to affix meaning to the discursive node, and marriage becomes a floating signifier. The term “floating signifier” describes the “ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs” (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 27; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). This struggle between different discourses is evidence of the importance of considering interdiscursivity.

Discursive repertoires draw on interdiscursive texts incorporating one or more discursive elements. Jeyifo (1990) describes the power mechanisms of critical discourse such that “parallel or competing discourses can be incorporated in the dominant critical one, whereas others are neutralized, marginalized, and ignored” (Schipper 1993). Additionally, competing discourses can simultaneously be present within one text (Fairclough 1992), and certain texts may be more relevant for collective action framing than others, e.g., the *Statement of Principles* for the MM. My analysis shows what others before have suggested as well – that framing is “historically and contextually dependent, partially structured through hegemony, and all the vocabularies, symbols, and meanings within them are dialogic” (Steinerg 1999).

Consensus mobilization around one frame or sign is an “action-specific process of demonstrating the saliency of a discursive repertoire defining a problem” (Steinberg 1999). Discursive mobilization usually happens when repertoires become salient to the extent that they delegitimize the meanings offered by opposing repertoires. This happens through a process of discursive conflict. Not all participants in a field will draw on a repertoire in the same way, nor will they use the same strategies. Discourse co-optation suggested by the MM could be one of many strategies, for example (Steinberg 1999).

The discursive nature (open to both critique and appropriation) of negotiating discursive repertoires in collective action framing also directly speaks to issues of hegemony. As Condit (1994) described hegemony as concordance, that is what I see with framing – it is a confluence of voices with the potential to re-create hegemony by converting discourse to monologue and silence multivocality (Steinberg 1999). Movement framing evaluates the field of contention; discursively and strategically deploys tools of dominance, appropriation or co-optation in order to gain status or neutralize opposition; and constructs messages that bolster or challenge hegemonic social constructions. Regardless of their position vis-à-vis hegemonic marriage, movement goals are all the same. They want to secure common-sense, popular support for the version of marriage they are peddling. They want the marriage sign to seem fixed in a manner that meshes with their worldview. Fixing a sign, however, often requires silencing dissent in favor of presenting a unified force. Fixing a sign may also involve other forms of silence and avoidance as well – for example, not explicitly engaging patriarchal elements of the marriage ethic, or not acknowledging contradictions between marriage equality advocates “respecting marriage” without interrogating the ethic’s primacy of biological parenting. I argue in the next section that this function of framing in a field shaped by hegemony can have serious implications on sexual citizenship.

Practical Insights

Critical discourse theory, and I argue feminist critical discourse theory as well, evaluates specific articulations within discourse by what social constructions or conventions they draw on and what they reproduce (Jørgenson and Philips 2002). While hegemony is necessarily contingent and incomplete (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), all three movements constantly sample from the marriage ethic’s discursive repertoire. I have talked at length in this project about how American sexual practices and the marriage ethic do not necessarily align. As the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter explains, the field of marriage politics is undergoing a transition as more and more people abandon hegemonic marriage principles in favor of a new relationship model that values the private ordering of sexual relationships. The shift away from marriage as a core public

institution to a state-sanctioned private institution is a hegemonic shift. As such, the three movements all determine their framing strategies in a field marked by uncertainty. A common movement reaction, as I explained in the previous section, is to try and fix the floating marriage signifier, or more specifically, to reinforce its original moorings – to advance diagnostic frames of what *marriage is* in order to win the definitional battle before it slips too far out of reach. This is certainly a strategy undertaken by both the TMM and the MM.

The MEM, on the other hand, negotiates the hegemonic transition a bit differently. They suppress much of their counter-hegemonic potential, and move closer to the hegemonic marriage ideal by essentially saying, “We respect marriage. We don’t want to redefine marriage. We merely want the legal right to love and be committed to our romantic partner, just like heterosexual couples.” The MEM absolutely pushes heteronormative boundaries of marriage, but they do so in a way that is not inclusive of all sexual minorities. Rather, by deploying discursive tactics that stress similarities/sameness between gay and lesbian and heterosexual relationships, their heteronormative challenges counter-intuitively reify heterosexuality as the standard from which deviance is determined. Implications of deference to the discursive power of the marriage ethic are most important with regard to two inter-related issues – queer inclusion and sexual citizenship.

Acquiescing to hegemonic marriage affects queer inclusion and sexual citizenship. The two go hand-in-hand. Berlant (2002, 176) states, “In the contemporary United States it is almost always the people at the bottom of the value/virtue scale – the adult poor, the nonwhite, the unmarried, the nonheterosexual, and the nonreproductive – who are said to be creating the crisis that is mobilizing the mainstream public sphere to fight the good fight on behalf of normal national culture.” Crisis discourse of this nature is apparent in all three movements’ negotiation of the marriage ethic. The IAV and the MM have a call for a new conversation on marriage that problematizes the relationship of marriage and social class. It is imperative for reformers to “fix” marriage for the lower class and less educated lest our nation be irrevocably harmed. The TMM

obviously vilifies LGBTQI people as inherent threats to our way of life who threaten God's damnation. The MEM is not exempt from this problem either. By prioritizing same-sex marriage rights and rhetorically describing them as the lynchpin to equality and the last right gays and lesbians may ever get, the movement places oppositional LGBTQI people at the bottom of the value/virtue scale. They are outsiders within, marked as deviant by mainstream society for their queerness and by their own community as troublemakers.

Of course, not many in the MEM come right out and label their own as troublemakers. Instead, they tiptoe around the issue and try to sell the party line, or they resort to silence. Both of these tactics are discursive and lexicogrammatical choices. Understanding discourse is always an operation of examining what is said, how it is said, and what is left unsaid. What is most often said in the MEM is that same-sex relationships are essentially no different from heterosexual relationships, and they deserve the exact same access to legal rights. In a remarkable bit of foreshadowing, Polikoff wrote in 1993:

Should public debate arise as to whether to legislate in favor of contemporary lesbian and gay marriage.... the political and public relations campaign to legalize same-sex marriage would likely contend that our relationships are no different from heterosexual marriages. In other words, the pro-marriage position would accept, rather than challenge, the current institution of marriage. I believe this process would be profoundly destructive to the lesbian and gay community (Polikoff 1993, 1540-1541).

Hunter (1991), an early same-sex marriage advocate, also qualified her support for marriage rights by arguing that the way in which activists achieved recognition was important:

The social meaning of the legalization of lesbian and gay marriage ... would be enormously different if legalization resulted from political efforts framed as ending gendered roles between spouses rather than if it were the outcome of a campaign valorizing the institution of marriage, even if the ultimate "holding" is the same (Hunter 1991, 29).

These two early statements are perhaps most eye-opening to me because they describe exactly what *is* and *is not* happening with the same-sex marriage debate today. Marriage equality activists are wholeheartedly valorizing marriage. In advance of the 2013 Supreme Court case *Windsor v. United States*, for example, Freedom to Marry and the Human Rights Campaign organized a coalition to oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and support marriage equality. The coalition's name is Respect for Marriage (Respect for Marriage 2013). It is such a puzzling position to maintain – the MEM both challenges the marriage ethic on grounds of its heteronormativity, but also argues that the institution holds important value worthy of respect. By the same token, MEM activists do not critique marriage's tendency to laud gendered roles between spouses. The current position of the movement is a far cry from the freedom-focused lesbian and gay alliances of the past. Polikoff (1993) explains, in general terms, a process of mainstreaming that often occurs within social movements. Her explanation is highly resonant of the contemporary MEM case, and also demonstrates the importance of understanding how movements discursively negotiate hegemony:

Demands for social change often have begun with a movement at first articulating the rhetoric of radical transformation and then later discarding that rhetoric to make the demands more socially acceptable. The movement's rhetoric is modified or altered when those opposing reform explore the radical and transformative possibilities of that rhetoric, causing its advocates to issue reassurances promising that such transformation is not what the movement is about at all (Polikoff 1993, 1541).

To emphasize her point, recall examples offered in Table 2 of early same-sex marriage advocates who argued that marriage equality had radical potential. Such discourse no longer has a place in the contemporary MEM. Thinking beyond same-sex marriage demonstrates how queerness can be transformative:

Being queer is more than setting up house, sleeping with a person of the same gender, and seeking state approval for doing so. ... Being queer means pushing the parameters of

sex, sexuality, and family, and in the process, transforming the very fabric of society.

...As a lesbian, I am fundamentally different from non-lesbian women. ... In arguing for the right to legal marriage, lesbians and gay men would be forced to claim that we are just like heterosexual couples, have the same goals and purposes, and vow to structure our lives similarly. ... We must keep our eyes on the goals of providing true alternatives to marriage and of radically reordering society's view of reality (Ettelbrick 1993).

Contrast these to the following statement from the Freedom to Marry's (2011) *Moving Marriage Forward: Building Majority Support for Marriage* report:

Joining, Not Changing Marriage

When talking about the freedom to marry, share the truth: gay couples want to join marriage, not "change" it, as opponents like to threaten. In fact, gay couples want to join in marriage precisely because they respect the institution and what it means in our society, and because they believe in the values of marriage and what it can bring: commitment, happiness, responsibility, companionship, family connectedness, and support and help in caring for those we love. Short-hand terms such as "gay marriage" or "same-sex marriage" can reinforce a false perception that we're seeking a new type of marriage, something other or lesser. In order to be clear about our intentions, we should talk about "marriage" or "the freedom to marry," not "same-sex marriage" or "gay marriage" – the same rules, same responsibilities, and same respect for all committed couples (Freedom to Marry 2011).

Whereas discursive repertoires of the same-sex marriage debate once held transformative potential, over the past twenty years that promise dissipated in official discourse of the MEM. Transformation is no longer articulated. The terrain of such possibilities is not investigated. The underlying critique of the marriage institution, and those who lobby it, is marginalized and silenced (Polikoff 1993). Even the name of Freedom to Marry's document suggests the extent to

which they reify hegemonic marriage—*building majority support for marriage*. It is a project of making marriage for same-sex couples become common sense.

The implications of reifying the marriage ethic are important to consider in relation to citizenship. I began this section by quoting Berlant's argument that delineations of difference place non-normative identities at the bottom of the scale of virtue/value. Through reification, even the MEM marginalizes and silences people with queer identities, potentially rendering them unintelligible (Berlant 2002; Carver and Chambers 2004). Polikoff suggested in 1993 that efforts to emphasize similarities between same-sex and heterosexual relationships would "detract from, even contradict, efforts to unhook economic benefits from marriage," "long-term monogamous coupling above all other relationships," and deny the "potential of lesbian and gay marriage to transform the gendered nature of marriage for all people" (Polikoff 1993, 1549). With heterosexual and same-sex marriage synonymous, how would American culture adapt? On the one hand, I hold out hope – despite discursive evidence to the contrary – that the practical experience of normalizing same-sex marriage, coupled with other popular shifts away from hegemonic marriage, would result in a more inclusive hegemonic construction of marriage/family. A worst case scenario, however, is that by making the marital union the center of ascriptive citizenship would lend those outside of the marriage coupling norm to be characterized as the new sexual immoral, perhaps even with renewed vitriol. Same-sex marriage rights would afford queer people the chance to be "normal," and those who choose not to accept the deal may be open to contempt.

Berlant (2002) states that American culture has the tendency to equate sexual and reproductive immorality with "un-American" activity that is in need of regulation. My critical discourse analysis certainly highlighted this as well, with (mostly) TMM descriptions of "gays and lesbians" as fornicators, pederasts, pedophiles, bestiality enthusiasts, and more. Such characterizations were typically lobbied against either "homosexuals" or "gays and lesbians," but not against transgender or queer people. Sometimes bisexuals were singled out because of their

seeming propensity toward polygamy. In the worst-case scenario described above, however, a larger in-group of married couples (same-sex and heterosexual alike) could potentially cause queer identities to come into clearer focus as distinct national threats. If marriage equality activists are correct that marriage rights may be the last right they get (Marriage Equality U.S.A., personal communication, January 15, 2009), then on what grounds will queer people be able to make claims for their equal citizenship?

I argue that reification of the marriage ethic through collective action framing is particularly impactful for citizenship claims precisely because it bolsters heteronormativity and gendered aspects of privilege (Richardson 1998). Polikoff (1993) posited that the more that marriage activists stress similarities between homosexuals and heterosexuals, the greater risk that “our movement’s public representatives, and the countless lesbians and gay men who hear us” will “believe exactly what we say” (Polikoff 1993, 1550). Acquiescing to dominant discursive repertoires bolsters hetero-patriarchal citizenship because it is “heavily circumscribed and simultaneously privatized, its limits set by the coupling of tolerance with assimilation” (Richardson 1998; Richardson and Seidman 2004). Lesbians and gay men are tolerated as citizens as long as they are “good citizens,” staying within boundaries demarcated by a heterosexist public/private divide (Richardson 1998; Richardson and Seidman 2004). Marriage equality advocates, for example, challenge heteronormative exclusion, yet they do not challenge traditional conceptions of the public identities of husbands and wives, or even gendered parenting roles of mothers and fathers. In fact, one MEM interviewee even states, “It’s about when you ... introduce your partner as your husband or wife, people somehow get that. Whereas all this other language, the spouse, partner, lover, whatever, they are sort of inadequate terms and they maintain us as second-class citizens” (Freedom to Marry 2, personal communication, January 13, 2009). Through seeking marriage as a vehicle for attaining citizenship rights, marriage equality activists embrace an ideal of “respectability” that perpetuates a division between “good gays” and “bad queers.” “Bad queers” who choose not to ascribe to the public identities of marriage, or who

choose to identify with other identities that better describe the contexts of their relationships, are excluded from citizenship discourse (Stychin 1998; Richardson and Seidman 2004).

An additional complicating factor is the different egalitarian versus ascriptive notions of citizenship held by the various movements (Josephson 2005). I argue that the MEM uses discourse of egalitarian citizenship, but such discourse could be shifting toward an ascriptive citizenship based on marital status as the movement continues to push for respectability. Respectability, however, does not guarantee full equality for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The MM's call for a new conversation on marriage offers an interesting analytical opportunity for future research. For instance, if the MEM takes up the MM offer of building coalitions in favor of strengthening marriage, will the movement discursively cement in place the unintelligibility of "bad queers" and the hegemony of the marriage ethic?

Continuing Questions

Discourses try to reduce polysemy, or the capacity of a sign to have multiple meanings, to one fully fixed meaning, but they really never get there – not even in achieving the common sense status of hegemony. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) describe discourse as establishing closure, or a temporary stop to fluctuations of meaning of signs like marriage. But such closure is not permanent, and it is not definitive: "The discourse can never be so completely fixed that it cannot be under-mined and changed by the multiplicity of meaning in the field of discursivity" (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 27; Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

We know that hegemony is contingent, incomplete, and discursive. Yet in the face of the social realities I identify – three distinct social movements battling on the field of marriage politics, and yet still reifying hegemonic marriage to varying degrees through their discursive and interdiscursive choices – what kind of alternative can we imagine that will swing the pendulum away from heterosexist conceptions of marriage to a new progressive hegemony? Josephson (2005) points to Cathy Cohen's iconic essay "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" as a source for considering the potential for new coalitions

to challenge sexuality-based surveillance and marginality. Cohen is concerned that even queer politics reinforces hetero-patriarchal norms by defining *queer* as the normative opposition. Merriam-Webster (2013) tells me, for example, that *queer* means “differing in some odd way from what is usual or normal.” Cohen’s suggestion is to stop using identity-based politics, and rather focus on one’s relation to power in order to determine “one’s political comrades. I’m talking about a politics where the *nonnormative* and *marginal* position . . . is the basis for progressive transformative coalition work” (Cohen 1997, 438).

I think back to the MM’s call for a new conversation around marriage, one that focuses on how the benefits of marriage are becoming increasingly stratified by class. A report prepared by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead of the Institute for American Values, for example, cites increases in unwed motherhood over the last 30 years (Whitehead 2012). The *2010 State of our Unions* report argues that such unwed mothers are increasingly likely to suffer a cascade of problems, from economic stress, high family conflict, and troubled children (Whitehead 2012; Marquardt and Wilcox 2010). I can imagine a world, *a lá* Cohen, where “bad queers,” unwed mothers, divorced women, cohabitators, career women, and more come together to begin a conversation about the need to delink economic benefits from marriage – to critique how marriage presumes a primary caretaking role for women and the punishing effects of such roles for women in the labor market. I can imagine a world where such a critique would be coupled with arguments against heterosexist employment policies that leave queer people vulnerable. I can imagine such a coalition finding common ground around the idea that their nonnormative sexual status contributes to economic and citizenship problems.

I am not, however, certain of how to get there. Part of that uncertainty is related to the discursive power of hegemonic marriage itself. This project indicates that the field of marriage politics is undergoing a process of hegemonic transition. At this point in time, it seems as if factors determine whether and how all three movements dance with hegemony. Additionally, statistics tell me that Americans’ individualized choices increasingly *do not match* the hegemonic

norm. This suggests that the greatest opportunity for transitioning to a more progressive hegemony does not lie in the content of particular movement frames, but rather with the discursive nature of framing processes. By this I mean that in order for social movement frames to gain momentum and be effective they must be attuned to not only the actions of other movement organizations, but also to the individual behaviors and worldviews of their framing targets.

A 34-year-old professional woman who chooses to use artificial reproductive technologies to start a family without a ring on her finger does not demonstrate commitment to hetero-patriarchal marriage. Nor does the African American family who largely sees marriage as a white institution and steers clear of it; the woman who makes a choice to leave a bad marriage because she believes it is the best decision for her children; the transgendered man who is impregnated three times because his wife is sterile; or the cohabitating recent college graduates who want to save money and get their careers launched before considering marriage. This list could go on. But more importantly, examples like these underscore that SMOs in the field of marriage politics must discursively engage with a new terrain of individualized conceptions of sexual ordering. As this chapter's epigraph states, this is an issue bigger than same-sex marriage. Imagining revolutionary potential for a diverse "beyond marriage" perspective is likely to lie beyond same-sex marriage as well.

As for the immediate future, I expect to see more alliances between the MEM and the MM, to the degree that the MEM finds building such alliances to be instrumental. I think that strengthening marriage, however, is going to remain only at the level of formal citizenship rights. "Good" gays and lesbians will gain, but not many other people will. It is hard to predict where the MM "nest and nest egg" project will take them, but it is likely problematic that the project relies on Americans to prioritize marriage for financial reasons in an economic culture demanding so many other reforms before a renewed marriage culture can pay any dividends. On the other hand, I also do not believe that marriage is going anywhere. It may not be an institution that fulfills its

material promises all that well *in practice*, but it certainly has common sense and romance on its side. Americans still value marriage – that is why the personal narrative tactic of the MEM likely will work, and why 90 percent of us eventually sign on the marriage license dotted line (Cherlin 2010). But marriage is not an institution that we particularly problematize. Our collective lack of criticism may be a great peril to our collective citizenship.

I look to sexual citizenship throughout this research as the logical extension of hegemony. Citizenship discourses tend to reflect a culture that never was (Coontz 1997; Cott 2002). Connecting these fictions to real impacts on Americans lives is important work – work that I hope other scholars will take up as the marriage equality movement continues to press for citizenship rights through legal marriage equality. Fruitful areas of inquiry will likely be how “bad queers” negotiate potential marginalization, as well as the promise of forming coalitions around non-normative and marginalized statuses in order to challenge hetero-sexist trappings of marriage. Cott states:

Men and women inhabit their marital roles in their own ways, not always bending fully inside the circle of civil definitions, but bringing new understandings into the categories of “husband” and “wife.” Unless legal order is deeply hypocritical, however, the majority of people conform more than they resist (Cott 2002, 8).

Cott underscores what I stated before, that resistance to hegemonic marriage appears on the individual level, but because of our large-scale cultural marriage buy-in, we do not tend to acknowledge such resistance in any manner except to problematize it. Unwed mothers are the problem. Divorced couples are the problem. Women delaying marriage are the problem. Women working outside the home are the problem. Same-sex couples raising children are the problem. These explanations are diagnostic frames – they are reactions to hegemonic resistance and another co-optation strategy. But what promise lies in reframing the “problems” in a different light? What is the potential of translating diagnostic problems facing marriage into prognostic opportunities that envision how to support diverse family forms? How can coalition-based

scholarship assessing non-normative sexual identities and gender roles contest hegemonic marriage in a way that translates into a brighter future for all Americans and families of all stripes? My research suggests that the starting point in answering such questions lies in acknowledging how SMOs discursively engage with each other and with framing targets. Hegemony is constructed through symbolic processes. Americans are already re-envisioning marriage in progressive ways. Challenging the marriage ethic necessarily requires progressive SMOs to have the courage to stop paying homage to outmoded conceptions of marriage. Perhaps there is some critical tipping point for the MEM where acquiescence to dominance stops, and diversity tags back in. Maybe that threshold is a Supreme Court decision to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act. I can only speculate. This research project, however, certainly speaks to numerous forces at play during an exciting moment of hegemonic transition. My hope is that this project provides a compelling starting point for other researchers to further evaluate the empirical nature of hegemony and the effects of its operationalization on sexual citizenship.

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Appendix A

Table A.1. Interviewee organizations and their representative movements

Organization	Movement
Administration for Children & Families	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
American Family Association	Traditional Marriage Movement
Concerned Women for America	Traditional Marriage Movement
Create Equality	Marriage Equality Movement
Family Equality Council	Marriage Equality Movement
Freedom to Marry	Marriage Equality Movement
Human Rights Campaign	Marriage Equality Movement
Institute for American Values	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
Institute for Marriage and Public Policy	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
Liberty Counsel	Traditional Marriage Movement
Marriage Equality USA	Marriage Equality Movement
Marriage Law Project	Traditional Marriage Movement
National Fatherhood Initiative	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
National Healthy Marriage Resource Center	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
National Marriage Project	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
National Organization for Marriage	Traditional Marriage Movement
Smart Marriages	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
The Dibble Institute	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement
Wedded Bliss Foundation	Marriage Movement/Marriage Education Movement

Appendix B**Table B.1. Subject codes (*The Washington Post*, January 1985 to December 2007)**

Subject Code	Parameters of Articles Included
Metaphorical	marriage-related analogies
Licensure	marriage fee/licensure policy
Gender Normativity	gender deviant identities and marriage
Marriage & Health	marriage benefits/detriments to health
Marital Violence	marital rape/assault policy
Immigrant Marriage	immigration policy and marriage
Religion & Marriage	role of religion in marriage and the regulation of marriage by religious institutions
Family Values	“family values” and similar concepts
Marriage Formation	forming a marital relationship, including demographics and legal factors
Sexuality & Marriage	expressions of sexuality in marriage, not same-sex marriage policy
Nonmarital Partnerships	nonmarital domestic partnerships, including same-sex relationships but excluding same-sex marriage
Same-Sex Marriage	same-sex marriage
Marriage Skills	programs or trends in marriage skill development
Teen Marriage	marriages between individuals less than 19 years old
Divorce	any aspect of divorce or family breakdown, including child support and deadbeat dads
Marriage Demographics	statistical information or trend data on the status of marriage
Marriage Norms	normal or typical behavior or expectations in marriage, including gender norms
Movements	activities/initiatives of marriage-related movements
Covenant Marriage	covenant marriage policy
Marriage & Finances	tax policy and other financial implications of marriage (pensions, property ownership, etc.)
Other Nations	marriage practices in non-U.S. nations
Interracial Marriage	marriage between individuals of different racial/ethnic groups

General Social Benefits	social benefits to marriage that cannot otherwise be categorized
Military Marriage	military marriage policy or marital relationships among individuals in the military
Black Marriage	the status of black marriages or dynamics within such marriages
Marriage & Aging	changing dynamics within marriage as partners age
Single Parenting	issues facing non-marital parents
Marriage & Child Welfare	effects of both marriages and divorce on child well-being
Remarriage	re-marriage and step-families
Other	issues that cannot otherwise be categorized

Appendix B

Newspaper Analysis Code Book

Ethic Index

This is a measurement of the degree to which the sentiment of the headline meshes with the following definition of the marriage ethic: marriage is a heterosexual, procreative union between a man and a woman for life, marked by traditionalist notions of appropriate gender roles.

I = The spirit of the headline upholds the marriage ethic. It includes at least one of the following:

- includes overtures to ubiquitous norms or the need to uphold tradition/values/the past
- indicates breadwinning/caretaker gendered division of labor as good/normal; highlights responsible fatherhood
- characterizes marriage stereotypically or non-critically: includes terms like happy unions, wedded bliss, etc. in a normalizing fashion
- challenges changes in the family structure or family diversity as social ills; characterizes changes in family patterns, including divorce, in negative terms, including stressing the negative outcomes of divorce (i.e., divorce hurts children)

-I = The spirit of the headline is confrontational to the marriage ethic. It includes at least one of the following:

- highlights social ills associated with marriage (i.e., marital violence)
- reports developments in family diversity, including cohabitation, single parenting, same-sex marriage, etc., without prejudice
- indicates changing gender roles within marriage
- normalizes divorce

0 = The spirit of the headline neither supports nor denies the marriage ethic. It may also be difficult to discern from the headline what the article is about.

Metaphorical

Headlines use matrimonial language allegorically or metaphorically. These headlines do not actually refer to the union of people in any kind of marital contract, but it might use such language to refer to the merger of businesses, for instance. Matrimonial language includes words such as *marriage*, *matrimony*, *wedding*, and *divorce*. Words such as *union*, *merger*, or *breakdown* are not sufficient to count as matrimonial language.

Licensure

Headlines refer to factors relating to acquiring a marriage license or policies associated with marriage fees or licensure.

Gender Normativity

Headlines refer to gender deviant identities and marriage, particularly marriage among transgendered/transsexual people. Same sex marriages are not included here.

Marriage & Health

Headlines explore health-related effects of marriage or detail health experiences of partners specifically within the context of marriage.

Marital Violence

Headlines address the spectrum of marital violence, including marital rape. Articles about *domestic violence*, *battered women* or *child abuse* are not included. Articles must specify either marriage or spouses to be included.

Immigrant Marriage

Headlines address marriage among immigrants, both those with legal and illegal status.

Religion & Marriage

Headlines discuss marriage in any context relating to religion, whether with regard to religious beliefs, practices, or demographics by religious group.

Family Values

Headlines refer to “family values,” typically in relation to concepts such as *morality* and *tradition*. If the headline refers to “values,” but not “family values,” it is not included.

Marriage Formation

Headlines refer to trends in salient aspects of marriage formation. These trends can be group characteristics, such as women delaying marriage to pursue careers, or individual factors that might affect one’s desirability as a marriage partner.

Sexuality & Marriage

Headlines address expressions of sexuality within marriage, most often how same-sex orientations fit within heterosexual marriage frameworks. Same-sex marriage is not included here.

Nonmarital Partnerships

Headlines discuss unions or partnerships between non-married persons that emulate marriage relationships, including cohabitation. Same-sex domestic partnerships and civil unions are included here, but not same-sex marriage.

Same-Sex Marriage

Headlines refer to marital unions between people of the same sex. Sometimes *gay marriage* or *lesbian marriage* is used interchangeably. Domestic partnerships and civil unions are not included in this category.

Marriage Skills

Headlines refer to programs, tactics, policies, and strategies for encouraging healthy marriages, the development of marriage skills such as conflict resolution or communication, and tips for continuing a marriage relationship in times of stress by committing to work on it.

Teen Marriage

Headlines refer to marital unions between individuals under the age of nineteen years old.

Divorce

Headlines allude to a variety of issues surrounding divorce or *family breakdown*, including policies and trends. Headlines addressing child support and “deadbeat dads” are also included here.

Marriage Demographics

Headlines include statistics and trends on the status of marriage in the United States.

Marriage Norms

Headlines refer to how marriage “should be” or how marriage “is” by alluding to specific behaviors or expectations within marriage relationships, including gender norms.

Movements

Headlines report on activities, programs, or initiatives of marriage movements. The movements must be specifically referenced to be included here.

Covenant Marriage

Headlines address issues relating to covenant marriage policies.

Marriage & Finances

Headlines discuss tax policy and other marriage-specific issues that impact married couples’ financial status. These may include, but are not limited to, pensions, property ownership, and retirement planning. Financial implications for separated spouses are included here, but not the financial issues relating to divorced individuals.

Other Nations

Headlines discussing any aspect of marriage in cultural contexts/nations other than the United States are included here. Included headlines must be generalizable to larger population groups, and cannot be specific to individual people (for example, discussions of the marriage and subsequent divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana are not relevant).

Interracial Marriage

Headlines refer to any aspect of marriage specifically reported as relating to interracial marriage. Interracial marriage is defined as a marriage between individuals from different racial OR ethnic groups. References to *mixed marriages* are included here unless it is clear that they refer to inter-religious marriages.

General Social Benefits

Headlines that reference general benefits of marriage that cannot be classified in other categories are included here.

Military Marriage

Headlines that deal with either marriage policy in the military or to the experiences of military personnel are included here.

Black Marriage

Headlines refer to policies or issues relating to the status of marriages among African-Americans.

Marriage & Aging

Headlines discuss trends and issues related to aging in the context of marriage relationships.

Single Parenting

Headlines discuss issues related to parents specifically identified as not married, non-marital, or single.

Marriage & Child Welfare

Headlines reference policies relating to marriage and child well-being, as well as general outcomes for children in various types of marriage relationships, including effects of divorce.

Re-marriage

Headlines address remarriage and step-family characteristics, trends, or problems. Circumstances relating to the need for a second marriage are not relevant.

Other

Headlines reference marriage in a manner that suggests a broad application, but the content either cannot be categorized in existing coding schemes or is unclear.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Background Questions

1. While I'm primarily interested in *ORGANIZATION NAME*, are you involved in any other marriage-oriented organizations?
 - a. (If involved with more than one, ask about similarities/differences across organizations when appropriate.)
 - b. If involved with more than one, which organization are you most involved with?
2. How are you involved with *ORGANIZATION NAME*?
3. How long have you been involved with *ORGANIZATION NAME*?
4. What about *ORGANIZATION NAME* attracted you and encouraged your participation?
5. *ORGANIZATION NAME* can be thought of as part of a larger movement— [*name specific movement*]. How would you describe the movement that you see *ORGANIZATION NAME* belonging to?

Framing Process Questions

6. What would you say is the current mission or purpose of *ORGANIZATION NAME*?
 - a. Has that mission/purpose changed at all over time?
 - b. If the mission/purpose has changed, please describe the changes as you see them.
 - c. If the mission/purpose has changed, please describe why you think the changes occurred (In addition, for each change described, ask what precipitated that particular change).
 - d. If the mission/purpose has NOT changed, please describe why you think the mission/purpose has been stable over time.
 - e. Over time, were there changes in the mission/purpose that were considered but rejected? If so, please describe the circumstances around that/those decision(s).

7. In your opinion, what are some of the main messages about marriage that *ORGANIZATION NAME* wants to convey or pass on?
 - a. Have the messages changed at all over time?
 - b. If the messages have changed, please describe the changes as you see them.
 - c. If the messages have changed, please describe why you think the changes occurred. (In addition, for each change described, ask what precipitated that particular change).
 - d. If the messages have NOT changed, please describe why you think the messages have been stable over time.
 - e. Over time, were there message changes that were considered but rejected? If so, please describe the circumstances around that/those decision(s).
8. Who would you describe as the main target of *ORGANIZATION NAME*? Or, in other words, when *ORGANIZATION NAME* talks about marriage, to whom is it directing its messages?
 - a. Have the targets changed at all over time?
 - b. If the targets have changed, please describe the changes as you see them.
 - c. If the targets have changed, please describe why you think the changes occurred.
 - d. If the targets have NOT changed, please describe why you think the targets have been stable over time.
 - e. Over time, were there targets that were considered but rejected or overlooked? If so, please describe the circumstances around that/those decision(s).
9. Please describe the process *ORGANIZATION NAME* uses when deciding how they want to talk about marriage. (i.e., major players, steps in decision-making, revisions/negotiations of messages, etc.)
 - a. Has this decision-making process changed at all over time?

- b. If the process has changed, please describe the changes as you see them.
 - c. If the process has changed, please describe why you think the changes occurred.
(In addition, for each change described, ask what precipitated that particular change).
 - d. If the process has NOT changed, please describe why you think the process has been stable over time.
 - e. Over time, were there procedural changes that were considered but rejected? If so, please describe the circumstances around that/those decision(s).
10. Think about the structure of *ORGANIZATION NAME*. Would you say there is a “typical” process for crafting and sending out messages about marriage?
- a. If yes, please describe that process, including what types of individuals/segments of *ORGANIZATION NAME* are involved.
 - b. If yes, why do you think *ORGANIZATION NAME* abides by the same protocol or processes when talking about marriage?
 - c. If no, why do you think *ORGANIZATION NAME* does not abide by the same protocol or processes when talking about marriage?

Specific Framing Questions – Four frames: Diagnostic - 1) Definitions of marriage; 2) Problems facing marriage; 3) Reasons to address marriage; Prognostic - 4) Strategies for addressing marriage [ONLY USE AS NECESSARY]

Definition of marriage

11. How do you think *ORGANIZATION NAME* defines “marriage”?
- a. How have *ORGANIZATION NAME* definitions of marriage changed over time, if at all? Why have these messages changed (or not) over time?
 - b. To what degree do you think messages about marriage definition are important to the organization? Has the relative importance of such messages changed over time? Why or why not?

- c. Does the process of creating these messages differ much from that already discussed? If so...What do you think is the process of creating messages about marriage definition? Has that process changed over time? Why or why not?
 - d. To what degree do you think people within *ORGANIZATION NAME* debate, disagree, or negotiate marriage definitions? What are those debates etc. usually about? How are they (usually) resolved?
12. Thinking of how *ORGANIZATION NAME* defines and talks about marriage, what is its position on sexuality and marriage?
- a. How have *ORGANIZATION NAME* messages about sexuality and marriage changed over time, if at all? Why have these messages changed (or not) over time?
 - b. To what degree do you think messages about sexuality and marriage are important to *ORGANIZATION NAME*? Has the relative importance of such messages changed over time? Why or why not?
 - c. Does the process of creating these messages differ much from that already discussed? If so...What do you think is the process of creating messages about sexuality and marriage? Has that process changed over time? Why or why not?
 - d. To what degree do you think people within the organization the debate, disagree, or negotiate in creating messages about sexuality and marriage?

Problems facing marriage

13. Do you think *ORGANIZATION NAME* believes there are problems facing marriage in the United States?
- a. If yes, what are the problems *ORGANIZATION NAME* identifies? Have those identified problems changed over time? Why or why not?
 - b. If no, what would *ORGANIZATION NAME* say protects marriage or keeps it strong?

- c. To what degree do you think messages about problems with marriage are important to *THE ORGANIZATION NAME*? Has the relative importance of such messages changed over time? Why or why not?
- d. What do you think is the process of creating messages about problems with marriage? Has that process changed over time? Why or why not?
- e. To what degree do you think people within the organization the debate, disagree, or negotiate in creating messages about problems with marriage?

Reasons to address marriage

14. Why do you believe *ORGANIZATION NAME* wants to address marriage? Or in other words, what is the driving reason behind its marriage focus?
 - a. Have those reasons changed over time? Why or why not?
 - b. For the organization, has the relative importance of focusing on marriage changed over time? Why or why not?
 - c. To what degree do you think people within *ORGANIZATION NAME* debate, disagree, or negotiate about the importance of addressing marriage?

Strategies for addressing marriage

15. How does *ORGANIZATION NAME* characterize the role of the government for addressing marriage issues in their messages?
 - a. How have *ORGANIZATION NAME* messages about the role of the government in marriage changed over time, if at all? Why or why not?
 - b. To what degree do you think messages about the role of the government in marriage are important to *ORGANIZATION NAME*? Has the importance of the role of the government changed over time? Why or why not?
 - c. To what degree do you think people within *ORGANIZATION NAME* debate, disagree, or negotiate in creating messages about the role of the government in marriage?

16. Does *ORGANIZATION NAME* identify sources other than the government with responsibility for addressing marriage issues? (i.e., church, individuals)

If yes, ask the following for each source identified:

- How have *ORGANIZATION NAME* messages about the responsibility of identified source changed over time, if at all? Why have these changes happened?

- To what degree do you think people within *ORGANIZATION NAME* debate, disagree, or negotiate in creating messages about the responsibility of identified source and marriage?

Appendix D

Table D.1. *Textalyser* semantic category prominence for MEM interview corpus, expression count frequency > 2

Semantic Category	Expression Examples	Expression Count	Average Prominence
Public Policy	<i>of the ENDA</i> <i>a bill that would protect</i>	6	77.3
Movement Process	<i>the right people to talk to</i> <i>to help them see that</i> <i>not being afraid of trying new</i>	26	52
Prognostic: Rights	<i>is that marriage equality is</i> <i>have the right to marry</i>	19	38.8
Definition of Marriage	<i>of what marriage looks like</i> <i>is an institution that is</i>	6	21.9

Appendix E

Table E.1. Percent frequency of newspaper subject codes by year, for the subject codes: *Rhetorical, Licensure, Gender Normativity, Marriage & Health, Marital Violence, Immigrant Marriage, Religion & Marriage, and Family Values*

Year	Subject Codes							
	Rhetorical	Licensure	Gender Normativity	Marriage & Health	Marital Violence	Immigrant Marriage	Religion & Marriage	Family Values
2006	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%
2005	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	7%	0%
2004	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%
2003	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	6%	4%
2002	17%	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%	2%	15%
2001	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
2000	13%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%
1999	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%
1998	30%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
1997	14%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%	12%	2%
1996	6%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%
1995	15%	12%	0%	0%	4%	4%	0%	0%
1994	11%	1%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	5%
1993	13%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	5%
1992	8%	4%	0%	0%	3%	0%	5%	16%
1991	6%	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	6%	1%
1990	6%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%	2%
1989	7%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	7%	0%
1988	9%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	6%
1987	3%	18%	0%	3%	5%	3%	3%	0%
1986	11%	2%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%
1985	7%	2%	0%	4%	11%	2%	2%	2%
Average	10%	3%	0%	1%	3%	1%	5%	3%
Median	8%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%	2%

Table E.2. Percent frequency of newspaper subject codes by year, for the subject codes: *Marriage Formation, Sexuality & Marriage, Nonmarital Partnerships, Same-Sex Marriage, Marriage Skills, Teen Marriage, Divorce, and Marriage Demographics*

Year	Subject Codes							
	Marriage Formation	Sexuality & Marriage	Nonmarital Partnerships	Same-Sex Marriage	Marriage Skills	Teen Marriage	Divorce	Marriage Demographics
2006	0%	0%	2%	63%	3%	0%	4%	1%
2005	3%	0%	0%	54%	0%	0%	1%	3%
2004	1%	0%	4%	63%	2%	0%	2%	1%
2003	3%	0%	0%	56%	0%	0%	6%	0%
2002	2%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	10%	5%
2001	0%	0%	0%	12%	16%	0%	4%	0%
2000	4%	0%	0%	9%	0%	2%	2%	2%
1999	0%	0%	0%	23%	15%	4%	8%	4%
1998	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	3%	8%	0%
1997	5%	0%	0%	14%	2%	0%	17%	5%
1996	0%	0%	0%	49%	4%	0%	11%	2%
1995	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%	8%	0%
1994	3%	1%	5%	5%	1%	1%	14%	3%
1993	0%	0%	5%	4%	2%	0%	16%	0%
1992	1%	0%	8%	5%	1%	0%	5%	3%
1991	1%	0%	8%	5%	3%	0%	16%	8%
1990	8%	0%	10%	12%	4%	0%	22%	10%
1989	0%	0%	12%	0%	2%	0%	21%	5%
1988	9%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	6%
1987	3%	0%	0%	3%	8%	0%	5%	5%
1986	2%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	20%	7%
1985	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	22%	4%
Average	2%	1%	3%	18%	4%	1%	11%	4%
Median	2%	0%	0%	9%	2%	0%	10%	3%

Table E.3. Percent frequency of newspaper subject codes by year, for the subject codes: *Marriage Norms, Movements, Covenant Marriage, Marriage & Finances, Other Nations, Interracial Marriage, General Social Benefits, and Military Marriage*

Year	Subject Codes							
	Marriage Norms	Movements	Covenant Marriage	Marriage & Finances	Other Nations	Interracial Marriage	General Social Benefits	Military Marriage
2006	10%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
2005	12%	1%	0%	3%	6%	0%	0%	1%
2004	10%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
2003	12%	4%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
2002	10%	0%	0%	2%	7%	0%	0%	2%
2001	24%	0%	0%	8%	4%	4%	0%	0%
2000	11%	0%	0%	36%	4%	0%	0%	0%
1999	12%	0%	0%	12%	0%	4%	0%	0%
1998	8%	3%	3%	14%	11%	5%	2%	3%
1997	2%	0%	2%	7%	2%	2%	0%	2%
1996	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	0%
1995	4%	0%	0%	15%	12%	0%	1%	0%
1994	5%	0%	0%	9%	6%	0%	0%	0%
1993	5%	0%	0%	7%	9%	0%	0%	7%
1992	8%	0%	0%	1%	3%	3%	0%	1%
1991	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%	6%	0%	3%
1990	2%	0%	0%	2%	6%	0%	0%	2%
1989	2%	0%	0%	7%	5%	0%	0%	2%
1988	0%	0%	0%	9%	3%	0%	0%	0%
1987	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%	0%	5%
1986	7%	0%	0%	5%	9%	0%	0%	0%
1985	0%	0%	0%	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Average	7%	1%	1%	7%	5%	2%	1%	2%
Median	8%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%	0%	1%

Table E.4. Percent frequency of newspaper subject codes by year, for the subject codes: *Black Marriage, Marriage & Aging, Single Parenting, Marriage & Child Welfare, Re-Marriage, and Other*

Year	Subject Codes					
	Black Marriage	Marriage & Aging	Single Parenting	Marriage & Child Welfare	Re-Marriage	Other
2006	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
2005	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
2004	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
2003	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
2002	0%	2%	0%	5%	2%	5%
2001	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	4%
2000	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	7%
1999	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%
1998	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%
1997	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
1996	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%
1995	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	8%
1994	1%	0%	4%	1%	0%	20%
1993	2%	0%	5%	7%	0%	9%
1992	4%	0%	8%	1%	3%	8%
1991	5%	0%	8%	10%	1%	1%
1990	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
1989	0%	0%	7%	5%	5%	7%
1988	0%	0%	3%	9%	0%	3%
1987	0%	3%	3%	8%	8%	8%
1986	0%	0%	5%	11%	5%	0%
1985	4%	2%	11%	9%	4%	0%
Average	1%	1%	%	4%	2%	5%
Median	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	4%

Appendix F

Table F.1 – *General Categories for Movement Prognostic and Diagnostic Framing Codes*

DIAGNOSTIC FRAMES	PROGNOSTIC FRAMES
<p>What type of union is marriage? <i>Religious union</i> <i>Legal/civil union</i></p> <p>What roles characterize a marriage? <i>Traditional marriage</i> * Woman at home/caretaker * Man head of household/provider <i>Non-traditional marriage</i> * Same-sex * Dual-earner * Polygamy * Man at home/caretaker * Woman head of household/provider</p> <p>What are the problems facing marriage? <i>Erosion of family form</i> * Breakdown of black families * Non-marital motherhood * Same-sex marriage * No fault divorce * Female-headed families * Cohabitation * Domestic partnerships/unions <i>Changing norms</i> * Delayed marriage * Women working outside the home * Normalization of divorce * Denigrated status of fatherhood <i>Structural Factors</i> * Financial constraints * Legal privileges <i>Interpersonal Factors</i> * Communication * Domestic violence</p>	<p>Why should marriage be addressed? <i>Moral issues</i> <i>Justice issues</i> * Same-sex marriage rights * Economic disparities <i>Family outcomes</i> * Children's functioning * Lower divorce rate * Stop black family breakdown * Reduce non-marital motherhood * Responsible fatherhood <i>Social outcomes</i> * Economic gains * Social well-being of children * Health * Foundational to society</p> <p>How should marriage be addressed? <i>Policy action</i> * TANF funds: Healthy Marriages * Anti-divorce * Anti-same-sex policy * Financial policy * Legal action to address rights <i>Individual action</i> * Mentoring/counseling</p>

Appendix G

Description of Corpus Linguistic Analytical Procedure – MEM

1. I first used *Textalyser* to prepare frequency wordlists for words with a minimum of five characters for the corpus of all interview transcripts and the combined corpus of website content. I analyze both corpora in relation to the keyword of *marriage*. This analysis yields different expressions representing six diagnostic and prognostic frames.
2. I use the *AntConc* concordance tool to learn more about which terms from the *Textalyser* frequency list are unusually frequent and suggestive of a higher level of significance. I make an assessment of significance by generating a Keyword list for the MEM web corpus, using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as a reference. Table G.1 details keyword analysis data, organized by each word's measure of keyness. Keep in mind that keyness is an imperfect statistic because it can be affected by the sample size.
3. I use keyword analysis results in Appendix I, Table G.1 and the word frequency list to determine which terms I will use as nodes in concordance analysis.
4. Using *AntConc* to conduct **concordance** analysis allows me to search every instance of a particular search word with its co-text. The purpose is to focus on grammatical and semantic categorization within a search node's original context (Mulderin 2012; Jezikoslovlje 2011; Römer and Wulff 2010).
5. **Collocation** analysis helps me identify words that co-occur at a frequency greater than would be expected in general language, as determined through comparison with the COCA reference corpus.
6. I evaluate the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences including the node through **cluster** analysis.
7. Below I explain which search nodes I use in concordance, collocation, and cluster analysis using the MEM web corpus.

- a. Diagnostic frame – what is marriage (FTM/HRC corpus): *civil* (collocation and cluster analysis)
 - i. *Civil rights* (concordance analysis)
 - ii. *Civil unions* (concordance analysis)
 - iii. *Civil marriage* (concordance analysis)
 - iv. *Legal, legally, lawful* (concordance analysis)
- b. Prognostic frame – why to address marriage (FTM/HRC corpus): *right(s)* (concordance, collocation, and cluster analysis)
 - i. *Equal* (concordance analysis)
 - ii. *Equality* (concordance analysis)
 - iii. *Unequal* (concordance analysis)

Table G.1. *AntConc* top 20 keywords in MEM web corpus

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Keyword
1	455	3183.119	marriage
2	290	2090.219	Gay
3	253	2057.834	couples
4	176	1627.043	The
5	162	1497.619	Marriage
6	184	968.108	Sex
7	132	893.692	Marry
8	79	730.321	Hawaii
9	69	637.875	In
10	81	625.153	Lesbian
11	208	617.195	Same
12	85	614.821	equality
13	107	501.247	Civil
14	125	498.019	Rights
15	166	488.493	S
16	63	480.395	Anti
17	50	462.228	I
18	50	462.228	We
19	67	460.656	discrimination
20	49	452.984	Court

Table G.2. *AntConc* top 20 collocates list for the word *civil*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
14	1	13	7.64360	Unions

5	0	5	7.02067	License
3	2	1	6.93578	Ending
3	2	1	6.93578	Asking
5	0	5	6.77966	Union
7	0	7	6.64360	movement
4	1	3	6.45773	institution
35	4	31	6.32167	rights
8	8	0	6.25128	responsibilities
4	4	0	6.25128	come
3	2	1	6.15817	States
3	1	2	6.04270	backlash
7	2	5	5.96553	Vermont
3	3	0	5.93578	reason
4	3	1	5.91025	end
3	1	2	5.65567	discussion
3	1	2	5.57321	under
3	2	1	5.57321	toward
11	10	1	5.55152	struggle
4	1	3	5.51432	marriage

Table G.3. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *civil*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
53	civil marriage
29	civil rights
12	a civil
12	civil unions
12	of civil
9	in civil
5	civil union
5	with civil
4	Civil marriage
3	and civil

Table G.4. top 20 *AntConc* collocates for the word *rights*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic	Collocate
17	1	16	8.02132	holders
4	4	0	7.9386	Equal
3	3	0	7.51882	banning
5	4	1	7.44843	inheritance
3	3	0	7.1989	office
4	4	0	7.12650	parenting
21	21	0	7.07825	equal
3	3	0	6.93386	extend
14	1	13	6.83432	responsibilities
5	1	4	6.79635	Social
9	1	8	6.78185	movement
3	3	0	6.71146	immigration
3	3	0	6.71146	denial

3	2	1	6.51882	fully
36	32	4	6.36231	civil
10	10	0	6.34889	basic
3	2	1	6.19689	protect
4	4	0	6.12650	opportunity
3	1	2	6.05939	Security
5	1	4	5.86347	struggle

Table G.5. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *rights*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
34	marriage rights
29	civil rights
19	rights for
18	rights and
11	the rights
8	rights movement
8	rights to
6	legal rights
5	equal rights
5	human rights

Appendix H

Description of Corpus Linguistic Analysis Process – Traditional Marriage Movement

1. Using the *Textalyser* tool, I first prepare frequency lists for words with a minimum of five characters for the corpus of all interview transcripts and the web corpus. I must note that using a decontextualized frequency word list, however, makes it difficult to identify expressions that go with each frame. Many of the concepts could potentially overlap (e.g., consider *Jesus* – does that expression map closest to the frame of *morality*, *religion*, or *prayer*? It is difficult to say.) Because frequency word lists are not definitive and are only intended to help identify the most prominent frames, I group them to the best of my ability. I use knowledge gained from textual analysis to guide my decisions. In some instances, I choose to include expressions of a frame’s opposite (i.e., including *homosexual* for the *heterosexual* frame) because of the interconnectedness of the concepts—*homosexual* marriage is not marriage because it is not *heterosexual*, for example.
2. I use the *AntConc* concordance tool to learn more about which terms from the *Textalyser* frequency list are unusually frequent and suggestive of a higher level of significance. I make an assessment of significance by generating a Keyword list for the TMM web corpus, using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as a reference. Table H.1 details keyword analysis data, organized by each word’s measure of keyness. Keep in mind that keyness is an imperfect statistic because it can be affected by the sample size.
3. *AntConc* conduct **concordance** analysis allows me to search every instance of a particular search word with its co-text. The purpose is to focus on grammatical and semantic categorization within a search node’s original context (Mulderin 2012; Jezikoslovlje 2011; Römer and Wulff 2010). The search terms I use are guided by both the word frequencies for diagnostic and prognostic frames, as well as insights from

keyword analysis. **Collocation** analysis helps me identify words that co-occur at a frequency greater than would be expected in general language, as determined through comparison with the COCA reference corpus. Below I explain which search nodes I use in concordance and collocation analysis, and the processes for each.

Heterosexual

- a. The most common diagnostic frame is *heterosexual*. In order to explore its meaning, I search for its reverse—the node *homosexual* – using **concordance** analysis. The search term *homosexual* yields distinct patterns on the right side of the node. There are 525 occurrences of the search term. I sort the concordances on both the right and left sides up to 3 words out. This gives an alphabetized list of concordances by 1L (one word to the left) or 1R (one word to the right). I “eyeball” the lists to identify most prominent patterns. For example, on the right side of the node, patterns with more than ten occurrences include: *activist(s)*, *agenda*, *behavior*, *community*, *couples*, *lifestyle*, *marriage men*, *movement*, and *relationship(s)*.
- b. Next I turn to **collocation** to analyze *homosexual* for the diagnostic frame of *heterosexual* marriage. The highest ranking collocates by Mutual Information score for the word *homosexual* are in Table H.2.
- c. I conduct **collocation** analysis on the node *homosexual* in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies 2013). I confine the corpus to newspapers from 1990-2012.
- d. I return to the TMM web corpus and use *homosexual* to evaluate the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences including the node through **cluster** analysis.

Moral Panic Frame

Because I am interested in testing the existence of a moral panic frame, I also conduct **concordance** analysis on the second-most common prognostic frame, *de-institutionalization*. I use three search nodes: *norm*, *preserve*, and *traditional*.

Policy

- a. The most common prognostic frame is policy. I default to keyword analysis to help guide my choice of a **concordance** search term. The only policy-related word that appears there is *amendment*.
- b. Next I turn to **collocation** to analyze *amendment* for the prognostic frame of *policy*. The highest ranking collocates by Mutual Information score for the word *amendment* are in Table H.5.
- c. I use the search node *amendment* to evaluate the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences including the node through **cluster** analysis.

Table H.1. *AntConc* top 20 keywords in TMM web corpus

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Keyword
1	1209	6855.217	Marriage
2	525	3462.886	Homosexual
3	354	1813.443	Gay
4	269	1268.323	God
5	193	1234.025	Homosexuality
6	307	1163.173	Sex
7	434	983.930	Family
8	149	980.698	Homosexuals
9	138	732.767	Couples

10	138	669.642	Pro
11	140	570.523	Christian
12	109	519.184	Amendment
13	80	495.882	Marriages
14	109	451.269	Agenda
15	160	446.761	Church
16	83	440.415	Christians
17	290	433.382	Same
18	77	402.933	Activists
19	303	395.461	Children
20	136	355.373	Married

Table H.2. *AntConc* top 20 collocates list for the word *homosexual*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
4	3	1	8.57201	pushes
5	3	2	7.57201	legalization
3	2	1	7.15697	taxpayer
3	0	3	7.15697	publications
3	0	3	7.15697	manipulation
53	0	53	7.03314	activists
5	5	0	6.89394	normalize
6	6	0	6.89504	ex
64	4	60	6.80382	agenda
7	4	3	6.79440	advocate
9	7	2	6.65447	promotion
3	2	1	6.57201	practices
5	5	0	6.43451	openly
7	5	2	6.37936	continue
3	1	2	6.34962	previously
3	0	3	6.34962	presented
3	1	2	6.34962	organized
3	3	0	6.34962	exposes
3	1	2	6.34962	bills
25	1	4	6.28513	movement

Table H.3. COCA top 20 collocates list for the word *homosexual*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
3	11.24	self-avowed
3	10.09	bisexuals
10	9.8	heterosexuals
5	9.20	consenting
17	9.16	bisexual
4	8.88	closeted
7	8.80	sodomy
22	8.79	heterosexual
6	8.70	ordination
4	8.20	sinful
3	7.80	anti-discrimination
3	7.58	condemns
21	7.57	orientation
3	7.33	propensity
3	7.32	subculture
3	7.02	priesthood
10	6.89	lesbians
3	6.81	harassing
4	6.73	tendencies
9	6.50	prejudice

Table H.4. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *homosexual*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
92	the homosexual
41	homosexual activists

36	homosexual marriage
34	homosexual agenda
34	pro-homosexual
27	of homosexual
26	a homosexual
21	homosexual community
21	homosexual movement
17	homosexual men

Table H.5. *AntConc* Top 20 collocates for the word *amendment*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
3	1	2	9.84000	HHS
3	3	0	9.42496	referendum
29	27	2	8.89062	constitutional
6	6	0	8.84000	pass
4	3	1	8.67007	Nebraska
3	0	3	8.42496	defines
4	3	1	8.38057	supporting
40	37	3	8.36751	federal
5	5	0	8.25504	passage
3	1	2	7.84000	ruled
3	3	0	7.84000	protected
3	0	3	7.72452	defining
4	1	3	7.67761	petition
3	2	1	7.51807	introduced
3	0	3	7.33750	ballot
3	0	3	7.25504	voted
4	3	1	7.25504	sign
3	0	3	7.17703	process
3	2	1	7.03264	September
3	1	2	6.94857	movement

Table H.6. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *amendment*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
46	marriage amendment
26	constitutional amendment

12	amendment to
9	an amendment
7	the amendment
5	first amendment
4	amendment would
4	amendment, which
4	protection amendment
3	amendment by

Appendix I

Description of Corpus Linguistic Analysis Process – The Marriage Movement

1. Using the *Textalyser* tool, I first prepare frequency lists for words with a minimum of five characters for the corpus of all interview transcripts and the IAV web corpus. I present frames in web corpus order in order to minimize bias from the interview protocol that shaped the nature of interviewee responses. This can be seen very clearly in the diagnostic frame of *interpersonal skills* and the prognostic frame of *awareness*. Starting with the diagnostic frame, the frequency difference is well over two points, such that the interview corpus seems to suggest a higher usage rate for that frame. Similarly, there is a full one-point difference in frequency on the *awareness* frame. Both of these are explained by my intentional over-sampling of representatives from the marriage education sector of the MM in interviews, in order to get a more robust understanding of the dynamics of the movement as it shifted over time. Because the web corpus only uses IAV website material – and the marriage education and scholarly marriage movements became more acrimonious toward each other in 2003 regarding the same-sex marriage debate – less inclusion of marriage education priorities on the IAV website is to be expected.
2. I use the *AntConc* tool to learn more about which terms from the *Textalyser* frequency list are unusually frequent and suggestive of a higher level of significance. I make an assessment of significance by generating a Keyword list for the IAV web corpus, using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as a reference. I use the same 3-grams sample from the Corpus of Contemporary American English as I did in the two previous chapters (Davies 2013). Keyword analysis uses the measure of keyness to determine if a word's frequency in the text when compared to a reference corpus is at a level of statistical significance so as not to occur by chance (Gabrielatos and Marchi

2011). Again, remember that keyness can be affected by sample size, so it is an imperfect measure. See Appendix I, Table I.1 to see the resulting keywords in the web corpus.

3. I use keyword analysis results in Appendix I, Table I.1 and the word frequency list to determine which terms I will use as nodes in concordance analysis.
4. *AntConc* **concordance** analysis allows me to search every instance of a particular search word with its co-text. The search terms I use are guided by both the word frequencies for diagnostic and prognostic frames, as well as insights from keyword analysis. For all **concordance** analysis I sort concordances on both sides of the search node up to three words out. This gives an alphabetized list of concordances by 1L (one word to the left) or 1R (one word to the right). I “eyeball” the lists to identify most prominent patterns.
5. **Collocation** analysis helps me identify words that co-occur at a frequency greater than would be expected in general language, as determined through comparison with the COCA reference corpus. For **collocation** analysis I evaluate the highest ranking collocates for the search node by Mutual Information score.
6. I evaluate the most frequent occurrences of two-word sequences including the node through **cluster** analysis.
7. Below are the search nodes I use in concordance, collocation, and cluster analysis using the IAV corpus.
 - a. Diagnostic frame (IAV corpus) – definition of marriage: *institution*
 - b. Diagnostic frame (IAV corpus) – erosion of family form: *divorce* and *childbearing*
 - c. Diagnostic frame (IAV corpus) – changing norms: *fatherhood*
 - d. Prognostic frame (IAV corpus) – marriage should be addressed to optimize child well-being: *children*
8. For the Smart Marriages corpus, I use the following search nodes:
 - a. Keyword, collocation and cluster analysis: *marriage*

b. Concordance analysis: *marriage is***Table I.1. AntConc top 20 Keywords in MM web corpus**

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Keyword
1	1926	11989.079	Marriage
2	371	2214.141	Divorce
3	572	1401.974	Children
4	216	1279.610	Couples
5	483	1272.22	Family
6	180	1214.460	Marriages
7	294	1169.627	Married
8	189	1070.799	Educated
9	191	884.181	Gay
10	194	735.939	Movement
11	104	731.962	Fatherhood
12	212	725.738	Families
13	233	708.240	Percent
14	144	661.663	Institution
15	221	625.974	Report
16	88	609.796	Childbearing
17	209	601.169	Society
18	243	566.664	Parents
19	110	484.718	Mothers
20	73	474.596	Moderately

Table I.2. AntConc top 20 list of collocates for the word *institution*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
3	2	1	8.53323	natural
3	0	3	8.53323	ensure
4	0	4	8.27020	weaker
9	9	0	7.19220	pro
4	4	0	6.94827	primary
47	45	2	6.93604	social
8	8	0	6.56976	strengthen
29	28	1	6.06209	an
9	5	4	5.91656	legal
67	57	10	5.91422	as
3	2	1	5.68524	center
11	11	0	5.6354	child
3	3	0	5.53323	class
6	4	2	5.31600	into
3	3	0	5.30057	human
3	1	2	5.24045	says
92	68	24	4.88237	marriage
7	2	5	4.85516	which
6	3	3	4.83915	support
7	6	1	4.82378	most

Table I.3. AntConc top 10 cluster analysis for the word *institution*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
43	social institution

22	an institution
19	the institution
14	institution of
8	institution that
6	child institution
6	institution to
5	institution and
5	institution, and
4	institution is

Table I.4. Top 20 *AntConc* list of collocates for the word *divorce*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
14	12	2	8.25277	unnecessary
16	3	13	8.09749	mediation
3	3	0	7.90485	unilateral
5	5	0	7.90485	tide
7	2	5	7.71220	separation
12	11	1	7.68246	fault
4	3	1	7.58292	avoided
3	3	0	7.48981	reductions
3	2	1	7.48981	preventing
3	2	1	7.4891	acrimony
4	4	0	7.31989	ended
7	5	2	7.2577	connected
30	25	5	7.22678	reduce
3	1	2	7.16788	counties
44	20	24	7.15483	rates
15	2	13	7.11130	laws
4	3	1	7.09749	recession
5	5	0	7.05685	waiting
5	0	5	6.90485	revolution
3	0	3	6.90485	bearing

Table I.5. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *divorce*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
66	of divorce
40	divorce and

20	the divorce
16	and divorce
15	divorce rates
14	in divorce
13	divorce education
12	reduce divorce
11	divorce or
11	for divorce

Table I.6. top 20 *AntConc* list of collocates for the word *childbearing*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
3	3	0	9.56565	delaying
15	14	1	9.49526	nonmarital
34	33	1	9.06815	unwed
24	24	0	8.81077	unmarried
3	2	1	8.24373	delay
3	0	3	8.10622	paid
12	11	1	7.98069	reduce
3	0	3	7.86521	substantial
7	0	7	7.83385	until
4	3	1	7.81077	increases
15	13	2	7.67813	rates
3	1	2	7.31773	increasing
6	2	4	7.17334	costs
4	4	0	7.07380	reducing
5	4	1	6.87635	early
42	32	10	6.83773	divorce
4	1	3	6.73276	risk
4	0	4	6.62314	create
3	2	1	6.61146	against
3	1	2	6.52126	outside

Table I.7. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *childbearing*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
29	unwed childbearing
23	unmarried childbearing

12	nonmarital childbearing
9	childbearing and
5	childbearing until
5	childbearing, so
4	and childbearing
4	childbearing in
3	childbearing are
3	childbearing create

Table I.8. top 20 *AntConc* list of collocates for the word *fatherhood*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
5	3	2	10.47665	indirectly
9	9	0	9.20917	responsible
3	2	1	8.51729	spoke
6	4	2	8.07672	promote
4	2	2	7.65222	God
7	1	6	7.59284	initiative
3	2	1	7.41776	renewal
7	2	5	7.41776	call
3	3	0	7.32465	involved
6	1	5	7.32465	initiatives
15	12	3	7.07672	national
3	0	2	7.07672	action
5	5	0	6.93233	strengthening
27	3	24	6.89466	movement
5	0	5	6.89169	project
3	2	1	6.80108	activities
4	2	2	6.62421	too
3	0	3	6.4528	recently
3	2	1	6.41776	intellectual
3	1	2	6.15472	conference

Table I.9. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *fatherhood*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
19	fatherhood movement
15	the fatherhood

10	of fatherhood
8	responsible fatherhood
7	fatherhood programs
7	national fatherhood
6	on fatherhood
5	fatherhood and
5	fatherhood initiative
5	fatherhood project

Table I.10. top 20 *AntConc* list of collocates for the word *children*, sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
3	2	1	7.86521	blindness
3	0	3	7.28025	victory
3	1	2	7.28025	loyalty
4	2	2	7.28025	disadvantages
4	0	4	7.28025	advertisers
3	3	0	7.28025	achievements
6	0	6	7.05786	protected
15	1	14	7.01722	suffer
4	4	0	6.95832	watch
15	15	0	6.86521	fewer
4	4	0	6.86521	era
3	1	2	6.86521	acts
5	5	0	6.79482	hispanic
52	49	3	6.75187	proportion
9	9	0	6.74974	raising
6	6	0	6.69529	protect
14	9	5	6.69529	outcomes
13	0	13	6.58837	grow
8	3	5	6.57981	suffering
3	0	3	6.54329	relative

Table I.11. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *children*, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
93	of children
51	children living

45	their children
36	for children
35	children in
30	children are
30	U.S. children
27	children of
24	children's
22	and children

Table I.12. *AntConc* top 20 keywords in Smart Marriages Listserv Archive corpus

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Keyword
1	4532	17106.050	marriage
2	1346	5300.791	couples
3	1181	4931.316	marriages
4	1213	4559.885	divorce
5	931	2536.425	conference
6	906	2337.507	married
7	495	1515.676	smart
8	1093	1402.394	family
9	442	1259.605	healthy
10	259	991.654	marital
11	514	986.966	families
12	473	876.586	list
13	748	834.711	says
14	332	817.562	please
15	974	807.662	children
16	495	752.054	relationship
17	319	723.528	relationships
18	410	722.728	training
19	397	668.803	sex
20	415	665.528	couple

Table I.13. top 20 *AntConc* list of collocates for the word *marriage* in the Smart Marriages corpus , sorted by statistical measure

Frequency	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Statistic (MI)	Collocate
464	106	358	1.95690	and

389	375	14	1.87136	of
330	256	74	0.71085	the
310	7	303	5.63370	education
257	228	29	2.32149	for
245	216	29	1.34467	a
215	212	3	5.47521	healthy
208	8	200	2.20448	is
180	77	103	1.30850	in
157	136	21	2.17655	on
128	95	33	1.34062	that
121	6	115	5.18112	week
119	1	118	3.31566	family
112	110	2	2.71587	your
106	0	106	6.50137	savers
102	63	39	-0.31536	to
99	99	0	4.45079	community
98	1	97	5.68669	initiative
93	93	0	2.36933	their
80	78	2	6.13641	covenant

Table I.14. *AntConc* top 10 cluster analysis for the word *marriage* in the Smart Marriages corpus, 2-word clusters

Frequency	Cluster
305	of marriage
274	marriage and
258	marriage education
221	the marriage
208	for marriage
192	healthy marriage
189	a marriage
183	marriage is
122	on marriage
111	marriage week