

A Half-Dozen Things That We Are: Collective Identity in Intersectional LGBT/Queer Social Movement Organizations Part I

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For decades, Black and multiracial feminist theories of intersectionality, which establish major systems of power and privilege with relation to race, class gender and sexuality as interlocking and mutually reinforcing, have promised to end reductive debates about which is “the ultimate” oppression and provide the basis for coalitional, multi-issue activism on the Left. Yet intersectional approaches are still not the norm in LGBT/Queer organizing, which, if anything, has narrowed over time. This research examines the work of two intersectionally-directed LGBT/Queer social movement organizations, *Queers for Economic Justice* in New York City and *Southerners on New Ground* in the U.S. South. Through the lens of collective identity theories that emerge from social movement theory, this study seeks to understand how the organizations in question cohere, address challenges posed by diversity and inequality and communicate their collective identities in a variety of settings. This research brings to Queer and multiracial feminist theories a deeper interaction with “on-the-ground” activisms, to social movement theory a more nuanced conception of collective identity and to activists new ways of interpreting their struggles and successes. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: <journal@transformativestudies.org> Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2008 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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“Multi-issue” social justice organizing is an invariably challenging proposition. During my year on the Executive Board of my campus’s GLBTQ and allied student organization, where I coordinated the

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