

**TABLOID POLITICS:
POWER AND SUBJECTION IN AN ANTI-GAY CAMPAIGN**

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper articulates a poststructural, genealogical perspective on how discourse functions in political battles. Drawing from Kenneth Burke and Michel Foucault and others who have developed their respective perspectives, it proposes a power-strategy framework for interpreting how victimage rhetoric in the form of negative constructions of an opponent's subjectivity are deployed in political, power struggles. The possibilities of this approach are developed through a detailed narrative analysis of how discourse functioned in the 1994 anti-gay, "no special rights" initiative in Idaho (U.S.A.). Proponents of the Idaho initiative represented themselves in secular rather than religious terms as "conservative" Idaho "moms and dads" fighting a heroic political battle in a "culture war" to preserve "traditional family values" against a powerful, sexually 'perverse' subject with a "militant Gay Agenda." to recruit children to the 'gay life-style.' Employing a method of computer-assisted text analysis, this case study traces the dynamic interplay of antagonists' rhetorical moves and counter-moves, and how each move by the antagonists in this battle generated a new field of possible counter-moves. Faced with an adversary claiming the mantle of 'conservative' and one of the most 'conservative' voting populations in the nation, in a larger national, political context consumed by the 1994 'republican revolution,' this study describes how those fighting against the initiative succeeded in articulating a 'conservative' counter-narrative that contributed to its surprising defeat.

TABLOID POLITICS: POWER AND SUBJECTION IN A U.S. ANTI-GAY CAMPAIGN

Since World War II four influential right-wing movements -- conservative, racist, neo-conservative, Christian Right -- have emerged in the United States (Diamond 1995). These movements have opposed the use government to *redistribute* political power and wealth more equitably, and/or favored its use *to enforce* traditional moral values. A rhetorical strategy that fused anti-communism, U.S. global hegemony, neo-liberal economics, and moral traditionalism, allowed a network of right-wing activists to create stable alliances that resulted in the historic 1980 election of President Ronald Reagan and Republican party control of the U.S. Congress in the 1990s. The Christian Right (CR) movement had succeeded in mobilizing millions of evangelical Protestants and orthodox Christians to support its 'conservative' political actions (Willcox 1996). By the beginning of the 1990s it was the largest and most influential movement on the American political scene.

Anti-gay campaigns have played a prominent role in this historic mobilization. CR activists implemented two strategies to exploit anti-homosexual prejudice: "No Promo Homo" and "No Special Rights" (Duggan 1994). The former was ostensibly aimed at preventing the "promotion" of homosexuality by the state, public agencies or schools. "No Special Rights" was designed to preempt anti-discrimination legislation on behalf of homosexuals. Beginning with Anita Bryant's successful 1977 effort to overturn Miami-Dade county's anti-discrimination law protecting homosexuals and California's defeated 1978 "Briggs Initiative," which would have banned 'homosexuals' from employment in public schools, activists have mounted statewide, direct ballot initiatives to overturn or prohibit civil rights protections for homosexuals in

Colorado (Amendment 2, passed 1992; overturned by Supreme Court, July 1996), Oregon (Measure 9, defeated 1992; Measure 13, defeated 1994), and Idaho (Proposition 1, defeated 1994; aborted initiative, 1996) (see Dworkin 1996; “Constitutional Limits..” 1993) .

This paper has two goals. First, it develops and deploys a poststructural, genealogical approach to show how political actors in the midst of political power struggles mobilize and use discourse to construct their opponents’ subjectivity to achieve their objectives (Blain 1994; Gray 1993; Miller 1993). Attacks on an opponent’s motives, it argues, play a decisive role in determining the outcomes of political battles. And second, by merging poststructuralism’s concern for subjection as a mode of domination with Kenneth Burke’s dramatism, it problematizes the use of victimage rhetoric as a means to achieve political ends (Blain 1995; Burke 1965; Holstein and Miller 1990). These ideas inform a case study of the 1994 anti-gay "no special rights" initiative in the state of Idaho. Narrowly defeated by a margin of 51 to 49 percent (a mere 3000 votes), it would have legitimated discrimination against homosexuals. Proponents used a melodramatic narrative that casted “children” and “traditional family values” in the roles of victims, and “homosexuals” in the role of a villainous power subject with a sinister “gay-agenda.” This narrative is revealed through an analysis of a 1993 video that was employed extensively in the Idaho campaign, *Gay Rights / Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda*. The dynamic interplay of proponents’ and opponents’ moves and counter-moves in the war of words provoked is displayed through an innovative, text analysis of newspaper articles and political literatures.

POWER AND SUBJECTION IN GENEALOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Genealogy is an interpretive strategy Nietzsche invented to unravel the European

power/morals complex . In Foucault's (1977, 1984) hands genealogy became a new way of writing "the history of the present" and practicing social research -- a diagnostic tool that foregrounds the subjectifying practices that have constituted us as knowing, power, and ethical subjects. "Genealogy," Foucault (1977, p. 148) argued, "seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations." The genealogist asks: How do practices and interpretations emerge? How was their emergence linked to power struggles? How has the interpretation of a practice shifted and changed over time? What is it doing to the quality of our lives? How do practices limit and constrain, or enable and advance freedom? The practice of genealogy is based on a critical choice, to make contemporary power relations and domination a central issue (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983; Seidman 1994). The genealogist does not seek to establish a general theory or merely describe the abstract features of members' everyday practices, but to destabilize "truths" and "subjections" by tracing their history (e.g., Foucault 1978,; also Katz 1995 on the history of 'heterosexuality').

In thinking about power struggles, the chess-game analogy is useful (Hoy 1986; Blain 1994). A genealogy describes the arrangement of forces at play in a contest, the possible moves and counter-moves at crucial moments in the game, and the effects of making specific moves. Power is exercised by one actor over another by structuring the field of possible counter-actions. Checkmate and domination are achieved through blocking any possible counter-move on the part of the opponent. The Idaho battle was concerned with how "homosexuality" should be defined and understood. Is homoerotic desire sick or normal, disgusting or the same as heteroerotic desire? Should "the homosexual" have "special" rights or not? This kind of battle, as we shall see, can shift practices and interpretations in novel and surprising directions.

Foucault's last works on ethics, liberalism, and governmental rationality has spawned a growing literature relevant to the Idaho campaign (see Gordon 1991; Hindess 1995; Barry, Osborne, and Rose 1996). One line of inquiry is specifically concerned with the discursive practices that shape our subjectivity. Liberalism, these analysts argue, is not just an ideological fiction hiding the truth of capitalist exploitation, but an effective strategy of political power -- a way of thinking about and 'governing' others and ourselves (Rose 1996). In liberal discourse 'freedom' depends on self-regulation of a very specific kind. The task of government is to create the conditions that make this kind of 'responsibility' possible. One of those conditions, the Christian right argues, is the family regime of heterosexuality. Homosexuality, they argue, represents a direct threat to that regime -- 'the basis of civilization as we know it.'

The analysis that follows addresses three issues. First, since it is concerned with power struggles and subjectifying practices, it describes the Idaho political situation in great detail. Politics, in genealogical perspective, is war by other means -- an agonism of conflicting strategies (Foucault 1978; Mouffe 1993, 1996; on the important role of warfare in European political history, see Giddens 1985 and Tilly 1990). Politicians fight battles the way that generals engage in warfare, by mobilizing forces and seizing opportunities. Shifts in strategic opportunities --- changes in political assess, unstable electoral alignments, divided elites, and changes in the state's capacity for repression, alter actors' calculations of the probability of success and their willingness to engage in action (Tarrow 1994; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1996).

Campaigns like the one mounted in Idaho, disrupt and challenge the political status quo, generating uncertainties and potential costs for those in positions of authority, which activists can use to gain concessions. These actions, as we shall see, can be very risky because they alter the

field of possible counter-actions (Tilly 1994; Meyer and Staggenberg 1996). The Gay-Rights movement and Clinton's election in 1992, for example, altered the political environment, creating possibilities for 'right-wing' activists (Diamond 1995; Adam 1987; Lo 1982). CR activists in Idaho seized the moment by organizing a direct ballot initiative to prohibit homosexuals from gaining "special rights" (Magleby 1984). While it was narrowly defeated, within a year the Idaho legislature had passed legislation prohibiting same-sex marriages.

A second analytical issue concerns the ritual and symbolic practices put into play in political power struggles. Analysts inspired by Kenneth Burke's dramatism have generated a substantial body of research on politics as symbolic action (Duncan 1963; Klapp 1959; Edelman 1971; Gusfield 1981; Cuzzort and King 1980; Hunt 1984; Wagner-Pacifici 1986; Cuzzort 1989).

Moreover, Burke's approach is highly compatible with the poststructural, genealogical approach advanced here (Desilet 1989; Blain 1994; Wess 1996). Symbolic and discursive acts are always 'strategies' for dealing with specific social situations. In political power struggles, words are weapons and a calculated means of politics.

In Burke's perspective, a political campaign like the one in Idaho can best be conceptualized in terms of the ritual form of a victimage ritual -- an attempt, in this case, to defend and reinforce a historically specific mode of domination through subjection (Burke 1965, 1967; Duncan 1963; Blain 1988, 1995). Since a family regime of heterosexuality has dominated in the past, then the 'homosexual' movement could be defined as a threat to its survival and the survival of 'civilization as we know it.' The initiative process, then, can be viewed as constituting a public, political stage on which CR activists could mount ritual attacks on their homosexual and 'liberal' opponents as threats to the survival of the existing social order. The

findings of research on framing and claims-making practices in movement and social problems politics simply confirm Burke's rhetorical model, adding nothing new to our understanding of this important phenomenon (e.g., Gamson 1992; Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993; Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994; Benford 1997).

Victimage narratives are melodramatic in form. They differentiate the field of actors into heroes and villains, enemies and allies, proponents and opponents (Desilet 1989; Blain 1994; Nelson-Rowe 1995). Two rhetorical moves constitute this mode of subjection. The first is vilification. The opponent must be vilified as a violator of the ideals of social order. The use of 'innocent' victims such as children to articulate the "truth" of an opponents' villainy is one of the chief rhetorical means to vilify an opponent. These attacks are designed to provoke anxieties, anger, and moral outrage in those addressed (Best 1990; Holstein and Miller 1990; Jenkins 1992; Elias 1993). CR activists in Idaho argued that militant homosexuals were making in-roads into the public schools where they would recruit and seduce children to the "homosexual life style."

The second rhetorical move in subjection is heroization. Moral outrage must be transformed into action. Something has to be done. This shift is accomplished through a reversal in power perspectives (Blain 1994). In the first move, the listener is called upon to identify with a villain who exercises power over an innocent and vulnerable victim, or is threatening to do so. As we shall see, CR activists claimed that their primary motive in mounting an initiative to limit the rights of homosexuals in Idaho was the growing power of the "militant" homosexual movement, and the menace it represented to children, traditional family values, and public health. In the second phase of subjection, those addressed must be goaded into fighting and defeating an opponent. It works by getting them to identify with an ethical incitement to

political action as moral agent (Foucault 1983; Davidson 1994; Butler 1997). CR activists must ‘witness against evil.’ Activists must indict the opponent as an immoral power subject and incite those addressed to political action by empowering them as moral agents.

A third and final analytical point needs to be stressed concerning the tactical use of discourse. Activists must speak to multiple and, at times, conflicting constituencies as well as take account of the opponent’s shifting tactics to gain a plurality of support and achieve their political goals (e.g., Castells, Yazawa, and Kiselyova 1995). Wood and Hughes (1984; also Miller, et al. 1989) suggest that the leaders and supporters of CR campaigns may have very different concerns. Therefore, leaders must articulate multiple discourses to appeal to different constituencies, opening them up to the charge of hypocrisy or cynical opportunism. Moreover, a second contingency arises once a political campaign is launched. Discourses are mobile and polyvalent, allowing for a turning of the tables to take place. Words can be selected and recombined in novel strategies. As we shall see, when CR activists in Idaho identified themselves as “conservatives” fighting a “liberal” political agenda, they opened themselves up to the criticism that they were not ‘true’ conservatives because they wanted to use ‘big government’ to impose their values on everyone.

GENEALOGICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Genealogical discourse analysis (DA) seeks by systematic, empirical means to describe how speech acts and literary texts vary as a function of power relations. Actors mobilize, select, and combine available terms to articulate contextually relevant narratives and constructions of the subject (Laclau 1977; Foucault 1982; Silverman 1985; Edwards and Potter 1993; Wetherell 1998). A genealogical analysis describes the agonistic clash of opponent’s subjectifying

strategies, their moves and counter-moves, and the way changes resulting from these actions generate new interpretations and opportunities for counter-action.

For example, activists working for the Idaho Citizens Alliance (ICA) insisted that "Militant homosexuals want special rights." The use of "want" indicates that the opponent's subjectivity is being characterized. The category "special rights" was made to function as synonymous to "gay rights," or to put it in formal terms, gay rights = special rights. Implicit in this usage is its antonym, "ordinary" or "regular" rights. Therefore, granting "special rights" to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people is "unfair" to the "average" citizen. Initiative opponents, on the other hand, tried to disarticulate this synonym by shifting the ground: gay rights ≠ special rights, gay rights = civil rights. This shift allowed initiative opponents to elaborate a discourse that constructed the proponents of "Proposition 1" as hateful actors trying to legitimate "discrimination."

Discourse analysis involves the identification of actors' situated use of membership categorization devices (MCD). MCDs are collections of familiar terms that members of a culture employ to describe or frame actors' motives and activities (Silverman 1993, pp. 80-84; also Loseke 1993). Victimhood rhetoric employs a melodramatic MCD that categorizes actors as victims and villains, heroes and enemies, and spectators. Actors construct villainous and heroic subjects by mobilizing antonyms known to the audience, such as liberal / conservative, homosexual / heterosexual, special / ordinary, or sick / healthy. The adversary's motives and actions are described in terms of the negative poles of the antonym, the heroes' in terms of the positive. The opponent is identified with the negative. In other words, power struggles are waged in antonymical terms, the antagonists struggling to make themselves synonymous with the

positives and their opponents synonymous with the negatives. The particular antonyms deployed depend on activists knowledge, and variations in social, cultural, and historical contexts. Once identified, they can be displayed in tables of values (Nietzsche 1887 [1967]; Gusfield 1981; Blain 1991; Alexander and Smith 1993).

The data included campaign literatures, the *Idaho Voter's Pamphlet*, transcriptions of the 1993 *Gay Rights / Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda* video and a televised broadcast of *Idaho Debates: Proposition 1* (Idaho PBS, Channel 4, 10/20/94), literature disseminated by psychologist, Paul Cameron, and observations and audio-tapes of anti-gay demonstrators at Boise, Idaho's Annual, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Freedom Rallies (1990-95). The *Gay Rights / Special Rights* video transcript was used to determine the ICA narrative strategy. The war of words unleashed by this assault was examined through an analysis of 238 articles appearing in the *Idaho Statesman*, January 1 1993 to November 11, 1994. The *Statesman* is published in Boise, the state Capitol. The newspaper of record, it has the greatest circulation of all of Idaho's newspapers. The voters served by this newspaper can make or break any political campaign. Activists from both camps maintained headquarters in Boise and employed the *Statesman* as a vehicle for disseminating their views on the initiative.

A "newspaper" text file was created by the following means. "No On One," the organization opposing the ICA campaign, employed a clipping service. All articles clipped from the *Statesman* were scanned into a computer text file. In addition, those articles indexed under "ICA" in *The 1993-1994 Statesman Index*, which the clipping sample did not include, were added to the file. Arranged in chronological order, a total of 238 articles were included in the "newspaper" text file. The text file was processed employing *Wordcrucher* (1995), a text

indexing and retrieval program that calculates simple statistics. To document the continuities and shifts rhetorical tactics, the articles were coded for three successive time periods that correspond to critical periods in the 2 year campaign: the launching of the campaign (January 1993-June 1993, n = 80); petitioning (July 1993-May 1994, n = 73); and voting (June 1994-November 1994, n = 85).

Wordcruncher produces frequencies for specific terms and combinations of terms, and allows the analyst to observe how these frequencies change over time. Once the file was indexed, a list of high-frequency terms was created based on the mean and standard deviation ($M=12.11$; $SD= 106.2$). The aim of this part of the analysis is to validate the argument that particular terminologies dominated the public debate and to detect shifts in rhetorical tactics. The distribution of frequencies was highly skewed, the majority clustering around the mean with a few extremely high-frequency terms (e.g., 'a' or 'the'). To counter this problem, high frequency terms were operationally defined as those with a frequency greater than 65 (Z score $>.50$). This list was searched for key terms (e.g., agenda, values, rights) and melodramatic MCDs invoked by opponents in the campaign (e.g., homosexuals, Gays and Lesbians, children, etc.).

SEIZING THE IDAHO POLITICAL STAGE

On January 12, 1993, Lon Mabon, founder of the Oregon Citizens Alliance and leader of Oregon's anti-gay campaigns, announced a forthcoming Idaho initiative (Bates 1995b; Gardiner 1992; Johnston 1994). The political environment provided CR activists with a fertile field of mobilizing opportunities. While Oregon's Measure 9 "anti-gay" initiative had been defeated by a 57% to 43% margin in the November, 1992 elections, Colorado's Amendment 2 passed by a vote of 54% to 46%. Colorado Springs is home-base for James C. Dobson's organization, "Focus on

the Family” and the “Colorado for Family Values” organization that orchestrated Colorado’s anti-gay campaign. Dennis Mansfield, the director of Idaho Family Forum, would play a leading role in the Idaho initiative.

At the national level, an electoral realignment was underway in Washington, D.C. George Bush, the incumbent republican President, lost the November 1992 presidential election to Bill Clinton, who was viewed as supportive of gay and lesbian rights. On November 11th, Clinton vowed to rescind the ban on gays in the military (Meyers 1994). Meanwhile, a rift had emerged within the national Republican party over the role of the CR’s “family values” agenda in Bush’s defeat, which was exploited by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). A group of a ‘Gay conservatives’ or “Log Cabin Republicans” appeared at the Republican National Convention held in Houston, Texas (Log Cabin Republicans 1996). Moreover, NGLTF had influential allies in the women's movement, among civil rights groups, and in the Democratically controlled Congress. On April 25th, 1993, they organized a march in Washington, D.C. to support Clinton’s decision to lift the ban on gay men and lesbian women in the military, creating an opportunity for right-wing activists, talk-show hosts, and media commentators to define the movement and Clinton in a negative way (Tarrow 1994).

Events in Idaho provided additional opportunities. In June of 1990 the Lesbian and Gay communities in Boise, Idaho, began staging well publicized “Annual Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day” rallies, including a parade, festival and dance, which also included counter-demonstrations by Christian Right activists and others. In November 1992, three Idaho high school teachers were fired for allowing “lesbians” to speak about “parenting” to a 12th grade sociology class. This episode was a *cause célèbre* in the state’s media for a month, an event which would be

rearticulated by the CR to make a *prima facie* case for an emerging “militant gay agenda” in Idaho’s public schools.

Lon Mabon and Kelly Walton held a press conference on March 4, 1993 on the steps of the Capital Building, Boise, Idaho to announce the founding of the Idaho Citizens Alliance (ICA) and to launch a campaign to place an ‘anti-gay’ initiative on the ballot in November of 1994. Walton, a veteran of the OCA campaigns, had recently returned to Idaho to manage the family construction firm. They openly speculated that the Idaho population, one of the most conservative in the U.S., would be supportive of an anti-gay initiative. Surveys reveal that the percentage of Idahoans identifying themselves as ‘conservative’ ranges from 49-56% as compared to 42% of the nation’s population (Gallup Poll Monthly, August 1995, Gallup 1995; Willmorth et al. 1996). Moreover, Idaho has a well documented history of right-wing insurgencies (Aho 1990) and anti-gay politics (Gerassi 1968). Its State Legislature and U.S. congressional delegation are solidly Republican, and among the most right-wing in the United States (Blumenthal 1995). Surveys show that only 20% of Idahoans as compared to 44% of Americans accept “the homosexual lifestyle” (Scudder and Willmorth 1995; Gallup Poll Monthly, April 1996), while 39% or slightly more of Idaho adults as compared to 34% of the nation’s population believe that homosexuals have too much political power (Scudder and Willmorth 1995; Price and Hsu 1992).

FIRST MOVE: A VILIFYING VIDEO

The video, *Gay Rights / Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda* played a prominent role in the Idaho campaign (Citizens United for the Preservation of Civil Rights 1994; Bates 1995a). A paradigm case of victimage rhetoric, this video is also a good example of the

tactical polyvalence of discourses and their strategic reversibility. Employing carefully selected shots of Lesbian and Gay activists at the 1993, Washington, D.C., "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Rights" march as evidence to establish the truth that a sinister "homosexual agenda" existed, this video vilifies "homosexuals" and their "liberal and leftist" allies. Employing a "secular" rather than "religious" discourse, the 'militant homosexuals' behind the campaign to gain "special rights" are described as politically devious, perverse and sick, but not sinful.

PART ONE. The video begins with the issue of "minority status." Designed to differentiate homosexuals from true minorities, it casts the former in the role of villains and the 'true' minorities in the role of victims. The narrator's tone is "fair and reasonable" when describing the "truly" disadvantaged. Martin Luther King is contrasted to Larry Kramer. Representatives of "true" minorities (i.e., Black, Latino, Asian, Women) are presented making public statements denouncing the "opportunistic" and "illegitimate" attempt by homosexuals to gain minority status. In other words, the video deploys a "liberal" civil rights discourse to attack a "militant homosexual" agenda. This move accomplishes several rhetorical goals. First, it delegitimizes the "homosexual agenda" to gain legal status as a protected class under the Civil Rights Laws. Second, it divides by pitting one minority group against another. And third, it establishes two important synonyms: Blacks = poor, oppressed; homosexuals = rich, greedy, opportunistic, and politically well-connected (to President Bill Clinton and Hilary Clinton).

PART TWO. 'Militant homosexuals' have deliberately created false myths to achieve their sinister 'agenda': "homosexuals qualify as a minority," "10% of the population is homosexual," "people are born homosexual," and "homosexuals cannot change their behavior." Each, in turn, is rejected as "not true." Employing survey data, testimonials from "recovering

homosexuals,” and expert opinions from a psychologist who has written books on the subject, each of these assertions is debunked. The use of the myth/fact form adds to the video’s rational and reasonable tone. The leaders of the homosexual movement are depicted as opportunistic in their use of these myths. They have deliberately “inflated” the numbers used to support the myths for political purposes. As evidence, the video presents a representative of ACT-UP responding to a question about the number of homosexuals in the population, “The thing about the 1 in 10 [of Americans that Gay and Lesbian activists had been citing]...I think the people probably always did know that it was inflated but it was a nice number that you could point to...”

PART THREE. After casting them in the role of villains who victimize “real minorities” and tacticians who distort the truth when it suits their purposes, the video constructs “militant homosexuals” as political power subjects. The "militant homosexuals" behind the "gay agenda," the narrator states as the sinister music intensifies, organized an "extravagant march on Washington" and employed advertisements in gay publications "to lure hundreds of thousands to a wild three day sexually indulgent celebration." The "leaders," the tape suggests, are strategic actors who use advertising and the promise of "wild sex" to achieve their political goals. The marchers are constructed as subjects of desire who can be manipulated through advertising, lured to Washington D.C. to participate in a "sexually indulgent celebration." Two things are going on here. First, this video vilifies homosexuals through the frequent use of “children” as actual and potential victims of homosexual child molesters. And second, it links the homosexual agenda to the Clinton administration.

PART FOUR. Employing an “impact assessment” format, the video now presents the homosexual menace in the form of a series of threatening scenarios that accentuate the negative

effects that will follow if homosexuals gain “special rights.” At this point, the melodramatizing tactics intensify. Homosexuals are depicted as villainous subjects desiring to molest children sexually. The sinister music intensifies as “militant homosexuals” who seek “special rights” are overtly constructed as “pedophiles,” who desire to “penetrate” schools and “sodomize” children. Public statements by Gay writers and teachers are cited in a point and counter-point fashion to bolster the truth of this hidden agenda.

PART FIVE. The video concludes with the “Dark Realities” of the gay agenda and a call to political action. This part contains explicit “sexual” material, including lurid descriptions of anal intercourse and “fisting.” Homosexuals are vilified as “abnormal” and “sick” subjects who engage in acts that threaten public health. Several new characters are added to the melodrama: the “liberal media” as villains, “the average person” as dupes, and “former homosexuals” as victims. A bio-medical discourse is employed to attack homosexuals as “pedophiles.” The narrator cites the results of “scientific” studies to support the ultimate vilification: gay rights = the victimization of children. The video concludes with an urgent call to action. Many of the main characters make final appearances (Trent Lott; Ed Meese; Bill Bennett; etc). The threats reiterated, the video goads the viewer to act. “We are on the verge of our civilization and our culture being totally overhauled by the homosexual agenda,” one commentator exclaims, “you need to be the person who takes a stand either in your school district or in your city or county or state or on the national level, saying, enough is enough!” Senator Trent Lott asserts, “This will be one more further degradation of a great country, and we cannot allow it to happen.” The people must “rise up and express their indignation,” he says, “because what is at stake here is the future of our boys and girls, but also...the future of

America.”

SECOND MOVE: ‘DADS’ AS GENERALS IN THE CULTURE WAR

Vilification is the first moment in a political victimage ritual; the second is heroic action. Employing arguments similar to those articulated in the video, ICA activists staged two press conferences in early 1993 to launch their campaign. At the first they stated the rationale for the initiative campaign, that the “gay community” was attempting to gain “special rights” and recruit Idaho children to “the homosexual lifestyle.” When reporters asked why legislation was needed in Idaho since there were few signs of a gay rights movement, they responded, “We are being proactive.” Later, Walton would add there were a number of “ominous signs” of a “militant homosexual agenda” in Idaho, citing the ‘Lesbian’ in the high-school sociology class affair, an ACLU plan to repeal the state’s sodomy and domestic partnership laws, a ban on discrimination based on “sexual orientation” at the University of Idaho, and a decision by the City Council of Troy, Idaho, to add “sexual orientation” to its non-discrimination clause. In April, ICA activists staged a second press conference at a middle-school near Boise to announce the revised (following legal review by Idaho’s, Attorney General) and final text of the proposition. This symbolic act communicated two synonyms: 1) the homosexual agenda to gain special rights = a strategy to recruit children to the homosexual lifestyle by promoting it in the schools; 2) the ICA campaign to pass a “no special-rights” law = the act of protecting and defending children, traditional family values, and civilization as we know it.

Kelly Walton represented himself as a “family man” and “father” who turned into a “general” to fight a “cultural war” to prevent the homosexual agenda from gaining a foothold in

Idaho and to defeat the “radical left.” Homosexuals, he asserted, are a “high powered interest group” who have a “political agenda,” who “want special privileges and rights,” who are “8-12 times more likely to molest children than heterosexuals,” and have “AIDS,” and “Syphilis, gonorrhea of the throat and intestinal infections.” These articulations were remobilized by activists and media commentators many times in the course of the campaign. The following excerpt is from a debate on Proposition 1 broadcast on Idaho public TV three weeks prior to the November 1994 elections. The speakers are Kelly Walton (ICA; current leader of the Idaho Christian Coalition) and Dennis Mansfield (Idaho Family Forum; Focus on the Family operative):

Moderator: ...why is this issue so important to you that you would risk the money the time and everything to see it all the way to the supreme court?

Mansfield: Kelly you wanna go first?

Walton: Well as a chief author and sponsor [hero], it's basically my idea; so you need to be asking me. I look around our state and I look at *our kids* [victim] and I look at the *our nation* [victim], and an example we can give to the rest of the nation and it's worth every penny, it really is. You know they keep saying we don't care, it's your money. Well, my response is they don't care, it's *our children* [victim], you know, *and that is what I'm fighting this for, is Idaho's kids* [victim].

Mansfield: And I would support that having seen the initial meeting of the minds of men and women, who came together to look at it, we said we are going to set a standard, and the standard is going to be that I [hero] will protect [from homosexual villains] my kids [victim] at whatever cost, and it's all good and well

to have parents of gay and lesbians marching in parades, but the reality is that the homosexual lifestyle [villain] is heartbreak, and that moms and dads [victims] who've had to endure the young kids [victims] going through it, and who have the young men and women [victims] who have grown to maturity living a lifestyle that's just been heartbreak.

Mansfield's "heartbreak" gambit was a clever maneuver in the war of words. An application of the ethic, "hate the sin, love the sinner," it identifies his concern with the "heartbreak" of the "moms and dads" whose "kids" have been victimized by "the homosexual lifestyle."

THE WAR OF WORDS

Modeled after Colorado's successful Amendment 2, Idaho's Proposition 1 addressed multiple issues, generating a dynamic theater of possible counter-discourses. It would have prevented any "state agency" from granting "minority status to homosexuals" and prohibited "same-sex marriages." Elementary and secondary education "teachers" would not be allowed to discuss "homosexuality as acceptable behavior." It had a provision that would have required librarians to limit the access of children to reading materials that address homosexuality.

The words deployed by proponents and opponents of the measure have been grouped into three clusters of MCDS that functioned as subjectifying antonyms in the battle provoked by this initiative: Political Power, Secular Normality, and Religious Morality. Table 1 should be read from the initiative proponent's point of view. It summarizes the positive terms ICA activists used to characterize themselves and the negative terms they used to describe their adversary. Table 2 describes the antonyms anti-ICA forces employed to describe themselves and counter-attack the initiative and the ICA. The frequency and percentages with which the most important

of these terms occurred in the three phases of the campaign are presented in Table 3.

(Place Tables 1, 2, 3 about here)

ICA activists fought the campaign in secular terms. Only when ICA leaders were questioned by journalists about their religious motives or thrown on the defensive as "unchristian" or "hate-mongering," did they speak directly in religious terms. They titled their organization the "Idaho Citizens Alliance" (ICA), not the "Idaho Christian Coalition" or "Family Forum." The use of these terms to identify themselves as conservative Idaho citizens committed to traditional family values, was intended to appeal to Idaho's 'conservative' constituency. The use of "Idaho" identified ICA activists as insiders as opposed to outsiders such as homosexuals and Californians, the putative cause of moral decline in Idaho (Edles 1994).

The leaders of the opposition were representatives of Idaho's Lesbian and Gay community, mainly based in Boise, the state capital. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) fought a continuous legal battle against the ICA initiative, exploiting every possible opportunity to tie up the initiative in the courts. During the petitioning phase of the campaign, opponents created a "Don't Sign on to Discrimination Coalition." After the ICA succeeded in gaining the required signatures by the June 1994 deadline, the opposition changed the name of their organization to "No On One Coalition" (NOO) and hired a new director to fight the final battle to defeat the ballot measure in November. It was opposed by an array of forces. The proposition included sections affecting schools and libraries, provoking vocal opposition from the Idaho Education Association, the Faculty Senates of the three universities, and the Idaho Library Association. It was also opposed by the leaders of a coalition of churches, including Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, Mennonites, and Jews. Significantly and some have

argued, decisively, the influential Mormon church representing 26.6% of the state's population remained neutral (Bradley et al., 1992). Witt and Alm (1997) found a robust negative correlation between a county's percent yes-vote and the percentage of LDS living in the county. Nearly every incumbent state and federal politician representing both major parties, including Cecil Andrus, the very popular Governor of the state, and the Libertarians, opposed it.

POLITICAL POWER MCDs. From beginning to end, initiative opponents questioned the “need” for the measure and the “costs” of its implementation. The “need” issue was raised in 37% of the newspaper articles. Critics argued it was unnecessary because there were no signs of a “Gay Agenda” in Idaho. Moreover, if it happened to pass it would be too costly to implement. Articles mentioning the “cost” issue escalated from 6% in the first period to 22% of the articles appearing in the last period. Ultimately, these would be the positions adopted by Idaho's “conservative” republican politicians to justify voting no on the initiative. Some argued that Idaho's state legislature is “so conservative” that it would never enact gay rights legislation anyway. If it happened to pass, they argued, the court battles would end up costing the “taxpayers” a bundle. Implementing the “library” provisions would cost “millions” of dollars. Librarians would have to segregate the unacceptable materials from the reading materials appropriate to minors.

ICA leaders responded to these issues by reiterating the threats articulated in the *Agenda* videotape. ICA leaders identified themselves as “conservatives” fighting a campaign against “liberals” and “leftists.” They worked to make voting for the ICA's initiative synonymous with being a conservative. Leaders were described as “conservative” in 27% of the *Idaho Statesman* articles. They argued that those who opposed the initiative, supported “special rights” for

homosexuals, and were “liberals” and “leftists.” Those who supported the initiative and opposed “special rights” for homosexuals, were “conservatives.” Wisely, the ICA leaders called it the “No Special Rights” campaign, guaranteeing that these terms would be invoked repeatedly.

The NOO leaders, on the other hand, tried to disarticulate these synonyms. The gay rights = special rights synonym was particularly problematic. In the political context of an on-going national debate about affirmative action programs, the use of ‘special rights’ resonated deeply with “conservative” Idahoans. NOO activists tried to disarticulate this synonym by countering that they did not seek “special” rights, but “equal” or “civil” rights. The Gay “agenda” was not a sinister, hidden, or conspiratorial one, but a legitimate, open, and public political program to gain civil rights. They seized the opportunity created by the ICA’s use of “agenda” to construct the ICA as a power subject with hidden motives. They charged that the ICA was an “extremist group” and not really conservative, part of a “radical right” movement with an “agenda” to create a theocracy that would negatively affect all Idahoans. ICA activists, they argued, have a hidden political agenda. Governor Cecil Andrus, a “conservative democrat,” repeatedly compared the ICA to “hate groups” such as the white supremacists in Northern Idaho, declaring that the same “voices of hatred and intolerance” from “out of state” are behind the ICA initiative. NOO activists worked hard to disassociate the ICA from ‘moderate’ and ‘conservative’ Idahoans. “If the ICA succeeds in its anti-gay rights agenda,” they asked, “who would be next?” By extending the threat this way, NOO activists appealed for support from other targets on the “radical right” hit list, including Jews and Mormons. By differentiating the ICA as “radical right,” “extremist,” and a “hate group,” the ICA’s opponents tried to influence “conservatives” to vote against this initiative. If this tactic succeeded, an effective “conservative” critique of the initiative could be

elaborated.

Two political discourses were mobilized to oppose the initiative. From the outset, opponents adopted a "liberal" discourse borrowed from the Black Civil Rights movement to attack the ICA and its initiative. This discourse constructed ICA leaders as power subjects who wanted to legislate their desire to "discriminate" against Gay and Lesbian people. As Table 3 shows, this articulation showed up in 41% of the newspaper articles. The results of a state-wide analysis of letters-to-the-editors confirms that this was the most frequent charge against the initiative (McCorkle and Most 1997). This articulation was used to place ICA leaders in a defensive position by portraying them as moral hypocrites. ICA activists claim to be Christians. Christians are supposed to be loving. Prop. 1 is hateful and bigoted. Therefore, ICA = not Christian.

NOO joined forces with the Idaho Human Rights Commission and ACLU to fight against ICA "intolerance, hate, and bigotry," and for the "constitutional rights" of lesbian and gay people. Proposition 1 was "unconstitutional" because it would legitimate "discrimination." In a preliminary March 1993 review, Idaho's Attorney General wrote that the initiative posed "serious constitutional problems" (EchoHawk 1993a, 1993b). The Attorney General was also required to construct titles to go on the initiative petition and, once the signatures were gathered, on the final ballot. Opponents of the measure seized this opportunity to engage in a major assault against their CR foes by taking the Attorney General to court (Patterson 1993). Anti-initiative forces took full advantage of these rulings, which were widely reported in the state's media. The number of articles on this issue were greatest during the petitioning period (30%), when these rulings were being made. Once decided, opponents could cite the Attorney General's authority

to charge that signing the petition was equivalent to an act of "discrimination." In the months prior to the November election, the linkages between the Proposition 1 = unconstitutional = discriminatory was made in 53% of *Statesman* articles. As a result, ICA leaders were constantly placed on the defensive by journalists and commentators, forcing them to ritually deny having any hostile intentions or motives.

In the final period of the battle, NOO leaders deployed a second political discourse -- a *conservative* or "Log-Cabin Republican" critique. They charged that passage of this measure would mean more "government intrusion" in people's private lives. A July newspaper article appeared with a quote from "conservative icon and former U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater" asserting that anti-gay initiatives like Idaho's would "institutionalize discrimination." Proposition 1, ICA leaders argued, was designed to "prevent" and "prohibit" the state government from granting "special rights" to homosexuals, and to "prevent" and "prohibit" public schools from promoting "the homosexual lifestyle." As it turned out, the November elections at the national level would be the most "anti-government" in 40 years. NOO activists took full advantage of this opportunity by beginning to speak to Idaho "conservatives" in their terms: the ICA and its initiative = government-control, -intrusion, -interference. This allowed NOO to construct ICA activists as power subjects who "want" to use "state government" to intrude into the "private" and "local" lives of individual Idahoans. This shift was designed to divide the "libertarian or economic" from the "cultural or social" conservatives. The frequency of *Statesman* articles containing this articulation increased from zero in the launch phase of the campaign, to 18% of the articles in the final stage.

'SECULAR' NORMALITY MCDs. Two normalizing discourses were deployed in the

Idaho battle. The “gay lifestyle,” ICA activists argued, is medically and socially “destructive.” Homosexual acts negatively effect public health (AIDS and other communicable diseases), and the lifestyle promoted by the homosexual agenda, destroys "traditional family values." Bio-medical issues were raised in 22% of the newspaper articles.. The percentage dropped from 33% in the launching phase to a mere 11% of the 85 articles in the final phase. ICA leaders did not publicly refer to their opponents as “sodomites.” They employed the homo- / heterosexual differentiation, a system developed inside early 20th century medical discourse (Katz 1995). The category, "homosexual lifestyle," repeatedly employed to identify the problem ICA activists were attacking, is modernist and secular in origin.

The discourse employed to engage in this secular critique cited professional authorities. James Dobson, the national director of Family Forum, headquartered in Colorado Springs, is a pediatrician. Dr. Paul Cameron, a psychologist and director of the Family Research Institute, toured Idaho, speaking to university and church groups, and disseminating institute pamphlets just prior to the November vote. He reiterated and amplified many of the themes articulated in the *Homosexual Agenda* video: "Medical Consequences of What Homosexuals do," "Child Molestation and Homosexuality," "Violence and Homosexuality," "Born What Way?", "What Causes Homosexual Desire and Can It Be Changed?" Cameron’s discourse associates homosexuality and violence in a cause/effect way, constructing the homosexual as violent other. He claimed that the top six U.S. male serial killers were all gay. Homosexuals, Cameron contended, engage in sadomasochism and deliberately infect others with diseases. And to those who countered that the majority of all of these crimes, including child molesting, are committed by heterosexual males, Cameron responds that the issue is the "disproportionate" number of these

crimes committed by homosexuals.

A six page "Proposition 1 Fact Sheet," employing Cameron's material, that was "Paid for by Stop Special Rights PAC" and disseminated at public debates, introduced and concluded on a religious note but most of its content is secular, including the two page bibliography. The religious framing of secular arguments is characteristic. Beginning with a prayer by the Pastor of the "Community Church of the Valley," the fact-sheet includes a four page, single spaced outline of secular, political and mainly medical arguments. The political arguments occupy one page. There are three pages of bio-medical and social science arguments with citations to scientific journal articles. "Is the homosexual lifestyle medically dangerous? Yes." Why: the homosexual lifestyle = promiscuous, high incidence of pedophilia and sexual abuse, a whole series of medical diseases, including AIDS. These arguments were reiterated by ICA spokesman in interviews with reporters.

The "causes" and "cures" of homosexuality are discussed in terms of genetic theory and social science. If it is not genetically determined, then "What causes homosexuality?" Paul Cameron answers in secular, social science terms. "Homosexuality is a learned behavior, learned in response to environmental factors such as...homosexual experience in childhood...Family abnormality...Unusual sexual experience, especially in childhood...Cultural influences." The genetic argument is rejected. The question of a "cure" for homosexuality is addressed in religious terms as a "choice" to change. Salvation is possible through religious conversion. Social scientific discourse follows the religious pattern of salvation through conversion.

ICA discourse on the "environmental" and "social" origins of "homosexuality" is directly related to the issue of the gay agenda. If homosexuality is a behavior that is learned, then the

social environment of children must be controlled to prevent the "transmission" of the "contagious disease" of homosexuality. Exposure to homosexuality in families, schools, and libraries, and the very existence of the "gay community," causes it to proliferate. The family, schools, and libraries must be "normalized." Same-sex marriages and lesbian or gay parents, are a threat to the normalization of children. School teachers that have homosexual sex with students or teach that the homosexual lifestyle is a normal one, are influencing children to engage in an unhealthy lifestyle. Society must be protected from the influences that cause these destructive abnormalities. The ICA initiative included sections that prohibit same-sex marriages, public school teachers teaching that the homosexual lifestyle is acceptable, and libraries allowing children to have access to pro-homosexual reading materials. In ICA discourse, homosexuality is a "contagious disease" that must be quarantined from the larger population. Another way to prevent the unhealthy effects of "the homosexual lifestyle," is to practice "traditional family values."

Clearly on the defensive, NOO leaders attempted to counter this pathologizing discourse by attempting to normalize gays and lesbians. "We are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and mothers and fathers," they argued. The Boise organization that sponsors the annual gay, lesbian, bi-sexual 'Pride' rallies and marches, is called "Your Family, Friends, and Neighbors." NOO activists attempted to disarticulate the homosexuality = learned behavior = choice synonyms by taking an agnostic position on this question. No one "knows" what causes homosexuality or heterosexuality. This discourse was employed to challenge the ICA argument that there is a "homosexual agenda." However, they argued, if scientists find that homosexuality is a genetic trait, then it would be impossible to promote homosexuality.

NOO activists attacked Paul Cameron's "credibility" as a psychologist and social scientist, citing two facts to discredit his research. He had been dropped from membership in the American Psychological Association in 1984 "for violation of the Preamble to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists." A 1985 resolution of the American Sociological Association was also cited: "The American Sociological Association officially and publicly states that Paul Cameron is not a sociologist, and condemns his consistent misrepresentation of sociological research." Cameron was a "dangerous" and "unethical" scientist who distorts and falsifies other scientists' studies and employs unsound methodologies in his own work. Cameron, NOO activists argued, believes that the spread of AIDS will rid the world of "perverts" and "advocates" the extermination of homosexuals.

The attempt to disarticulate the ICA homosexuals = AIDS = disease chain of associations was highly problematic. NOO activists did not deny the public health construction of the Gay community as a high-risk group for HIV infection and AIDS, and counter-attacked the initiative on the grounds that it would prevent AIDS education and prevention. The gay and lesbian community, a diverse group composed of "reasonable" people, is a "responsible" actor that has acted to reduce the rate of disease. In response to the charge that 1% of the U.S. population are responsible for 60% of the AIDS cases, they attacked the AIDS = gay disease articulation by citing global statistics which show that the majority of the victims of this disease are heterosexual.

Anti-ICA forces also engaged in an offensive attack deploying normality as a weapon by constructing their opponents as "deviant others." ICA activists described the initiative and those behind it as "homophobic" and as appealing with their initiative to "homophobic" people. A

popular bumper sticker disseminated by initiative opponents stated, "Homophobia is a social disease." The hatred expressed by the initiative was caused by a psychiatric disorder -- a phobic reaction. They also deployed learning models to construct ICA activists and supporters as prejudiced and hateful. People who are "homophobic" or "prejudiced" against homosexuals acquired it from their environment. Idaho has many small rural and religious communities, they argued, that foster this kind of prejudice. Social science evidence, they argued, shows that people who have a lesbian or gay friend or relative are less likely to be homophobic.

"Hate," another popular bumper-sticker asserted, "is not a family value." ICA activists were compelled to defend themselves against the charge that they were anti-gay, hateful, or hate-mongering. Anti-ICA critics argued the initiative battle was having a divisive social effect. The initiative process was "dividing Idahoans" into hostile camps, promoting "needless" conflict and violence. This articulation appeared in eighteen percent of *Statesman* articles. The editors of the *Idaho Statesman* repeatedly attacked the ICA initiative as "divisive." "The foremost reason to oppose Proposition 1," they argued, "is that it is a hateful, divisive, and wholly unneeded measure." Those who were behind the ICA initiative were constructed as subjects who were needlessly inflicting hate and divisiveness on Idahoans.

'RELIGIOUS' MORALITY MCDs. The political and normality terms mobilized in ICA discourse constituted initiative proponents as reasonable secular subjects. In a third discourse, they defined themselves as "loving" Christian subjects. However, it was not something that the leaders of the initiative fronted in their public statements. Much of this was implied by the frequent use 'morality' and 'values,' which showed up in 26% of the total articles. On the other hand, ICA organizational literature stressed that members did not have to be

Christian to be members, just “conservative” and committed to “traditional moral values.” In spite of this, the use of Christian in the news articles steadily increased from 14% in period 1 to 26% in the last. ICA recruitment literature constructs the sinister subjects behind the “Gay Agenda” as immoral and wrong. Only those who practice “Christian” and / or “traditional family values” are moral beings. Implicit in the construction of the homosexual as an immoral, sinful subject by ICA activists, is the identification of the speakers/writers and those they claimed to represent, as morally righteous.

To the extent that it was articulated, the substance of ICA ethical discourse was concerned with the relation that one has to one’s sinful desires (Foucault 1983; Davidson 1994). Christians must choose to obey or disobey God’s commandments. The individual who engages in sodomy willfully disobeys one of God’s laws by giving into a sinful desire. ICA leaders invoked the principle that one must “hate the sin and love the sinner.” Therefore, a true Christian must denounce evil acts but love the sinner. The differentiation of the sinful act from the sinner is crucial. As a matter of conscience they believe that they have the moral duty to bear witness against sinful activity (i.e., sodomy, abortion). ICA activists rarely chose to publicly discuss these matters unless forced to do so by opponents in debate or by journalists’ questions. Once, in response to a reporter, the director of Idaho Family Forum affirmed his belief in God, and added, “Should the culture fall apart at the seams because of sexually transmitted diseases, promiscuity, the AIDS increase, the incredible divorce rates, then I need to be personally able to stand before the God that created me and say I did everything I could.”

From the beginning, initiative opponents and the media linked the ICA to the activities of Pat Robertson, the Christian Coalition, and the “religious right.” While ICA leaders preferred the

category “conservative Christian” to “religious right” or “Christian right,” the media employed “religious right” more frequently. In the final months before the November vote, the use of “Christian right” escalated. A majority of Idaho’s “mainstream” religious organizations, including the Catholic Church, actively opposed the initiative. This made it possible to be a Christian and opposed to the measure, disarticulating the synonym, voting for the initiative means being a good Christian. Significantly, the “conservative” Mormon church, representing 26.6% of Idaho’s population, remained neutral. CR/ICA opponents had communicated to Idaho’s Mormon Bishops that the activists behind the initiative had circulated anti-Mormon videos. The most effective attack on the Christian = anti-gay articulation, however, was the accusation that ICA leaders were motivated by hate toward homosexuals. This provoked the issue of Christian ethical substance directly. ICA leaders were frequently forced to explain their motives in religious terms. They vehemently denied having any intent to harm lesbian and gay people, often invoking the Christian principle, “Hate the sin, love the sinner,” as an explanation of their conduct. Discussion of this issue appeared in 33% or 79 of the articles. In 22 of these explicit attempts are made by ICA spokespersons to disarticulate the ICA = hate group association.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this detailed case study was, first of all, to display the analytical possibilities of a poststructural, genealogical approach to how discourse functions in political battles. Sociologists have largely ignored the way that interpretations of power and sexuality have functioned in political and theoretical discourses. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this paper (on sociology’s problem with thinking straight about power, the nation-state, and

violence, see Giddens 1985; on the lack of ‘sexuality’ in sociological theory, see Epstein 1994). The data reported here clearly demonstrates that the strategic language of warfare and military conflict permeates actors’ common sense understandings of their political opponents’ motives and actions, as well as their own. The CR activists who organized and lead the Idaho campaign argued repeatedly that it was the existence of “militant homosexual” opponent that had necessitated their actions. In other words, this articulation was their publicly stated motive for mounting this two year, highly contentious campaign to prohibit “special rights” for homosexuals. They were in the midst of a fight with a powerful and menacing opponent.

The genealogical framework advanced here also makes it possible to elaborate the analysis of power and subjectivity in terms of a Burkean critique of victimage ritual. This interpretation can lead to a more complex understanding of the subjectivity and identity in politics by adding a moral dimension to the strategic one. Political actors can always be attacked as more or less “sincere” or “cynical.” In this perspective, the sociological debate about strategy versus identity, the rational versus the non-rational in politics becomes moot. Sociologists have spent a whole generation involved in theorizing two aspects of single phenomenon. In fact, participation in political activities constitute actors as both power and ethical agents. The opponent can always be represented as cynically motivated by purely strategic concerns. The CR charges that “homosexuals” and “liberals” want to use the school system to tear down their kids’ moral values. Their opponents, on the other hand, counter that CR activists are cynically exploiting the public’s anxieties about pedophilia and AIDS to advance their political agenda.

A third analytical point made in the genealogical approach advanced here applies specifically to the contingent and emergent character of discourses in political battles. Political

leaders must contend with multiple-constituencies and a dynamic field of antagonistic reactions. In the Idaho case, CR activists seriously underestimated the fierce opposition their initiative engendered from multiple adversaries. Any move in the game transform the field of possible counter-moves. Genealogical analysis recognizes the tactical and polyvalent character of discourses, and that new interpretations and practices often emerge from the contingencies of historical power struggles. In the Idaho battle, CR activists struggled hard to identify themselves as “conservative” Idahoans. Their opponents cleverly turned the table on them in the final stages of the political contest. They began to interpret the initiative as an attempt on the part of the CR to use “government” to impose its values on Idahoans. Initiative campaigns like the one in Idaho are “radical” and politically “extreme.” The difference between “conservatives” and “right-wing extremists” is the willingness to use “big government” to subjugate individuals and communities. As a result of this battle, the idea that a government would be employed to impose one community’s style of life on a diverse and complex society becomes morally and political problematic (Touraine 1998).

This last point can lead into the issues of how the discourses generated in the Idaho campaign “resonated” with the public. Why did the CR activists deploy a “secular” rather than a “religious” discourse in the Idaho campaign? The answer is tactical, but not merely tactical. A central tenet of discourse analysis is that variations in power relations are correlated with variations in discursive action. Since evangelical Christians dominated the leadership positions in the campaign but only constitute a small percentage of Idaho’s population, they could not address the public the way they speak to their core constituency. In Idaho, the category “conservative” captures a far greater range of constituencies than does “Evangelical Christian.”

The rhetoric of public health is a more widely held set of values than the fundamentalist discourse of sin and redemption.

The opponents of the initiative effectively mobilized multiple-discourses to fight this initiative. From beginning to end, opponents mobilized and deployed a “liberal” human rights discourse that condemned the initiative as discriminatory. In addition they began to question the need for the initiative in a conservative political environment. They added a discourse emphasizing the high economic costs to the taxpayers of the state of implementing the initiative, one designed to appeal to the “conservative” taxpayers of the state. Once the initiative campaign succeeded in getting enough signatures to get on the ballot, its opponents borrowed rhetoric from the 1994 Republican Revolution and forged a novel “conservative” critique of the CR initiative. Initiative proponents were charged with attempting to use “big government” to impose their particular community values on everyone.

One important condition that can also help to explain the defeat is that those who identify themselves as “conservative” and “religious” are not monolithic groups. In fact, they are riddled with internal divisions, and cross-cutting and unstable alliances, which were effectively exploited by the opponents of this initiative. A good example is the way that initiative opponents were able to pit the Mormon establishment against the CR in this battle. Most of Idaho’s religious authorities actively and publicly worked to defeat Proposition 1. Their opposition provided a religious justification for voting against this initiative. Moreover, Idaho’s “conservative” population is divided along the lines of economic versus social conservatism. Economic conservatives identify strongly with “individual privacy” as well as “private enterprise.” The critique of “big” and “intrusive” government was very resonant with this type of conservative

voter. Some, following the example of Barry Goldwater, actively oppose the increasing political power of the CR. Initiative opponents exploited these divisions by engaging in the tactical use of political and religious counter-rhetorics.

Still, in spite of the opposition of most of Idaho's religious and political authorities, and a very skillfully run counter-campaign, the initiative did "resonate" with 49% of the voters. Religious socialization alone cannot explain this fact. Smart (1986), blending Foucault and Gramsci, has argued that modern societies achieve hegemony and social cohesion by subjugation. Subjugation refers to a process that produces individuals with "normal" thoughts, sexual desires, and feelings through techniques built into modern familial, medical, and educational practices. More specifically, Butler (1993) has argued that a regime of heteronormativity has been constitutive of the modern individual. In other words, it has been the "biopolitical" technology of the state and not the church, that has imposed this regime on society. This would help explain the CR's use of a peculiar blend of moral and bio-medical terminologies. Homosexuality, which had been linked to 'moral degeneracy' in 19th century medical thought, has functioned to negatively define the limits of middle-class respectability and manliness. Epstein (1993) has argued that homosexuality played an important role in right-wing political discourses and the national construction of an ideal American masculinity.

The discourses of "abnormality" and "immorality" were largely implicit in the newspaper and public television debate data. The negative medical and moral effects of "the homosexual lifestyle" were far more explicit in letters-to-the-editor in state newspapers (McCorkle and Most 1997). On the other hand, the discourses directed at the core constituencies, the campaign literatures (particularly the literature disseminated by the psychologist, Paul Cameron), the *Gay*

Rights/Special Rights video, and activists' discourse at public meetings, were much more explicit. One of the most striking features of the latter are the lurid descriptions of "sexual" activities and crimes. The use of these descriptions resembles the tabloid press which exploits the 'prurient interest' in sexuality and crimes for commercial purposes. The CR's use of pornographic descriptions of S/M and homosexual activities is nothing new in the history of political discourse (Darnton 1995). The function of vilifying homosexuals as child molesters is to generate moral outrage in those addressed. There is a long history of "child protection" legislation to legitimate social control and impose discipline (Donzelot 1979; Jenkins 1992).

The use of victimage ritual as a calculated means of politics is problematic on several grounds. In the Idaho case, the aim of the "no-special rights" campaign was clearly anti-democratic. CR activists vehemently deny this criticism, claiming they want to protect children and traditional family values. The majority of the justices of both the Colorado and U.S. Supreme courts have disagreed. The federal judges found that Colorado's Amendment 2 was motivated by extreme "animus" and violated the equal-protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution (Dworkin 1996). A second criticism applies to the politics of victimage in general. Activists who engage in the tactics of vilification to achieve their political goals, whether intended or not, may incite violence against the target group (Blain 1994; Herek 1991). This practice is most problematic when applied to groups that have been historically marginalized.

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Table 1
The Arsenal of CR/ICA Anti-Gay Discourses

SELF		OPPONENT
<i>Political power MCDs</i>		
Idaho citizens		Gay movement [=not Idaho]
Prop. 1 =conservative =[ordinary rights]		militant Gay agenda =liberal special rights =unfair
<i>Secular normality MCDs</i>		
<i>Bio-medical:</i>		
heterosexual normal		homosexual abnormal
[mentally healthy]		perverts pedophiles molesters
[physical health]		AIDS (sexually transmitted) disease
<i>Social:</i>		
values traditional family schools children		[no values] Gay life style promote
<i>Christian morality MCDs</i>		
[moral] [Christian]		immoral godless sodomites
[Righteous]		sinful

*[] = implicit terms

Table 2
The Arsenal of Anti-Initiative Discourses

SELF		OPPONENT
<i>Political power MCDs</i>		
Gay and Lesbian Community =minority		Idaho Citizens Alliance =Christian right =extremist =theocratic ≠conservative
'liberal' opponents		Prop. 1 =discriminatory =unconstitutional
'conservative' opponents		Prop. 1 =unnecessary =costly = government intrusion
<i>Secular normality MCDs</i>		
<i>Biomedical:</i>		
normal human		abnormal homophobic
<i>Social:</i>		
[tolerant] love diversity family friends neighbors		intolerant hateful prejudiced
<i>Religious morality MCDs</i>		
'religious' opponents		Prop. 1 =hateful =bigotry ≠ Christian

*[] = implicit terms

Table 3
 Frequencies (Percentages) of *Idaho Statesman* Articles
 Containing Key Terms in Three Time Periods

	<u>Launching</u> <u>1/93-6/93</u>	<u>Petitioning</u> <u>7/93-5/94</u>	<u>Voting</u> <u>6/94-11/94</u>	<u>Total</u>
# Articles	80 (100%)	73 (100%)	85 (100%)	238(100%)
<u>Initiative Proponents' Terms</u>				
Special Rights Agenda	42 (52%)	38 (52%)	43 (51%)	123 (52%)
Schools/ Children	40 (50%)	29 (40%)	34 (40%)	103 (43%)
Conservative/ Liberal	17 (21%) 22 (30%)	25 (29%)	64 (27%)	
Bio-medical	26 (33%)	17 (23%)	9 (11%)	52 (22%)
Morality/Values	15 (19%)	22 (30%)	28 (33%)	62 (26%)
Christian	11 (14%)	17 (23%)	22 (26%)	50 (21%)
<u>Initiative Opponents' Terms</u>				
Need	33 (41%)	22 (30%)	32 (38%)	87 (37%)
Cost	5 (6%)	23 (31%)	19 (22%)	47 (20%)
Discrimination	31 (39%)	22 (31%)	45 (53%)	98 (41%)
Constitution	17 (21%)	22 (30%)	20 (23%)	59 (24%)
Government Intrusion	00 (0%)	9 (12%)	15 (18%)	24 (10%)
Hate/ Divisive	29 (36%)	21 (29%)	29 (34%)	79 (33%)