7.3 Marginalized Groups in American Society

Marginalized groups can be defined as people who are viewed as outside the mainstream culture and are deemed by the majority as insignificant or unimportant. Members of such groups are often of minority populations (by some demographic criteria) and have been excluded or prevented from having power or influence. Historically, marginalized groups have been subject to discrimination and may suffer demonstrable disadvantage in multiple spheres (social, economic, political). Members of these groups are often defined by some immutable characteristic (or a characteristic that is most often experienced as immutable) such as race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (Williams, 1998).

Representation of Marginalized Groups

In 1999, in a protest later dubbed the "Battle in Seattle," between 50,000 and 100,000 people gathered to protest globalization and the World Trade Organization, which they believed contributed to a widening socioeconomic gap between the rich and poor. The press reported:

> Protesters came from all over the world, not just the developed countries. They ranged from human rights groups, students, environmental groups, religious leaders, labor rights activists etc. wanting fairer trade with less exploitation. Even right-wing protectionist groups were there also arguing against the current corporate-led free trade. (Shah, 2001)

After the protest, organizers claimed success in representing the disenfranchised and marginalized groups of the world.

Activists for specific causes often see themselves as "representatives" who give voice to diverse populations whose views would otherwise be excluded from the dominant culture. They believe that providing better representation of historically disadvantaged groups through demonstrations and protests advances inclusion. Researchers who agree argue that these activities provide important avenues of political representation in a democracy, especially for excluded, disadvantaged groups (Weldon, 2011).

Critics, however, claim such activities often lack democratic accountability and deepen exclusion and marginalization. They argue that when demonstrators' tactics disrupt deliberation, prevent compromise, and emphasize differences over commonalities, people become fragmented into separate *identities*, which weakens their cause (Weldon, 2011).

Others maintain that for representation of marginalized groups to be equitable, the people who represent these groups must actually be members of the marginalized group (Williams, 1998). In this view, self-representation is necessary for fair treatment of marginalized groups and to retain trust in democratic institutions.

Mechanisms for Representation by Marginalized Groups

Do activists such as those in the Tea Party movement—which often uses activities such as organized protest marches and mass demonstrations—offer a pathway to a more inclusive democracy? Or do they create a more polarized and fragmented national social, economic, and/or political structure? The answer may depend on the methods such groups use or the activities in which they engage to publicize their viewpoints. Several mechanisms exist in established democracies for marginalized groups to promote their causes.

Interest Groups and Other Voluntary Organizations

Interest groups and other voluntary organizations are one vehicle by which marginalized groups promote their causes. Examples include groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP), the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the Center for Law and Social Policy. Such organizations pool a group's resources to provide a voice for people who lack sufficient representation in national politics. In fact, political scientist Laurel Weldon (2011) cites studies that show political parties are most likely to represent marginalized groups when they are pressured by independent, voluntary, or special interest organizations that represent these marginalized groups.

Although many such entities have achieved much for their constituents, it is debatable how well others have lived up to their promise to represent their members and help the less powerful members of their communities. Some research suggests that interest groups and other voluntary organizations may actually work *against* marginalized groups.

A 2006 study of 286 national advocacy organizations found that, to increase their membership and the number of people who vote their positions, organizations appeal to the median member or voter (Strolovitch, 2006). The concerns of weaker subgroups within the organization are often excluded by elite members who manipulate the agenda toward their own interests and issues and those of the numerically larger subgroups. Membership in these groups is also low among women, Blacks, Hispanics, and people with lower levels of income and education. Thus, these subgroups have little power to influence the larger organization.

Finally, critics argue that these voluntary organizations often practice **intersectional marginalization** (Strolovitch, 2006). That is, they fail to address issues that affect subgroups with more than one form of disadvantage—such as African American gay men or others who face dual discrimination.

Political Parties

Political parties help shape the discussion on inclusion and marginalization in a variety of ways. Some argue that politics can help bring together some marginalized groups. This is because various candidates or representatives within the same political party compete for the support of these groups. In theory this competition advances inclusion.

In contrast, researchers Wolbrecht and Hero (2005) refer to political parties as "mediating institutions" that potentially link marginalized groups to democratic political processes. They reference numerous studies from 1996 through 2005 that suggest political parties simply mobilize supporters and do not necessarily promote inclusion or act as equalizing institutions. Weldon (2011) also cites studies that show political parties are most likely to represent marginalized groups when they are pressured by independent, voluntary, or special interest organizations that represent these marginalized groups.

Interestingly, a political party may be more significant than race when advancing issues such as race. In a 2011 study, Katrina Gamble analyzed how race factored into party deliberations inside congressional committees. She was interested in whether Black legislators were more likely than White ones to mention marginalized groups during committee debates or to discuss how policies may impact them. Gamble states that, historically and even today, many presume that Black elected officials are critical for providing Black Americans with quality representation. As was predicted by civil rights activist Lani Guinier, "black political leaders would temper the rhetoric and overt racism of white elected officials. In particular, black representatives would, by definition, constitute a progressive force affirmatively promoting black interests" (as cited in Gamble, 2011, para. 3).

However, Gamble's study found that Democratic legislators were more likely than Republicans to introduce issues related to marginalized groups during committee discussion. Additionally, there was little difference between Black Democrats and White Democrats in the mention of marginalized constituencies during committee deliberations.

Social Movements

Social movements are another type of mediating institution that can potentially improve representation of marginalized groups. As a form of political organization, membership in a social movement is based on a shared sense of purpose and/or identity. Social movements are aimed at changing social practices or the prevailing power relations among those in the majority.

Social movements foster political mobilization via traditional lobbying or interest groups, voter registration drives, education initiatives, and leadership institutes. They also work through political channels to change undesirable language, pass institutional reforms, and stage consumer boycotts, street theater, cultural criticism, public demonstrations, and grassroots efforts. These activities help publicize their concerns and promote broader social change.

Visions of America/SuperStock

Social movements may help shape political parties, shift political platforms, or revitalize a democracy by advocating issues that are relevant to underrepresented groups.

Through these efforts, social movements create the constituencies and corresponding group perspectives that can promote issues relevant to underrepresented and marginalized groups. Social movements can also revitalize a democratic society and help shape political parties' platforms and operations at national, state, and local levels. These ongoing interactions can have lasting impact far beyond any particular movement (Meyer, Jenness, & Ingram, 2005).

However, not all agree. Meyer and colleagues (2005) cite three primary objections to social movements as avenues of democratic representation. The first is that the representation is not democratic because large bureaucratic, national organizations seem to have little interaction with the grassroots. The number of people in leadership positions in these organizations is small compared to the constituencies they represent, and the leaders are usually not elected democratically.

Second, some argue that social movements do not represent the most marginalized and disadvantaged subgroups. Many of the inequities that characterize larger society also shape social movements. For example, racial inequality often exists within social movements because Blacks have less access to **social capital—**the network of social connections and level of participation in social activities that generate influence and power. Those members of the social movement who are at the intersections of marginalization have even less access to social networks, which means they have less voice in the movement.

A third objection is that social movements have become less participatory as protests become mainstream, professionalized, or co-opted by other interests. Theoretically, social movements are opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate and be represented in political dialogue. However, large social movements are overly biased toward participation, and not necessarily about representation.

Weldon (2011) and others believe that social movements constitute a critical avenue of policy influence and may be one of the most effective ways to deepen inclusive democracy and give marginalized groups a voice in creating public policy. A social movement also seems to enable disadvantaged groups to better define themselves and to identify their priorities. With these ideas in mind, let us examine some of the most effective social movements in our country's history.

7.4 Native American Rights

When settlers arrived in the Western Hemisphere, they scarcely recognized the rights of the indigenous Native American inhabitants. They fought the tribes, sought to convert them to Christianity, or conscripted them as slaves for their colonies. As settler families grew at the expense of Native Americans, who succumbed to battle or disease, European Americans soon became the dominant population on the North American continent.

Native Americans and the U.S. Government

The U.S. Constitution makes little mention of Native Americans. The document gave Congress the power to "regulate Commerce . . . with the Indian tribes," and it bound the new government to respect the treaties that had been previously negotiated. However, it did not clarify the legal standing of Native Americans in the new United States, and the tribes received no representation in the new government. In addition, the Constitution provided no guidance or resolution for the dispute over whether Native Americans were subject to the new country's governance.

Native Americans' uncertainty in the new nation was evidenced by the brutal treatment they received at the hands of the U.S. government over the following decades. For example, in 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which initiated forced relocation and resettlement of Native American tribes to areas west of the Mississippi River. When the Cherokee were driven westward during the winter of 1838 to what is now Oklahoma, thousands died before reaching their destination. Survivors and their descendants refer to the journey as the Trail of Tears.

By the mid-1800s most tribes had been relocated to reservations, and disease and starvation resulted from many of these relocations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was charged with distributing food and aid and with protecting tribal interests. However, the actions of unscrupulous Native American agents increased misery on the reservations (Henson, 2009).

A century later World War II further diminished Native American populations on the Indian reservations. Government subsidies dwindled, and talented young people left the reservations to serve in the military or work in war production, creating manpower shortages in some tribes.

The Native American Movement

By the 1960s Native Americans were the least prosperous, least healthy, and least stable group in the nation. Their average annual family income was $1,000 less than that for Blacks (Brinkley, 1997). During this turbulent decade, political activism increased the participation of native peoples in charting their own direction as a sovereign people.

In 1961 more than 400 members of 67 tribes gathered in Chicago to issue a manifesto titled the Declaration of Indian Purpose. The document stressed the right of tribes to choose their own way of life and proposed legislative and regulatory changes to alleviate economic development, health, welfare, housing, law enforcement, and education problems among the Native American population (Declaration of Indian Purpose, 1961).

The movement was significantly aided by the development of several organizations formed to redress common grievances the Native Americans had against the U.S. government. For example, the National Indian Youth Council, created in 1961, promoted the idea of nationalism and intertribal unity. Another group, the American Indian Movement (AIM), a young militant organization formed in 1968, sought to ensure the fulfillment of treaties, build solidarity in the Native American community, and preserve its people's culture, history, and language.

This new activism had some early political results. In 1968 Congress passed the **Indian Civil Rights Act**, which granted Native Americans who lived on reservations many of the protections afforded to other citizens by the

Bill of Rights, and also recognized the legitimacy of tribal laws on the reservation (Tribal Court Clearinghouse, n.d.). Leaders of AIM and other Native American groups were not satisfied, however, and turned to direct action.

AP Photo/Paul Sakuma

Members of the American Indian Movement occupied San Francisco's Alcatraz Island in 1969 to bring attention to their movement.

In 1968 Native American fishers, citing old treaty rights, clashed with Washington state officials on the Columbia River and in Puget Sound. The following year members of several tribes occupied the abandoned federal prison on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, claiming the site "by right of discovery." In response, U.S. president Richard M. Nixon promised greater tribal self-determination and an increase in federal aid, but the protests continued. One notable protest was held in 1973 at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of an 1890 massacre of Sioux by federal troops. Its purpose was to publicize the extreme poverty and deplorable living conditions on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006).

Current Status

Native Americans' call for civil rights, like other rights movements of the time, fell short of winning full justice and equality for its constituents. Still, the movement helped the tribes win a series of new legal rights and protections that left them in a stronger position than at any other previous point in the 20th century. It also offered many Native Americans a renewed awareness of and pride in their identity as part of a distinct community within the larger United States.

Over the years, AIM has been instrumental in bringing multiple successful suits against the U.S. federal government for failing to protect the rights of Native Americans. The organization has also helped pass numerous pieces of legislation to benefit Native American peoples and has worked to educate Americans and change their perceptions of native tribes.

Today contemporary Native Americans may be members of nations, tribes, or bands with sovereignty and treaty rights. Programs are in place to help Native Americans immerse themselves in American culture while retaining the unique characteristics of their heritage. Native Americans are also eligible to receive government funds to build homes and schools and to maintain their community, as well as small business grants to provide job opportunities in their communities.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education, both agencies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, provide services directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts to federally recognized tribes. The Bureau of Indian Affairs also administers and manages more than 55.7 million acres of land held in trust for Native Americans in the United States (which includes Hawaii Natives), Native American tribes, and Alaska Natives. Additionally, the Bureau of Indian Education provides education services to approximately 48,000 Native American students. The Indian Health Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, also provides medical and public health services to members of federally recognized tribes and Alaska Natives.

Additionally, tribes today are free from most hunting and other restrictions, so they can continue their traditional means of subsistence and cultural rituals. As sovereign nations, their lands are exempt from state laws that prohibit the establishment and operation of gambling casinos and the sale of fireworks and other commodities, as well as from many business licensing requirements.

Several critical issues remain unresolved by the Native American civil rights movement, however. For instance, despite support from the American Psychological Association (APA) "for the immediate retirement of all

American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations" (APA, 2014, para. 2), the use of Native American symbols persists among U.S. professional sports teams. The Washington Redskins' team owner, Daniel Snyder, has steadfastly refused to change the team's name. When asked about the controversy, Snyder argues that the name represents the heritage of the 81-year-old franchise and is intended to honor Native Americans by evoking respect and pride (Bieler, 2014).

The backlash against the team is fierce, however. The Center for American Progress argues that derogatory team names create an "unwelcome and hostile learning environment" for Native American students that "directly results in lower self-esteem and mental health" (Stegman & Phillips, 2014, para. 3). In addition, a majority of the U.S. Senate has spoken out against the name; some journalism outlets have stopped using it in their stories; and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office canceled the Washington Redskins' trademark registration of its name, stating that both the name and logo are disparaging (Vargas, 2014). In addition, AIM has also actively objected to the use of Native Americans as mascots for sports teams and has sent representatives to protest at Washington Redskins and Atlanta Braves games (Wittstock & Salinas, 2006).

7.5 The Civil Rights Movement

Most Americans are familiar with many of the pivotal events and personalities of the civil rights movement for Black Americans in the 1960s. However, less well known are the historical background that led to such events, and the changes in public policy that resulted from them.

After the Civil War

When the Civil War was over and the North prevailed, southern Blacks celebrated liberation. But a long period of bitterness and enduring controversy accompanied the ensuing period during which Americans attempted to reunite their shattered country. This era—known as **Reconstruction**—lasted from the South's surrender in 1865 until the last federal troops left the South in 1877 (Goldfield, 2013). Many White southerners viewed Reconstruction as the North's attempt to humiliate and exact revenge on the South. Northern defenders of Reconstruction, however, argued that federal intervention was necessary to prevent Confederates from reinstituting slavery and the previous aristocracy in southern society (Brinkley, 1997).

Reconstruction led to the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, banning slavery in all U.S. states and territories. Black men also gained the right to vote in 1870, and federal laws provided civil rights protection for freed slaves.

Neither the Emancipation Proclamation (President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 edict that slaves in the Confederacy who could make their way into Union territory would be freed) nor Reconstruction provided Black citizens with legal protections or material resources to ensure their equality. They found themselves abandoned by the federal government and, for the remainder of the 19th century, had little power to resist the ongoing racism and oppression to which many were subjected. This era marked the beginning of the Ku Klux Klan in southern states and the passage of state Black Codes and local Jim Crow laws. Such laws were designed to replace Slave Codes, which had placed significant restrictions on all Black Americans, including those that were not slaves.

Black Codes, laws passed by southern states in 1865 and 1866, usually included a vagrancy provision, under which local authorities could arrest Blacks and commit them to involuntary labor for low wages. These laws also restricted the rights of Blacks to own property, conduct business, buy and lease land, and move freely though public spaces.

Jim Crow laws were federal laws used to enforce segregation of Whites and Blacks. The earliest such laws criminalized marriage between Whites and Blacks, provided penalties for intermarriage, and redefined Blackness as having one-eighth Black blood. Subsequent Jim Crow laws segregated schools, churches, and other public and private spaces, such as spaces on buses and other public transportation. Although public facilities were supposed to be separate but equal, Blacks were often afforded inferior facilities (Cassanello, 2013).

The landmark 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (in which Homer Plessy, a Black man, refused to give up his seat on a train to a White man) further solidified American acceptance of segregation. The court ruled that a state could legally enact legislation requiring different races to use segregated facilities. These laws were instrumental in shaping the civil rights movement.

Black Americans in the Early to Mid-20th Century

During World War I many Blacks served in the U.S. armed forces. However, their service did not win them improved status in postwar American society. By the time World War II came about, the union movement had also begun. In 1941 the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a union with primarily Black membership, demanded that the government require companies receiving defense contracts to integrate their workforces, and it planned a massive march on Washington, D.C., to mobilize support for its demands. President Franklin D. Roosevelt persuaded the union to cancel the march and, in turn, promised to form what became the Fair

Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to investigate discrimination against Blacks in war industries. The FEPC's enforcement powers were limited, but it was a symbolic victory for Black representation.

The need for labor in war plants greatly increased the migration of Blacks from rural areas of the South into industrial cities. It bettered the economic condition of many Black Americans, but it also created urban tensions and occasional violence.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s

One of the most important social movements of the 1960s was the initiative to produce justice and equality for Black Americans. President John F. Kennedy was sympathetic to the cause of racial justice, but he also feared alienating southern Democratic voters. His administration hoped to alleviate racial tensions by expanding enforcement of existing laws and supporting litigation to overturn segregation statutes (Brinkley, 1997).

Pivotal Events That Sparked the Movement

One of the first events that began the Black civil rights movement involved access to education. By the 1950s it was clear that segregation had impacted America's education system and that "separate but equal" was not providing equivalence in education. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) case came to the forefront of America's consciousness in a class-action suit known as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), in which cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware were united to argue against school segregation. Black students from those states were denied admission into schools with White children because of their race. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in the court's opinion that "in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. . . . We have now announced that such segregation is a denial of equal protection of the laws" (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954).

Underwood Photo Archives/SuperStock

Rosa Parks was a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement.

Shortly after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, civil rights activists prompted another event that challenged the concept of separate but equal. In 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, bus drivers required Black riders to move when there were no White-only seats left. On December 1, 1955, NAACP member Rosa Parks boarded a city bus and took a seat. When the White-only seats filled, the bus driver told four Black people to stand up and give their seats to the Whites. Three complied; Parks, in protest of the law, did not and she was arrested and jailed. She was soon released on bond, but her resistance was the catalyst for a citywide bus boycott. The boycott lasted for 381 days and severely damaged the transit company's finances. The city eventually repealed its law requiring segregation following the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the federal ruling of *Browder v. Gayle* (1956) that it was unconstitutional.

Another pivotal event occurred in February 1960, when Black college students staged a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. In the 4 months that followed, similar demonstrations spread throughout the South, forcing many merchants to integrate their facilities.

In 1961 an interracial group of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a student branch of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, working with the Congress of Racial Equality, began what they called "Freedom Rides." Traveling by bus throughout the South, they tried to force the desegregation of bus stations. In some locations Freedom Riders were met with such violence that President John F. Kennedy dispatched federal marshals and ordered the integration of all bus and train stations.

Numerous events in 1963 added to the civil rights movement's spread across the nation. That year King helped launch a series of nonviolent demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, a city strongly committed to segregation. The city police commissioner, Eugene "Bull" Connor, personally supervised a brutal effort to break up the peaceful marches. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested, and police used attack dogs, tear gas, electric cattle prods, and fire hoses—even against small children—as many in the nation watched televised reports in horror. In June Alabama governor George Wallace stood in a doorway at the University of Alabama to prevent the court-ordered enrollment of several Black students. He backed down only after federal marshals and the Alabama National Guard arrived. That same night, NAACP official Medgar Evers was murdered in Mississippi.

Later that summer, in August, more than 200,000 demonstrators marched down the mall in Washington, D.C., to generate support for civil rights legislation and to dramatize the power of the growing movement. Marchers gathered before the Lincoln Memorial for the largest civil rights demonstration in the nation's history. King stirred the crowd by delivering the most memorable speech of his career: his "I Have a Dream" speech.

New Civil Rights Legislation

These significant events resulted in important new pieces of civil rights legislation. In March 1961 President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925, which mandated nondiscrimination in government employment and required consideration of additional "affirmative steps" to ensure that no exclusion or discrimination took place "against any employee or application for employment in the Federal Government because of race, color, religion, or national origin" (Executive Order 10925, 1961). This executive order was the forerunner of affirmative action legislation and also created the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which later evolved into the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

As protests erupted across the nation in 1963, President Kennedy spoke on television about the "moral issue" facing the nation and introduced further legislation prohibiting segregation in public areas, barring discrimination in employment, and increasing the power of the federal government to file suit on behalf of school integration. Unfortunately, President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, 3 months after the march on Washington, D.C.; however, rather than squelching the movement, the tragedy gave new impetus to the passage of civil rights legislation. President Lyndon B. Johnson and other supporters of legislation Kennedy had proposed applied public and private pressure to members of Congress, and the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** became the most comprehensive civil rights bill in the nation's history.

The civil rights movement next turned its attention to Black voter registration in the South. The campaign, known as "Freedom Summer," produced a violent response from some southern Whites. Three of the first freedom workers to arrive in the South—two White men, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, and one Black man, James Chaney—were murdered.

A year later, in March 1965, King helped organize a major demonstration in Selma, Alabama, to help Blacks exercise their right to vote. Local police attacked the demonstrators, which—like the violence earlier in Birmingham—was televised to a horrified nation. Two northern Whites participating in the Selma march were murdered. The national outrage that followed helped push Johnson to propose and win passage of the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**, which provided federal protection to Black Americans attempting to vote.

Radical Approaches to Civil Rights

By the mid-1960s the issue of racial equality was moving out of the South and spreading to the rest of the nation. Battles to end job discrimination against Blacks followed; violence occurred on college campuses around the country (both for civil rights and against the Vietnam War); and race riots took place in the Watts section of Los Angeles, in New York City's Harlem district, and in Chicago and Cleveland. In the summer of 1967, eight major riots erupted, the largest of them a racial clash in Detroit in which 43 people died.

To some these events warranted a more radical approach to achieving civil rights. By 1968, disillusioned with the ideal of peaceful change that King had advocated, some Blacks became interested in the philosophy of Black Power. The term had many different meanings that ranged from a positive social and psychological emphasis on "Black is beautiful," to violent groups that stressed revolution to upend the White power structure. Overall, however, it marked a change away from the goal of assimilation and toward increased awareness of racial distinctiveness.

Black Power also took political form, and it created a deep schism within the civil rights movement. Traditional Black organizations that emphasized cooperation with sympathetic Whites—groups such as the NAACP, the National Urban League, and King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference—faced competition from more radical groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality.

These groups were joined by others, including Students for a Democratic Society, the Black Panthers, and the separatist group called the Nation of Islam (also known as the Black Muslims), which denounced Whites as "devils" and called for more radical and violent action against the racism of White society.

The most influential of the Black Muslims was Malcolm Little, who adopted the name Malcolm X (to denote his lost African surname). As Dierenfield and White (2012) indicate, he was once dubbed "the angriest Negro in America" (p. 181) by White publications. In his autobiography Malcolm X did not deny the charge. In his words, "When the law fails to protect Negroes from whites' attack, then those Negroes should use arms, if necessary, to defend themselves" (Malcolm X, Haley, & Shabazz, 1987, p. 373). Malcolm X was killed in 1965 by Black gunmen, presumably under orders from rivals within the Nation of Islam. He remains as important to many Black Americans as Martin Luther King Jr.—who was assassinated on April 4, 1968, while he stood on the balcony of his motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

King's death produced an outpouring of grief and anger throughout the country, and major riots broke out in more than 60 American cities. Forty-three people died, more than 34,000 suffered injuries, and as many as 27,000 people were arrested. The civil rights movement spurred a mix of emotions for many Americans as it highlighted how some people found freedom and safety in the United States while others experienced and continue to experience inequality and peril. Fifty years after King's death, while some policies and social movements have reduced barriers and disparities, some research and personal stories continue to portray an America that holds on to a culture of microaggressions, inequality, and White privilege.

7.6 The Women's Liberation Movement

In addition to the Native American and Civil Rights movements, the women's movement has been one of the most effective and prominent social movements in U.S. history. At the nation's birth, the rights protected under the U.S. Constitution were fully enjoyed only by White males. Women were treated according to social tradition and English common law, which meant they could not vote, own property, keep their own wages, or have custody of their children. In a letter from Abigail Adams to her husband and future president of the United States, John Adams, she urged him to "remember the ladies" (as cited in Francis, 2014, para. 2) when he and the other founding fathers drafted the Constitution. However, it was nearly a century before significant changes to the Constitution recognized women's rights.

Early Efforts Toward Equality

Feminism can be generally defined as the advocacy for political, social, and economic equality for women, in comparison to men. The first public demand for equality came in 1848 at the first women's rights convention in New York. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, abolitionists working to end slavery, convened a 2-day meeting of 300 women and men to call for justice for women as well as for Blacks. They were widely ridiculed for their efforts.

Everett Collection/SuperStock

Suffragists fought for decades to win the right to vote. Here members of the National Women's Party demonstrate outside the White House in 1918.

After the Civil War Stanton joined with activists Susan B. Anthony and Sojourner Truth, and they fought in vain to have women included in new constitutional amendments giving rights to former slaves. The 15th Amendment to the Constitution declared that "the right of citizens . . . to vote shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (as cited in Francis, 2014, para. 5), but women of all races were still denied voting rights. In 1872 Anthony voted anyway. She went to the polls in Rochester, New York, and cast a ballot in the presidential elections. She was arrested, tried, convicted, and fined $100, which she refused to pay.

Until the end of their lives, Stanton and Anthony campaigned for a constitutional amendment for women's **suffrage**, or right to vote, but they died without seeing their dream realized. Finally, in 1919 the 19th Amendment affirming women's right to vote passed Congress, and it was ratified in August 1920. To date, it is the only specific written guarantee of women's equal rights in the U.S. Constitution.

A Second Wave of Feminism

Despite constituting more than 50% of the population, during the 1960s and 1970s many women began to identify with minority groups and demand freedom from oppression. At the time, one historian writes, "sexual discrimination was so deeply embedded in the fabric of society that when feminists first began to denounce it, many men (and even many women) responded with bafflement and anger" (Brinkley, 1997, p. 872). By the mid-1970s, however, public awareness of the issue had increased greatly, and women's role in American life began to change rapidly and dramatically.

Women in the Workforce

Several generations of women in the late 19th and early 20th century were raised to believe that it was possible to hold jobs as teachers or nurses, but such roles were secondary to their primary ones as wives and mothers. Other professions were usually not available to them. Additionally, women who were not married by the age of 25 or 30 were pitied and stigmatized as "spinsters" or "old maids."

Social norms shifted somewhat to accommodate the war effort during World War II. Women entered the workforce in large numbers to fill the gap left by men who were deployed overseas. However, when men returned after the war, those women who did not give up their jobs and return to their homes experienced significant social pressure. They were often shamed for taking jobs away from men, since men were expected to provide the income for the family.

The Feminine Mystique

Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, is often cited as the first book to spur the women's liberation movement in the latter part of the 20th century. Friedan had been a writer for women's magazines in the 1950s and traveled around the country interviewing women who had graduated with her from Smith College. Most of them were living out the dream that postwar American society had set for them: They were affluent wives and mothers living in comfortable suburbs. Yet many were deeply frustrated and unhappy, with no outlets for their intelligence, talent, and, for those who possessed it, their education. By chronicling their unhappiness, Friedan's book gave the women's liberation movement a voice.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, which brought national attention to sexual discrimination and helped create important networks of feminist activists who would become engaged in political processes, many for the first time. Kennedy's administration also helped win passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, which barred the pervasive practice of paying women less than men for equal work. A year later Congress incorporated into the Civil Rights Act of 1964 an amendment—Title VII—that extended to women many of the same legal protections against discrimination that were extended to Blacks.

The National Organization for Women

In 1966 Friedan joined with other feminists to create the National Organization for Women, which would become the nation's largest and most influential feminist organization. It lobbied for greater educational opportunities for women and denounced the domestic ideal and traditional concept that a woman's place was in the home as a wife and mother.

The focus of the women's liberation movement, at least in the beginning, was on women in the workplace. NOW denounced the exclusion of women from professions and politics, and discrimination against them in countless other areas of American life. At the time, both single and married women were routinely denied bank loans or credit cards in their own names, and married women often could not transact business or execute legal contracts without the permission or signature of their spouses.

Regardless of their education, ambition, or experience, women were routinely denied management positions and relegated to secretarial or low-level administrative positions—with the rationale that they might become pregnant and quit work. Even in their activism women experienced discrimination: Those who became involved in the civil rights movement or the antiwar movement, for example, often faced exclusion and were subordinated to male leaders.

Gloria Steinem and Other Feminists

There were several important leaders of the women's liberation movement. Gloria Steinem is a writer and activist organizer who has been involved in the feminist movement for more than 40 years. In 1972 Steinem cofounded *Ms*. magazine as a publication for women and controlled by women. The publication's name stemmed from a controversy at that time over what an appropriate title should be for women. Many women did not want

to be defined by their marital status, and the titles *Miss* and *Mrs*. were inappropriate for the growing number of women who kept their last name after marriage. *Ms*. magazine helped popularize the title that is today considered proper etiquette for addressing women, especially in the workplace. Steinem was also instrumental in founding several women's political and informational organizations, including the Women's Action Alliance, the Women's Media Center, and Voters for Choice (Gloria Steinem Official Website, 2010).

Steinem was one of several important women who contributed to a new form of feminism, known as **radical feminism**, which sought to address gender inequality by exploring gender roles, identities, and social and political injustices (Tong, 1989). Radical feminists such as Mary Daly deconstructed gender roles and spoke of ways to redefine society by taking back some of the language used to minimize women's bodies and minds. Radical feminists also suggested that matriarchal societies (versus the patriarchal ones) could change how the world functioned by transitioning away from warrior societies to more egalitarian government.

Although not all women shared the views of radical feminists, many did see themselves as an exploited group and thus banded together against oppression. The women's liberation movement inspired the creation of grassroots organizations and activities in which feminist women opened businesses and founded newspapers and magazines. The movement also spurred the creation of centers to assist victims of rape and abuse, women's health and family planning clinics, as well as day care centers.

Gains of the 1970s and 1980s

During the women's liberation movement, the nation's major all-male educational institutions such as Princeton and Yale began to open their doors to women, and some women's colleges began accepting male students. Nearly half of all married women held jobs by the mid-1970s, and almost 90% of all women with college degrees worked (Brinkley, 1997).

Some middle-class women postponed marriage or motherhood for the sake of their careers—rejecting stereotypes that intelligent women "scare off" possible suitors. If they did marry, they were frequently warned that they should not threaten their husband's ego by earning more than he did. The two-career family, in which both the husband and wife maintained active professional lives, was becoming a widely accepted middle-class norm, although many women felt guilty that they were neglecting their "wifely duties" or their children by working.

Women began to compete effectively with men in 1970s politics for both elected and appointive positions. By the mid-1980s women were serving in both houses of Congress, on the Supreme Court, in numerous federal cabinet positions, as governors of several states, and in many other political positions.

In 1971 the government extended its affirmative action guidelines to include women, officially acknowledging that both racism and sexism were social problems. Women were also making rapid progress moving into the economic and political mainstream, helped in large measure by discrimination charges against some major American corporations that resulted in court settlements and the placement of more qualified women into management positions in organizations and businesses.

The Equal Rights Amendment

Early women's rights activist Alice Stokes Paul believed that an equal rights amendment that affirmed the equal application of the Constitution to all citizens was necessary. In 1923 at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the 1848 women's rights convention, Paul introduced such an amendment. However, she died without seeing the amendment become the law of the land.

In 1972 Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. The amendment consisted of simple language, as shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Provisions of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Section 1:	Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
Section 2:	The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
Section 3:	This amendment shall take effect 2 years after the date of ratification.

The amendment was introduced in every session of Congress from 1923 until it finally passed in 1972 as a proposed 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, Congress placed a 7-year deadline for the amendment to be ratified by a required 38 states. This deadline was later extended an additional 3 years, until June 30, 1982.

For a while, ratification seemed almost certain. However, by the late 1970s the momentum behind the amendment had died, not because of indifference but because of a growing chorus of objections, including from many women. Opposition came from those who defended traditional female roles in society and those who feared the amendment would require women to serve in the military, potentially in combat roles (Brinkley, 1997).

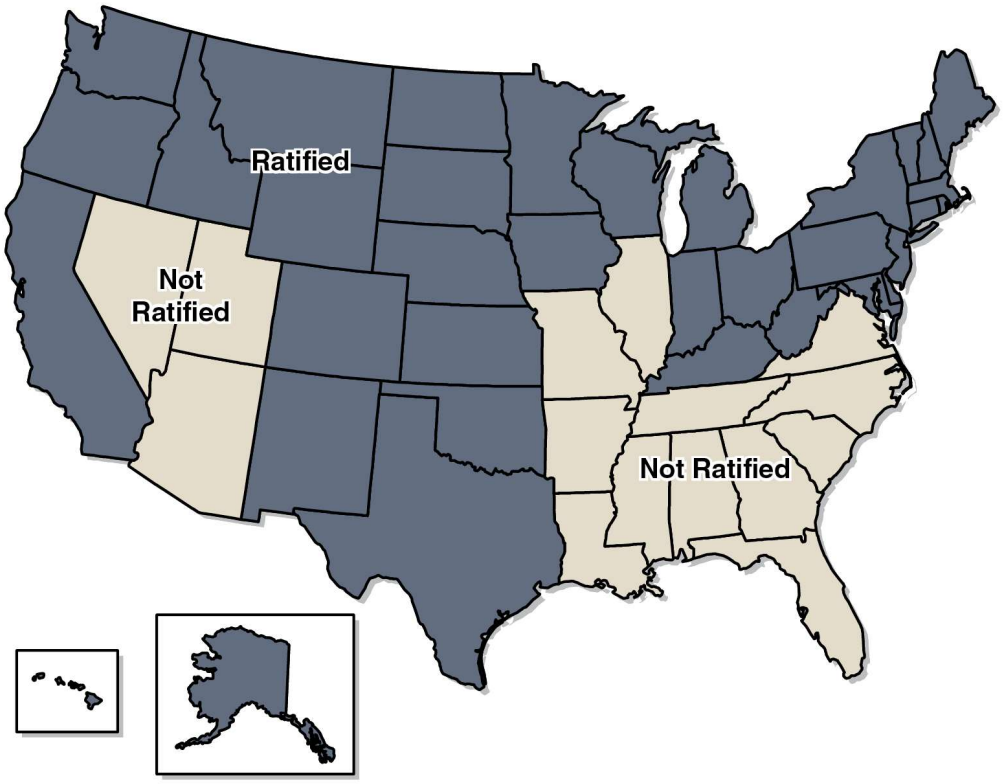
Another key issue central to the ERA debate was legislation that protected women from employment deemed too physically demanding for them, or those that regulated the hours a woman could work so she would have time to care for her children. According to Christine Blackerby (2013) of the Center for Legislative Archives in Washington, D.C., those who supported this protective legislation worried that an equal rights amendment would void these laws. Others argued that passing the amendment would repeal laws that protected women from sexual assault, enabled them to be awarded alimony, allowed them to obtain abortions, or would change the tendency for mothers to win custody of their children in divorce cases.

It was also feared that the ERA would herald the elimination of single-sex bathrooms, the legalization of homosexual marriages, and the disruption of traditional social patterns. States' rights advocates argued that the ERA was a federal power grab, and businesses such as the insurance industry opposed it because they believed it would cost them money. The ERA was also opposed by fundamentalist religious groups that believed it threatened traditional values (Francis, 2014).

The opposition was effective. In 1977 Indiana became the 35th and so far the last state to ratify the ERA. Figure 7.1 shows which states ratified the amendment before its expiration.

Figure 7.1: States that have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment

At the deadline for ratification, the Equal Rights Amendment had been ratified by 35 states, 3 states short of the 38 required to add it to the U.S. Constitution.



Source: Used with permission of the Alice Paul Institute **www.equalrightsamendment.org (http://www.equalrightsamendment.org)**

Although 21 states have a version of the ERA in their state constitutions, the federal amendment died in 1982 when the 10 years allotted for its ratification expired.

The amendment has been reintroduced in every session of Congress since 1982; it was introduced several times in the 113th Congress, in both the original form—requiring ratification by all 50 states—and in a modified form—upholding earlier ratifications and requiring only an additional 3 states' approval (Alice Paul Institute, n.d.). Proponents of the ERA are vowing to continue to fight to enact the amendment, but it has yet to pass.

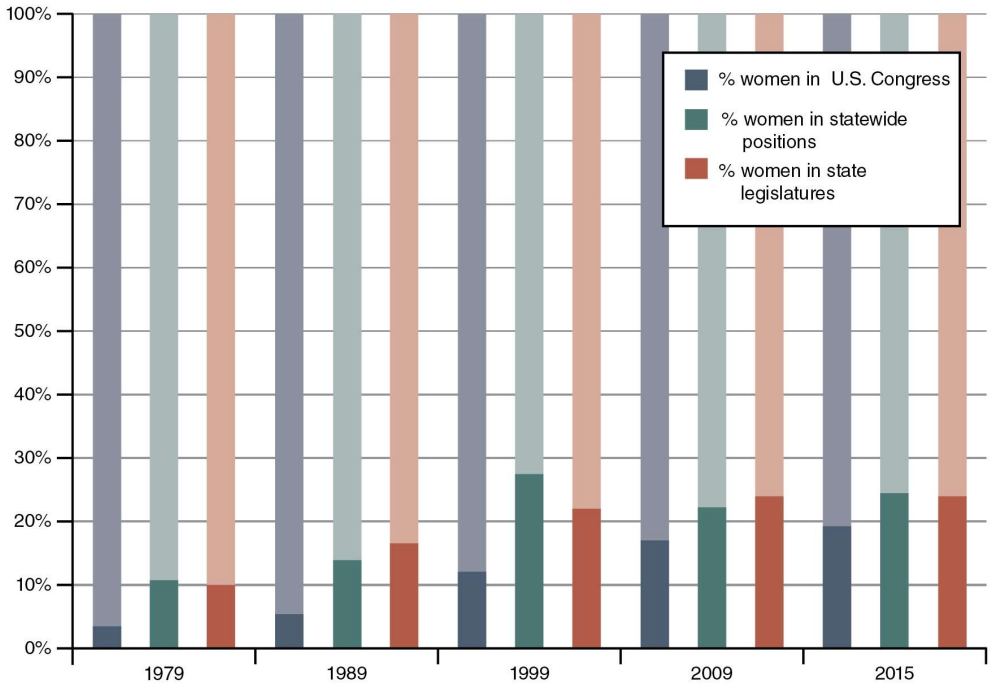
Current Status

Despite the progress made by the women's liberation movement, women in the United States are still on unequal footing with men. In the workplace, women continue to earn 77% of what men earn (U.S Census Bureau, 2012), despite equal pay legislation. In terms of workplace leadership, men continue to dominate. In 2013 women held just 22% of senior management positions in the United States (Grant Thornton, 2014). Female representation is even lower in top positions at corporations. Only 23 women held CEO positions at S&P 500 corporations at the start of 2015 (Catalyst, 2015b). Women also accounted for 19.2% of board members at S&P 500 corporations in 2014 (Catalyst, 2015a), a fraction of those positions held by their male counterparts.

Women also continue to be underrepresented in politics. Despite accounting for half of the U.S. population, women hold a minority of appointed and elected governmental positions. At the start of 2015, women held 33% of the seats in the U.S. Supreme Court, 19.4% of the seats in Congress, and 23.6% of statewide executive elected positions (Center for American Women and Politics, n.d.). Figure 7.2 shows that the percentage of women in elective offices has increased over the past few decades, but is still unequal to that of men.

Figure 7.2: Percentage of women in elective office, selected years

The number of women in elected offices has grown in the past half century, but women continue to be significantly underrepresented at all levels of government.



Source: Based on data from Center for American Women and Politics, 2015.

7.7 Hispanic Activism

People who come to the United States from a Spanish-speaking (some also include Portuguese-speaking) country are often clustered together into the *Hispanic*, *Latino*, or *Chicano* category. These terms vary throughout the nation, and each comes with its own element of pride or disdain. Although some members of the community embrace one term or another, there are an equal number who are uncomfortable with the label. For the purpose of this text, we will use the government's selected word, *Hispanic*.

Challenge of Unifying Activism

The Hispanic population is the fastest growing group in the United States and includes individuals from the Caribbean, South and Central America, and Europe. One challenge to clustering this group in a section about activism is that it is diverse in and of itself. Although other groups also have individual differences, most of their activism has been united. Hispanics also have not had as long an activist history as other groups. Blacks, women, and Native Americans have been instrumental in laying the foundation for Hispanics to organize into a single group, but that activism is relatively new to seeking policy changes.

The Hispanic populations have decentralized issues because of the nature of their activism. Their activist causes are fueled by the politics surrounding their countries of origin or stem from their desire to differentiate themselves from other Hispanic American groups. Activism from Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, or South and Central American populations each comes with a different set of political influences, beliefs, customs, and traditions. Still, research has shown that many Hispanic populations have unifying identifications, the primary of which is their Spanish-speaking origin and how they define themselves in terms of their birthplace (or the birthplace of their parents or grandparents) (Zimmerman et al., 1994). Another strong cultural value representative of Hispanic populations is the concept of *familismo*. *Familismo* is a way to define a strong connection to family, "both nuclear and extended, and requires members to prioritize family over individual interests" (Espinoza, 2010, p. 318). These two factors together shape the cultural connects of the Hispanic population.

Organizing for Equal Rights

Michael Salas/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images

César Chávez's activism helped improve the working conditions of Hispanic farmworkers in the West and Southwest.

Like other groups we have discussed, many Hispanics began organizing for political and economic power in the 1960s. Affluent Hispanics in Miami filled influential positions in business and local government. In the Southwest, Mexican Americans were elected to seats in Congress and to governorships. In the 1960s the Southwest Council of La Raza was formed to assist with issues of education and housing for Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. However, these efforts were overshadowed by the national prominence of the Black and Women's movements (National Council of La Raza, n.d.).

One of the most visible efforts to organize Hispanics occurred in California, where César Chávez, an Arizona-born farmworker of Mexican descent, created an effective union of itinerant farmworkers: the United Farm Workers (UFW) (Brinkley, 1997). Chávez was an important figure in changing perspectives of the Hispanic population. His activism, which largely consisted of nonviolent protests, marches, and boycotts, was seen as a way for Hispanics to showcase their strength and unity, and they did so using their focus on family and *la causa*. Translated literally, *la causa* means "the cause," but the term represented a call to recognize human dignity for workers and their

families. Creating the UFW was about more than achieving better pay and working conditions; it was also about recognizing the importance and dignity of farmworkers and their families (UFW, n.d.).

Current Status

Although not as organized or influential as the civil rights movement, Hispanic activism has made inroads into changing American public policy. For most Hispanics, however, the path to economic and political power has been difficult. There continues to be a tenor of negativity in the United States that casts Hispanic populations as poor, illegal, or immigrant. Many Hispanics try to separate themselves from such stereotypes by rejecting their connection to their Spanish heritages, especially by not speaking Spanish. By attempting to become more "American," the Hispanic population continues to struggle. Although others might define them as one entity, many members of this group are not interested in adopting a single Hispanic identity, thus making them slow to develop political influence in proportion to their numbers.

Despite this, the Hispanic community has taken strides toward political advocacy. The National Council of La Raza is the largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. The organization works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans through applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy. Among the most important issues are concerns for more representation in government, access to education, and opportunities for success.

One of the most pressing issues for Hispanic activists at this time is access to, and the exercise of, voting rights. As of 2014, 34 states had passed voter ID laws requiring identification prior to casting a vote (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014), which opponents argue disproportionately limits the ability of eligible minority voters to exercise their right to vote. According to a 2012 report from the New York School of Law's Brennan Center for Justice, these voter ID laws are especially burdensome on eligible minority voters because those individuals are less likely than the general public to possess ID cards (Gaskins & Iyer, 2012). That same report found that in just 10 states with voter ID laws, half a million eligible Hispanic voters lived more than 10 miles from the nearest office open more than 2 days a week that would issue free IDs; many of these individuals did not own vehicles and had limited access to transportation. These challenges, coupled with concerns over family members' immigration status, language barriers, and stereotypes, create a fear and apathy among Hispanic voters that activists are currently struggling to overcome.

7.8 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

Of all the liberation efforts to emerge from the 1960s, the attempt by the LGBTQ community to win political and economic rights (and also social acceptance) constituted one of the most controversial challenges to the traditional American values of the time. Homosexuality has been a generally unacknowledged reality through most of American history (Brinkley, 1997).

In the 1940s Dr. Alfred Kinsey conducted extensive research on the science of human sexual behavior. In 1948 he created the Kinsey Scale, by which he accounted for the fact that people did not "fit" into either heterosexual or homosexual categories, but rather fell along a continuum. Kinsey's work was used to discuss human sexuality and, along with the counterculture movement, helped popularize the idea of free love and sexual exploration and experimentation. Even with this, however, nonheterosexual men and women were forced for generations either to suppress their sexuality, exercise it surreptitiously, or live within isolated and often persecuted communities.

The Counterculture and New Societal Norms and Values

A new youth culture, which developed during the turbulence of 1966 to 1969, was openly scornful of the values and conventions of middle-class society and the preceding generations. They pressed for racial unity; sang for peace, love, and harmony; and offered a fundamental challenge to the prevailing American middle-class mainstream culture. The most visible characteristics of this counterculture were a change in lifestyle, nonconventional clothing, smoking marijuana, using hallucinogens such as LSD or heroin, and adoption of a more permissive view of sex and sexuality in general.

The so-called hippies who dominated the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, as well as the "dropouts" who formed communes in rural communities, rejected modern society and attempted to find refuge in a simpler, more natural existence close to nature. A new set of social norms emerged that emphasized personal fulfillment.

The counterculture was a way for individuals to express themselves against the restrictions of earlier times. It was a search for freedom of expression and experimentation with altering perspectives. Harvard professor Timothy Leary was an iconic leader of the movement and was able to capture the essence of the hippie movement in his mantra "turn on, tune in, drop out," which characterized the psychedelic movement's use of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs as a way to escape current realities and see the world from different perspectives. Leary's philosophical viewpoints were so influential among young people, and so different from the values held by the previous generation, that Richard Nixon called Leary the "most dangerous man in America" (as cited in Higgs, 2013, p. 3).

The Stonewall Riots

On June 27, 1969, police officers raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay nightclub in New York City's Greenwich Village, which was the center of New York's gay community. Police began arresting patrons simply for being there. Outraged by this blatant police attack on the gay population, patrons and onlookers responded by taunting the police and then attacking them. Someone started a fire in the club, almost trapping the police inside. Rioting continued throughout the neighborhood during much of the night. The Stonewall Riots, as the event came to be known, was the pivotal event that marked the beginning of the gay liberation movement.

Gay Activism

By the late 1960s the success of other social movements helped encourage gay men and lesbians to fight for focus on their own rights. Gay rights organizations—among them the Gay Liberation Front, founded in New York in 1969—sprung up around the country. Gay activists had some success in challenging the long-standing attitude that homosexuality was aberrant behavior, and they argued that no sexual orientation was any more normal than another. Perhaps most importantly, the movement helped many people "come out," expressing their sexuality openly and unapologetically, and demand that gay relationships be considered as significant and worthy of respect as heterosexual ones.

DavidSweetPhotography/Moment/Getty Images

The Castro District became very influential in San Francisco's political structure, and the city's populace was the first in California to elect an openly gay individual to public office.

A large gay population began to form in the Castro District of San Francisco and became very influential in the city's political structure. A member of this community, Harvey Bernard Milk, was elected to the city's board of supervisors in 1977. He became the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California, but he was assassinated 11 months later, along with San Francisco mayor George Moscone. Despite his short time as San Francisco city supervisor, Milk was successful in sponsoring a civil rights bill that outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation. The bill was hailed as one of the strongest and most encompassing in the nation (Ledbetter, 1978).

Current Status

In recent years gay and lesbian activists have made great strides in achieving cultural and public policy changes toward workplace equity and legalizing same-sex marriage in the United States and around the globe. Bisexual, queer, and transgender communities, however, have not yet achieved significant public policy regarding their interests. The future of LGBTQ rights and public dialogue about this important group of people has largely yet to be written.

Still, there are many different levels of advocacy in the LGBTQ community, from advocating for children through groups such as the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, which helps schools, parents, teachers, and students treat each other with respect regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity; to larger organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, which actively campaigns for LGBTQ equal rights. Each of these organizations has a plethora of resources to discuss current efforts.