

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP OF LESBIAN AND GAY IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

John Wiley Lynch, Master of Arts, 2005

Thesis Directed By: Dr. Margaretha Lucas, Associate Professor  
Department of Counseling and Personnel Services

This study investigated the relationship between gay and lesbian identity development and involvement in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organizations. Eighty nine undergraduate and graduate students who self identified as gay, lesbian, or questioning were surveyed at a large, mid-Atlantic, state university. The Gay and Lesbian Identity Questionnaire (Revised) (Fassinger, 2001a; Fassinger, 2001b) was used to measure identity development. An instrument was created to measure involvement. No significant relationship was found between identity development and level of involvement. However, it was found that participants with more integrated identities showed a preference for support and social type organizations over education and cultural organizations. There were also significant relationships between age, coming out, and gay and lesbian identity development. Implications for theory and practice and directions for future research were examined.

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INVOLVEMENT IN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

by

John Wiley Lynch

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Advisory Committee:

Dr. Margaretha Lucas, Associate Professor, Chair  
Dr. Susan R. Komives, Associate Professor  
Dr. James Davidson "Dusty" Porter

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## CHAPTER I

A great deal of discussion and research has surrounded involvement in higher education literature, particularly over the past several decades. Much of the energy behind this interest in involvement has to do with its many positive outcomes (Kuh, et al., 1991). Participation in extracurricular activities complements classroom learning. It provides an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned. Involvement also contributes to the development of the individual. Through deep involvement in organizations students learn about leadership (Komives, et al., 2004). Finally, high involvement can also lead to better retention (Tinto, 1993). Students who are involved with campus activities have a stronger social integration into the institution, and based on the model created by Tinto, are more likely to be retained.

Astin (1984) was one of the first to promote the importance of involvement in the learning experience of college students. He believed that colleges needed to encourage their students to become more involved to enhance their learning and development. Kuh et al. (1991) followed up Astin's ideas with suggestions and best practices on how colleges can promote involvement. In this work they focus on environment and structure. Other research has begun to look at the role that students' current development affects their involvement. Even though involvement affects development, the reverse is also true. For example, studies have shown that identity development can affect involvement in identity based organizations; that involvement then contributes to further reflection on that identity.

The topic of involvement in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is timely and relevant to both practitioners and researchers. A number of

LGBT issues have entered the national debate. At the same time, research and literature have begun to explore the role of culture and identity in leadership and organizational behavior. In particular, the literature on the processes of leadership and activism in LGBT organizations and the broader LGBT community has significantly increased over the past decade.

Though the LGBT community has sought equity in public policy for many years it has been only in the late 1990s and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that the community has made considerable advances. Some of the recent issues affecting the LGBT community include non-discrimination, domestic partnership benefits, and marriage rights. The Supreme Court striking down sodomy laws in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) and the Massachusetts Supreme Court allowing same sex marriage in Massachusetts in the case, *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (2003), are examples of the advances made. However, the passage of eleven state constitutional amendments defining marriage as between a man and woman is an example of a major set back during the 2004 campaign. At this point in the gay rights movement, there is a high need for members of the LGBT community to become involved.

Much political, legal, and sociological literature has been produced to discuss these current LGBT challenges, how best to achieve the goals, and what the implications would be for the LGBT community and society in general if the goals are achieved. At universities strategies have been developed for LGBT campus communities to work toward achieving campus equity and acceptance of LGBT individuals (Destinon, Wall, & Evans, 2000; Shepard, Yeskel, & Outcalt, 1996; Simpkins, 2001; Wall, Washington, Evans, & Papish, 2000). The LGBT Campus Organizing manual produced by the

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, in particular, has provided information to practitioners and student organizers on how to mobilize the campus LGBT community (Shepard et al., 1996).

LGBT communities exist on every college campus. These communities include students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and members in the surrounding geographical area. There are many ways that students can be involved in the LGBT community at their campus. The most easily identifiable form of involvement is participation in formal and non-formal organizations.

LGBT groups tend to be formally organized, and they exist primarily to serve the needs of the LGBT students on their campus. These groups realize that their members have common experiences around discrimination, harassment, and loneliness due to their sexual orientation and gender identity (Outcalt, 1998). These common negative experiences create a need for an organization that supports and advocates for the members of this community (Wall, Washington, Evans, & Papish, 2000).

Some campus LGBT communities are more organized than others. Depending on the culture of the institution, some groups have to remain unofficial. At the University of West Georgia, for example, the student organization is limited to just a few active members. The University of California, Berkeley, on the other hand, has multiple LGBT student organizations—many of which either fulfill a specific purpose or serve a specific sub-group of the LGBT community (Mallory, 1998).

Based on the observations of practitioners, LGBT campus organizations face many challenges. Externally, being on a campus and in the structure of the institution, a student organization must contend with the campus environment toward LGBT issues

and the rules and procedures of the school (Outcalt, 1998). Internal challenges consist of preparing leaders, recruiting and retaining members, and developing a shared vision. (Outcalt, 1998). Over time, these challenges may negatively impact the organization's continuity and ability to create positive change amongst its members and the community. Outcalt (1998) described a four part cycle to LGBT organizations: 1) they begin with enthusiasm; 2) they flourish with many accomplishments and a growing membership; 3) infighting sets in and leaders leave due to burnout; 4) finally, the group disbands with disaffected, former members. There is only a brief time period of success and change before the group runs into problems that often impede its ability to do anything. Any long lasting change is aborted, and a new group that comes along must re-invent the wheel, only to go through the same cycle once more. An organization that should be contributing to the campus community then struggles to exist.

Along with Outcalt's description of how organizations may end (1998), there are also many success stories and best practices suggested by advisors working with organizations. Unfortunately, only a few research studies exist that have considered how lesbian and gay students organize themselves in LGBT campus organizations and how they become successful. Porter (1998a) looked at the role of sexual identity development on LGB leaders' self-efficacy in transformational leadership in the context of LGBT organizations and heterosexual dominant organizations. In a longitudinal study that is still underway, Renn and Bilodeau (2002, 2003) study the long term impact of leadership involvement in LGBT organizations on LGBT identity development. Both of these studies add a better understanding to the nature of LGBT leadership and organizations,

and their findings, which will be further discussed in Chapter 2, may provide suggestions on how to create and maintain successful LGBT organizations.

### Purpose of Study

There has been some research into LGBT organizations and leadership in these organizations (Porter, 1998a; Renn & Bilodeau, 2002, 2003), but no research has explored the levels of involvement in LGBT organizations and how sexual identity development relates to involvement. This study has sought to fill this gap in the research.

This study focused specifically on university students who self identify as lesbian and gay or who are questioning their sexual orientation. Bieschke, Eberz, and Wilson (2000) recommend that researchers carefully consider whether to include bisexuals or transgender individuals in studies on lesbian and gay students. The researcher realizes the importance of studying all members of the LGBT community; traditionally, only the gay and lesbian portion of the community have been studied in research. While this study does not wish to continue giving attention to only a segment of the community, it was decided to exclude bisexuals from the sample and not to address the identity development of transgender students. This was done for several reasons. First, the focus is on sexual orientation, not gender identity. Some models have been proposed for transgender identity (Bolin, 1992; Etscovitz, 1997), but neither of these have gained much credibility yet in the field. Transgender students could also self identify as gay, lesbian, or questioning, and those that did were included in the sample, but the study did not address their development as transgender individuals. Second, most sexual identity development models address the experiences of gay and lesbian individuals, not bisexuals. Some models do encapsulate the development of bisexuals (D'Augelli, 1994), but none of these

models have assessment instruments. Finally, to achieve stronger internal validity bisexuals were taken out. Even though some previous studies that focus on lesbian and gay issues have included bisexuals in their samples, it was decided that including them would leave conclusions questionable.

### Problem Statement and Research Question

Theories of gay and lesbian identity development suggest that students at a certain stage of identity development are likely to be involved in LGBT organizations. However, there have not been any studies that have confirmed this prediction for LGBT student organizations. Nor has any study investigated the relationship of identity development and the type of LGBT involvement. This study, focused on the relationship of identity development and participation specifically in LGBT organizations, addressed this gap in the research literature and informs the understanding of organizational dynamics in LGBT student groups.

The research question was: how does lesbian/gay identity development relate to the level and type of involvement in LGBT campus organizations and activities? The null hypotheses tested were: 1) there is no difference in time of involvement in LGBT organizations among varying phases of sexual identity development; 2) there is no correlation between time, breadth, and depth of involvement in LGBT organizations and the scores of sexual identity development phases; and 3) there is no difference in the type of involvement (such as advocacy, support, social, education, and cultural) based on sexual identity development.

### Definitions and Variables



The three primary variables in this study included gay and lesbian identity development, level of involvement, and type of involvement in LGBT organizations. Identity development and level of involvement had multiple measurements.

For gay and lesbian identity development, this study used the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1998). This model has two branches of identity development: the individual sexual identity (which describes one's sense of self as a sexual individual) and group membership identity (how one identifies with other gays and lesbians). The instrument for this model provides multiple measurements that were used to define development in this study.

Level of involvement was defined by three sub-variables: time, depth of involvement, and breadth of involvement. Time was the amount of time an individual spent with LGBT organizations. Depth was the degree to which an individual was involved in specific organizations. The four levels of depth of involvement were "no involvement," "spectator," "participants," and "leader" (University of Maryland, 2004, <http://www.union.umd.edu/diversity/index.html>). These terms were borrowed from the programming model at the University of Maryland and are further defined in Chapter 3. Breadth was defined by the number of organizations with which an individual is involved.

Finally, type of involvement was defined by the type(s) of organization(s) with which the individual was involved. The categories of organizations were based on an adaptation on the list of LGBT organizations proposed by Mallory (1998): advocacy, support, education, social, cultural and other.

## Significance of Study

The results of this study add to the understanding of lesbian and gay identity development, involvement, and the membership dynamics of LGBT organizations. In terms of lesbian and gay identity development, the behavior of college students in specific phases of development gives a more accurate description to the phases of development often cited in research. For involvement, this study gives a clearer understanding of how participation can be assessed in specific organizations. Involvement in extracurricular activities have been an important area of research in student affairs, but not many assessment instruments have been used to assess individual involvement in organizations. Though the instrument developed for this study was designed for LGBT organizational involvement at a specific institution, perhaps future researchers will be able to adapt it for other student organizations, volunteer groups, and identity based organizations.

In addition to contributing to theory and research, this study is useful for practitioners. By having a framework to understand involvement, advisors to LGBT groups can be more intentional in advising and supporting LGBT groups as these organizations struggle with recruiting and retaining members and increasing membership participation. Student leaders can also benefit from this study as they confront the challenges of running an LGBT group.

Outcalt (1998) noted several problematic characteristics of LGBT organizations. Most of these problems stem from the dynamics between the positional leaders and the members. The leaders often err by taking on too much responsibility without delegating and pursuing their own agendas without keeping the membership involved in the decision

making process. The members come to rely on the leaders to make decisions, plan, and do the work. This is usually because those leaders see themselves as the primary doers in the organization. They retain all the responsibility of the group. There is no shared sense of involvement or responsibility in the organization.

At times, one or two strong leaders can be very useful for organizations. Some leaders are quite charismatic, and for a membership that is looking for an LGBT role model, a charismatic leader can be very appealing. Unfortunately, in these cases the group's effectiveness is dependent on the leader's attention to it (Outcalt, 1998). Over time, the leader can become disillusioned as the group does not succeed to the extent he or she wants it to, and since the leader identifies so closely with the group he or she becomes discouraged. Leaders then can start to feel burnout. Outcalt described burnout as the "tendency to work harder while accomplishing less and feeling worse" (p. 331). Eventually that leader will leave, and their energy, knowledge, and skills will go with them. Since the group is so dependent on this leader, the group falters as well. A strong leader may be effective over the short term, but over the long term an organization needs an active membership. This study helps LGBT students better understand how the identity development of their peers can affect their involvement.

Finally, by better understanding how to involve lesbian and gay students in organizations, student affairs practitioners can potentially improve retention of lesbian and gay students. Tinto (1993) suggested that a major factor in retention is establishing a social connection to the university. By encouraging lesbian and gay students to become involved, practitioners could potentially improve the likelihood of those students being retained.

## CHAPTER II

### Chapter Overview

The following is an overview of what is known and theorized about lesbian and gay college students, LGBT organizations, lesbian and gay identity development, and the relationship of identity development and involvement. In this chapter it will be shown that despite a growing amount of research on lesbian and gay students and culture based organizations of other minority groups (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender), there has yet to be any research on the role that identity development plays in involvement in LGBT organizations. There is a clear gap in the literature that this study intends to fill.

#### Lesbian and Gay Students

To gain a better understanding of lesbian and gay students, their collegiate experiences need to be examined. A growing amount of research has been conducted on these experiences, especially in the last decade. Most of this research has focused on campus climate issues and lesbian and gay identity development. Unfortunately, not much research has been done on lesbian and gay involvement.

Several quantitative and qualitative studies have researched the experiences of lesbian and gay college students (Baier, Rosenzweig, & Whipple, 1991; D'Augelli, 1989; D'Augelli, 1992; Herek, 1993; Lopez & Chism, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Reynolds, 1989). These studies consistently have shown that lesbian and gay students experience harassment and discrimination across campus and are less likely to view the campus as welcoming or safe. In addition to these studies, many institutions have conducted assessments of their own campuses to determine the climate toward LGBT issues. These assessments often find the same results suggested by the research literature (Bieschke,

Eberz, & Wilson, 2000). Often campus activists will use these assessments as a first step in establishing a need for LGBT programming or more funding and support for the LGBT organizations (Destinon, Evans, & Wall, 2000).

In addition to the negative experiences, lesbian and gay students have had many positive ones, too. Despite all of the negative experiences, many lesbian and gay students have persisted in higher education and graduated—though there is no research that shows retention rates of lesbian and gay students. There has been an increase in the number of “lavender graduations” across the country as well as the attendance at these events (Sanlo, 2000). Designed to recognize those members of the LGBT community (who are either LGBT or straight allies) who have persisted to graduation, these ceremonies celebrate the uniqueness and excellence of those students. Many students experience a meaningful sense of closure as a result of these ceremonies.

Research on lesbian and gay students has many challenges. The invisible nature of sexual orientation makes it difficult to study lesbian and gay students (Bieschke, Eberz, Wilson, 2000). Researchers often run into the problem of finding participants because so many students are not willing to identify with a sexual minority status. Many are “in the closet” and do not wish to disclose their sexual orientation to anyone—even if the study guarantees anonymity. Cultural influences can add to a person’s desire to keep his or her minority sexual identity invisible. Gay and lesbian African Americans, for example, experience a great deal of cultural pressure to conceal their sexual orientation (Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000). African Americans who keep their sexual orientation concealed are referred to being on the “down low” or “DL” (Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000). As a result, African Americans may be difficult to survey in LGBT related studies.

Often, the researcher will study only those students who are comfortable with disclosing their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, this limits the generalizability of those results since the experiences of students currently in the closet can be different from out gay students. Researchers have yet to find a solution for this problem in lesbian and gay research. It is important, though, that researchers continue this line of research and continue to find ways to overcome these many obstacles. Continuing research on lesbian and gay students will further legitimize a population that has been traditionally ignored (Bieschke et al., 2000).

### LGBT Organizations

LGBT organizations provide many opportunities for development and involvement for lesbian and gay students. This study views these organizations as the primary means that students can involve themselves with the LGBT community. Only a handful of research studies have seriously looked at LGBT college groups, and LGBT organizations have received more discussion in the literature than actual analysis.

There are many similarities between LGBT student groups and student groups in general. One similarity is the ever changing membership as students graduate; thus, these groups have frequent turnover. LGBT student groups especially are similar to other identity based organizations whose members are from a specific segment of society (namely, other minority groups). In many of these groups the members have experienced oppression and seek an organization for support and a sense of community. However, because LGBT groups are organized around sexual orientation and gender identity, they have specific characteristics that are inherent to issues surrounding these specific identities. The following section will explain some of those characteristics.

### *Types of organizations*

Mallory (1998) identified five functions LGBT organizations could serve. These include support, advocacy, education, social, and personal development. Examples of support include running a peer support group, which can address general topics or be more specific to coming out or to an additional identity, like LGBT people of color. Other forms of support can be peer counseling and providing a safe space for people to be out. Examples of advocacy include holding rallies to advocate specific issues, registering members to vote, supporting election campaigns and legislation, and trying to change school policy by meeting with school administrators. Examples of education can be bringing special speakers to the campus and organizing a panel of students who talk about being LGBT to different classes (often called a Speakers Bureau). Social activities are often very important in LGBT groups as the members frequently want to meet and connect with other LGBT students. Just like other student groups, social events can be dances, parties, going out for dinner, and even visiting the local gay dance club. Personal development programs can range from a workshop on safer-sex practices to addressing career issues as the members struggle with finding a supportive employer. LGBT groups are inherently focused on personal development since they seek to support and challenge their members as those members come to understand and take pride in their sexual identity.

Sometimes, these programs are provided by several LGBT organizations that exist on one campus, but usually only one organization exists (Mallory, 1998). Some campuses have an LGBT resource center with a paid staff. This center may take care of several of the roles of the organization (support, advocacy, and education, for example).

To date, across the country only 96 campuses have resource centers with at least a half-time graduate assistantship (N.J. Tubbs, personal communication, March 10, 2004); on most campuses, though, the students themselves are responsible for the services provided to the LGBT community.

### *Research on LGBT groups*

Preliminary data shows that involvement in an LGBT organization contributes to the identity development of an LGBT leader. In a longitudinal study that is still underway, Renn and Bilodeau (2002, 2003) looked at the impact of leadership involvement on LGBT identity development. In its first phase, this qualitative study showed that the involvement in LGBT leadership activities provides “rich opportunities in [sexual] development” and contributes to that development (Renn & Bilodeau, 2002, p. 8). The experience also contributed to the development of other identities that the student held, such as a “leader” or “activist” identity (Renn & Bilodeau, 2002, p. 16). This research shows that participation in LGBT groups can be valuable experiences for student development, both as a lesbian/gay individual and as a leader.

Renn and Bilodeau’s (2002, 2003) ongoing study is limited by focusing only on the leaders involved in the organization. Their study ignores the experiences of the members who participate but are not as active as the leaders. These kind of data would be useful to understand how LGBT organizations can benefit all who are involved—not just those who are very involved.

For his dissertation, Porter (1998a) explored the role of sexual identity development in students’ self-efficacy in transformational leadership in LGBT organizations and heterosexual dominant organizations. Porter found that identity



development did not significantly explain any variance in leadership self-efficacy, but that identity development did significantly account for variance in self-esteem. Gay males had significantly lower self esteem in three of the four stages of group membership development. Gay males had significantly less self-efficacy in their ability to produce change in a heterosexual group than in an LGBT group. For lesbians, self esteem accounted for a significant portion of the variance in self efficacy in both types of organizations.

Porter's study (1998a) has several limitations. The model of identity development that was used was the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation, and the Cronbach Alpha for the different constructs in the instrument were relatively low, making internal reliability questionable. There were some internal validity issues due to the small number of participants that were in the early phases of development. Finally, the external validity of his research is limited because the sample was not randomly selected. Porter relied on a snowball sampling technique. These limitations were hard to avoid because of the difficulty in sampling a population that is oppressed and therefore unlikely to participate.

Despite limitations in their studies, Renn and Bilodeau (2002, 2003) did show that identity development is an important concept in the experience of lesbian and gay students involved with LGBT organizations. Porter (1998a) also showed that the experiences of gay men in LGBT organizations are different than their experiences in heterosexual based organizations.

How identity development should be conceptualized has been an ongoing research topic in lesbian and gay research. The next section will give an overview of some of the key models explaining gay and lesbian development.

### Sexual Identity Development

During their collegiate experience, most lesbian and gay students go through what is commonly referred to as the coming out process. During this time lesbian and gay students progress through several stages of identity development where they acknowledge their sexual orientation or gender identity to themselves, explore this sexuality, integrate their sexual orientation into the rest of their self-concept, and disclose their sexual orientation to the individuals in their lives.

Several theories explain coming out and acknowledge that it is part of a more complicated developmental process, which begins with an uncertainty and questioning period and eventually ends with the integration of an established sexual orientation into the rest of his or her identity. Most of these theories also acknowledge that people can go forwards and backwards in this process depending on a number of factors including the environment in which the person lives and the experiences he or she has. Unfortunately, not many theories address the bisexual or transgender identity development process. No model currently exists that effectively describes those identities.

Three prominent models of gay and lesbian identity development have been used in the literature: the Cass model (1979), the D'Augelli model (1994), and Fassinger's model (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). In many ways these models have built off of each other as research has clarified the development of identities. Each of the theories have advantages and limitations, but this study used the

Fassinger model primarily due to the way it addresses both individual identity and group membership development as two separate but concurrent processes. In this section these three theories will be discussed and compared to each other. Additionally, research on the identity development of lesbian and gay students will be discussed.

### *Cass Model*

The Cass model (1979) was one of the first proposed identity development models for lesbian and gay individuals and probably is the most cited model in research of lesbian and gay students. Cass proposed a six-stage model “that all individuals move through in order to acquire an identity of ‘homosexual’ fully integrated within the individual’s overall concept of self” (p. 220). The ultimate goal of this developmental process is for the individual to bring congruence to him or herself. Cass based her proposed theory on clinical work she did with homosexuals in Australia.

Cass (1979) grounded her model on interpersonal congruency theory. This theory is based on “the assumption that stability and change in human behavior are dependent on the congruency or incongruency (sic) that exists within an individual’s interpersonal environment” (p. 220). Movement in the developmental process is facilitated by a feeling of incongruence which causes an individual to think critically about his or her own “feelings, thoughts, and behaviors” (p. 220).

In the Cass model, the perceived incongruence has to do with the individual’s sexual orientation and the fact that it does not match the heterosexist messages he or she receives from their interpersonal environment. Cass (1979) discusses a complicated cognitive process that an individual uses to determine who and what they are. These processes are categorized into stages which signify major milestones in development.

These stages are replete with opportunities for the individual to develop further or to stall (or, foreclosure).

The first stage of the Cass model is Identity Confusion, where an individual realizes that homosexual topics have some kind of personal meaning to him or her. The individual typically reacts by noting the incongruence and trying to rationalize it. Since this individual previously thought of him/herself as heterosexual a lot of doubt is felt. The individual begins to question who he/she is. The individual typically reacts by either viewing these new feelings as correct and acceptable, correct but unacceptable, or incorrect and unacceptable. The first reaction leads the individual to seek more information (possibly from an LGBT organization), and he/she proceeds into stage 2. The second causes the individual to focus on inhibiting the feelings and avoid situations or experiences likely to cause those feelings. Most likely they would avoid any association with LGBT organizations. The third potential reaction causes the person to disregard labeling his/her feelings as homosexual. He/she does not link the behavior or attraction to an identity. In this case, identity foreclosure occurs.

As an individual labels their incongruence as having to do with homosexuality, he/she moves to stage 2, identity comparison. This stage is characterized by the individual considering whether or not he is homosexual. As individuals in this stage struggle with defining who they are, they become aware of the implications of that identity. For example, they become aware of the high potential for social alienation. Feelings of “not belonging” typically occur in this stage (Cass, 1979, p. 225). On a college campus, it is important to have positive images of LGBT individuals so that when

individuals are in this stage they can associate positive attributes with this possible identity.

An individual can react to the second stage by finding the idea of being gay acceptable or unacceptable. Finding it acceptable moves him or her into the third stage: identity tolerance. This stage is marked by an attitude of “I probably am a homosexual” (Cass, 1979, p. 229). The individual begins making contact with other gay individuals. Based on this contact, either positive or negative associations of a gay identity form. If these contacts are negative, then according to Cass the individual is more likely to form negative perceptions about him or herself being gay and inhibit that behavior. If he or she has positive contact, though, then the commitment to a gay identity increases.

The fourth stage, identity acceptance, is characterized by an attitude of accepting a gay identity, rather than just tolerating it (Cass, 1979). Contact with other gay individuals becomes more frequent as those social networks increase. These friendships are seen as a positive component to the individual’s life. At this point the individual is still “passing” as heterosexual to the external world.

In the fifth stage, identity pride, the individual becomes more committed to a gay identity, becomes acutely aware of society’s negative portrayal of homosexuals, and begins to reject these notions of society. Unlike in earlier stages, when the individual is more likely to succumb to the negative attitudes society has toward homosexuality, the individual is now actively resisting society. The world is seen as either “pro-gay” or “anti-gay,” and most heterosexuals and heterosexual institutions (e.g., marriage) are lumped under anti-gay. The individual becomes immersed in gay culture, attending meetings, rallies, and events, reading literature, and associating only with other gay

individuals or “pro-gay” heterosexuals. Much pride is felt toward the lesbian and gay community, and anger is directed at the rest of society. At this point the individual is very likely to be out to most individuals. Cass suggests that if individuals routinely experience negative reactions when they disclose their gay identity, then they will likely remain in the fifth stage until finding a more positive environment.

In the sixth and final stage, identity synthesis, the individual experiences more positive reactions from heterosexuals. The individual begins to change the “us vs. them” attitude previously held to greater acceptance of heterosexuals being allies. As these perceptions of the outside world change, the individual becomes more able to integrate his or her private and public identities and by doing so integrate his or her gay identity into an overall self concept. Now he or she is no longer “just gay” but is a variety of identities.

Cass (1979) believes that it is not possible to find complete congruence for being homosexual since society has such pervading messages about the normalcy of heterosexuality. However, she does believe that the incongruence can be minimized to a manageable level. By the sixth stage, the individual finds this congruence as his public and private image can be the same.

#### *Critique of Cass' Model*

Several components to the Cass model weaken its applicability to current college students. Firstly, the model fails to recognize the role and importance of other identities. As with most models that focus on specific identities, it is difficult to distinguish where one identity begins and the next one starts. However, in Cass's model, the researcher went through great pains to identify the thought process as one evaluates the acceptability

of his or her homosexual feelings. At no point is the role of one's culture explained. In reality, what one's culture thinks about homosexuality can play a large part in how he or she judges those feelings (Cintron, 2000). In the Latino community "gay" is not a recognized label (Kutsche, 1995). The African American community is the same way: "gay" and "lesbian" are viewed as "white" terms (Ferguson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000). In very religious communities (which include the Latino and African American Community) homosexuality is viewed as a sin, and there is a large stigma associated with same-sex attraction and identity (DuMontier, 2000). The role of these cultures would undoubtedly play a major role in the psychosocial development of gay and lesbian individuals. It is quite likely that the Australian gay males that Cass worked with were too homogeneous for her to include the role of culture.

In stage three (identity tolerance), Cass suggests that if an individual who is tolerating a gay identity has a negative experience with other gay individuals, they are more likely to disassociate with that individual gay identity. This does not seem logical. Instead, it would seem more reasonable to expect that individual to disassociate him or herself from those gay individuals. Instead, their thought process might be, "I am not like those gay people, but I am still gay." Despite negative reactions with other gay individuals, one can have a positive perception of a gay identity. Fassinger's model (which is discussed later) includes this possibility.

In stage five (identity pride) and six (identity synthesis), Cass suggests that after experiencing negative reactions to disclosing a gay identity, an individual is likely to have identity foreclosure. According to this research the achieved integrated identity requires positive external reactions. Just as Fassinger and associates (Fassinger, 1998;

Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) have argued, such reasoning places the individual's development at the mercy of his or her environment. Though climate probably does play a significant role in development, it is this researcher's view that climate is not the only factor that can make or break that individual's development. Other factors effecting identity development are discussed later in this chapter.

The exploration that occurs in stages three and four is a bit archaic. With the internet many questioning individuals nowadays are able to obtain information about gay and lesbian individuals without ever having to make direct contact with anyone from the lesbian and gay community. People who are in stages one and two now are likely to explore on the web if they are questioning their sexual identity.

Finally, some of the stages seem to split hairs. Accepting his or her homosexuality in this framework covers three different stages (two through four). Being able to detect the subtle differences between each of these stages would be very difficult. Indeed, in a quantitative test of her model, Cass (1984) found that there was more statistical evidence for a four stage model than six.

#### *D'Augelli's Model*

Some more recent models have come into use since Cass published her model. For example, the Life-span model of lesbian-gay-bisexual (LGB) development proposed by D'Augelli (1994) uses a completely different theoretical framework than the Cass model. Additionally, the interviews used to create the model were based on college students. Unlike the Cass model which is psychosocial, D'Augelli's model is social constructionist. It recognizes that "we are shaped by social circumstances" and that "our



images of identity are [in fact] transient and malleable” and can be constructed by our own selves (D’Augelli, 1994, p. 312).

According to D’Augelli’s model, gay and lesbian individuals have to go through six processes to develop their own identity as gay or lesbian. Unlike Cass’ stages, which represent developing clusters of attitudes towards one’s gay identity, D’Augelli’s processes are more like tasks that represent major milestones in one’s identity development.

The six processes include: exiting heterosexual identity, developing a personal lesbian-gay-bisexual identity status, developing a lesbian-gay-bisexual social identity, becoming a lesbian-gay-bisexual offspring, developing a lesbian-gay-bisexual intimacy status, and entering a lesbian-gay-bisexual community (D’Augelli, 1994).

Exiting heterosexual identity covers the ongoing process than an LGB individual experiences to disassociate him or herself from a heterosexual identity. Initially it includes recognizing that one is not heterosexual and seeking a new meaning sexually. Over the lifespan, though, the process is ongoing because one has to routinely decide to “come out” to individuals he or she encounters at work, in school, and on the street.

Developing a personal LGB identity involves finding one’s own stability in thoughts, feelings and desires (D’Augelli, 1994). The sexual identity label that an individual gives to him or herself then drives the person to interact socially with others who are LGB. Based on this interaction the individual develops a better sense of who they are as an LGB person. Like the first process this is an ongoing process. The individual continually updates his or her personal meaning of being LGB based on

experiences. It is also during this process that one deals with internalized homophobia and myths about homosexuality.

Developing an LGB social identity involves networking and socializing with others who affirm his or her LGB social identity. This naturally could include other LGB individuals but also affirming heterosexual individuals. This is a critical process in that it provides a social system that supports an otherwise invisible and unappreciated component to that individual's identity.

Becoming a LGB offspring refers to reconnecting to the family of origin after any initial disruption that occurred when the sexual identity was first disclosed. Since the family typically goes through a series of adaptations as they cope with the sexuality of their son or daughter, the D'Augelli models suggests that much of the responsibility lies with the offspring (the LGB individual).

Developing an LGB intimacy status requires the individual to work through whatever preexisting (stereotypical) notions he or she had about same sex relationships and finding his or her own preferred style of dating and relationships. There is a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty to wade through during this process as not much information about same-sex relationships exists in the general culture.

Finally, the last process is entering an LGB community. This process is marked by becoming involved socially or politically in the LGB community. Some never enter this process—those individuals who consider their sexual orientation a private matter, for example.

These processes represent very different milestones than the ones suggested by Cass (1979). For example, the first process, exiting heterosexual identity, lumps all of

Cass' first four stages into one process. Instead, this model focuses more on what happens after an individual acknowledges he or she is gay.

#### *Comparisons of D'Augelli and Cass*

The D'Augelli model is more specific about what happens than the Cass model. D'Augelli's model highlights the interaction with parents. Cass is completely silent on the role of parents or the family in general. Instead, the Cass model refers to the general outside world that an individual must contend with. Other key differences of the D'Augelli model are that it recognizes the intimacy status of the individual, and it suggests that entering an LGB community is not a necessary process. Cass on the other hand would argue that entering the community leads to more areas for development and therefore is an important part of the developmental process.

The key difference between the two models is that Cass sees development as resolving perceived incongruence. D'Augelli's model, though, believes that the individual constructs the meaning of their experiences and that most processes are ongoing through the life space. Cass' model is about working through attitudes to reach a healthy, positive sense of oneself, and D'Augelli's model is similar to an ongoing task list of issues to consider.

#### *Critique of D'Augelli Model*

A major critique of the D'Augelli model is that it places a great deal of responsibility on the individual to achieve some of these tasks. In particular, the process of becoming an LGB offspring puts the LGB individual in an unfair position of having to persuade his or her family to accept their sexual orientation or simply to tolerate their negative attitudes. Many students experience a complete separation from their parents,

some of whom go so far as to disown them. Putting the responsibility on the individual to repair this relationship is inappropriate and places the responsibility of sexual prejudice off of heterosexuals and onto LGB individuals. A more plausible process for the model might be becoming part of a family that is either family of origin or family of choice.

The social constructionist point of view used by D'Augelli is useful in analyzing the development of gay identity with other identity processes. For example, Renn and Bilodeau (2002, 2003) are looking at the intersections of the development of a lesbian/gay identity and a leader identity. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers have sought to understand how students make meaning from their experiences in leadership roles. In this case, a social constructionist perspective is useful, and the D'Augelli model is applicable.

If a needs based study were to be done, the D'Augelli model would probably be more useful than the Cass model. The D'Augelli model clearly outlines what an LGB person needs to do in the areas of personal development, social life, family, intimacy, and political activism. LGBT organizations would be wise to consider how many of these processes they assist their members with.

In other areas of research, though, the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings one possesses are more useful in explaining behavior. D'Augelli's model is useful after students have developed meaning from an experience, but understanding current behavior, and focusing on attitudes might be a useful next step. For that reason, the current study will use a psychosocial perspective for identity development to explain involvement behavior in LGBT organizations.

### *Fassinger's Inclusive Model*

The model of gay and lesbian identity development that will be used for this study is Fassinger's Inclusive Model of Lesbian/Gay Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). This model differs from other identity models in that it distinguishes individual sexual identity from group membership identity and it argues that these two processes develop separately and concurrently.

Fassinger's model describes the development of beliefs and attitudes of gay men and lesbian women in terms of two goals. On one hand, the individuals have to deal with understanding a sexual identity "that they previously considered reprehensible and/or irrelevant" (Fassinger, 1998, p. 16). On the other hand, the individual must also "acknowledge their membership in, and change their attitudes toward, a largely invisible minority group that they also previously considered reprehensible and/or irrelevant.... Thus, identity development is a mixture of self-categorizations related to both personal and social identities" (p. 16). So, there are two tracks of development that students engage in simultaneously, but they do not necessarily move forward on both simultaneously.

The course of development is similar to the stages proposed by Cass. Instead of stages, though, the Fassinger model calls these "phases." It is believed that this term emphasizes the fact that students can move in and out of such stages.

There are four phases for both processes. Each phase represents a certain set of beliefs the person holds. The phases are awareness, exploration, deepening/commitment, and internalization/synthesis.

During the awareness phases on the individual track a woman might think, “I feel pulled toward women in ways I don’t understand” (Fassinger, 1998, p. 17). On the group membership track she might think, “I had no idea there were lesbian/gay people out there.”

For exploration, the individual considers erotic feelings on an individual level and possible membership on the group level. A gay man might say, “I want to be closer to men or to a certain man” (p.17). On the group level he could think, “I think a lot about fitting in as a gay man and developing my own gay style” (p.17).

In deepening/commitment, the individual focuses more on his or her own sexual feelings, gains self-knowledge and self-fulfillment, and becomes personally involved with the reference group. This is very similar to the “identity pride” phase that Cass (1979) described in her model. During this stage, the individual sees the world in a very dichotomous sense; in terms of sexual orientation, a gay male may see things as gay or straight and attach more positive meaning to the former.

In Fassinger’s final stage, internalization/synthesis, the individual begins to integrate their sexual identity into the rest of their identity and associates with homosexual and heterosexual groups. This final stage is again, very similar to other identity models where integration of one’s many identities occurs.

Fassinger’s model is psychosocial, where the individual experiences psychological conflict at each stage (Fassinger, 1998). As the person interacts with others, learns from experiences, and gains a better understanding of her sexuality, her beliefs will change and she will progress through the stages. Like many other development models, each stage is marked by an increasing amount of thought and

understanding regarding the concept of sexual identity. On the group membership side, progression through the model means the individual identifies more closely with that group until synthesis, where the individual realizes she has both gay and straight group memberships.

#### *Comparison of Fassinger Model to Previous Models*

Both the Cass model (1979) and D'Augelli's model (1994) discussed contact with the homosexual community, but Fassinger's model emphasizes the parallel process of group membership. The previous models make interaction with the gay community part of the phases or processes that lead to personal identity integration. By distinguishing the individual identity development from the group membership development, the Fassinger model explains how a student can be secure in their sexual identity but not be socially integrated into the LGBT community, a phenomenon not explained in the Cass model nor the D'Augelli model. The Cass model suggests that a lesbian or gay person would reconsider their individual lesbian/gay identity. The D'Augelli model suggests that a lesbian/gay individual relies on affirming interaction with others to develop their lesbian/gay identity.

Another feature that separates the Fassinger Model (1998) from Cass (1979) is that Fassinger emphasizes that coming out is not a necessary feature of identity development. Fassinger acknowledges that one can choose not to disclose their identity to others but still develop. This is especially true since coming out can be based on external or contextual factors (Fassinger, 1998).

### *Critique of Fassinger Model*

Because of its ability to explain more community level interaction, Fassinger's model may do a better job at explaining the role of identity in LGBT involvement than other models. However, it is not yet clear how the two processes interact with each other. The model suggests that the two processes operate concurrently but not simultaneously. In other words, an individual can be grappling with individual identity issues and group membership identity issues at the same time, but that person can also be at different phases for each process. It is unclear if any phases must proceed others. Is it possible for an individual to be very developed in one process but not in another? On this, the model and research so far has been silent. Perhaps some more insight into the interaction of the two processes will be gained from the current study. If certain phases or combination of phases have significantly higher or lower involvement levels, that might inform some unanswered questions of this model.

### *Research of lesbian and gay identity development*

In addition to the studies on experiences on college campuses, there have also been quantitative and qualitative studies on lesbian and gay identity development of college students (D'Augelli, 1991; Lopez & Chism, 1993; Renn & Bilodeau, 2002, 2003; Rhoads, 1995a; Rhoads, 1995b; Stevens, 1997; Stevens, 2004).

D'Augelli (1991) surveyed gay men in college to investigate how they came to define themselves as gay. In this quantitative study, the researcher used a questionnaire to gather information about different domains of gay life for the participants; these different domains included development of a gay identity, relationship with family members, social relationships, gay community involvement, management of public identity, and



personal concerns. D'Augelli gave the questionnaire to members at the LGBT student organization and asked them to give the survey to anyone they knew. Participants completed the surveys at home and mailed them in. There was a 38% return rate (out of 200 surveys distributed).

D'Augelli (1991) found variability in the time it took for individuals to reach certain milestones in identity development. In general, though, individuals seem to first identify feeling different from others. This is eventually followed by labeling oneself as gay; this on average took 6 years ( $SD= 3.8$ ) after initially realizing there was some kind of difference. In 75% of the cases sexual behavior followed self labeling, which means a considerable number of individuals engaged in same sex behavior before they defined their sexual identity as gay. After self-labeling there was eventual disclosure to others about sexual orientation. The theories discussed earlier would classify most of these milestones in awareness and exploration.

In D'Augelli's study, involvement in the gay community was defined as socializing and involvement in the student organization (1991). Many of the participants reported being involved. Twenty-three percent of the participants reported socializing with gay people exclusively and fifty-two percent of the participants reported socializing with other gay people at least half of the time. Fifty-four percent reported participation in the LGBT student organization, and forty percent reported that the majority of their time involved with gay related activities was connected to this organization. These numbers are a bit misleading, though. Since D'Augelli distributed his survey primarily to students already involved in the organization, it is to be expected that the involvement data would be higher than usual.

The D'Augelli (1991) study is frequently cited in the literature, but there are some important limitations to consider. Primarily, the survey was distributed to students involved in the organization. This obviously excluded many students who were not involved; D'Augelli attempted to correct this by asking students to give the survey to other students they know. Unfortunately, D'Augelli did not include data on how many students responded who received the survey from a friend, so it is unclear how this data collection procedure may have influenced the results.

Another limitation is that D'Augelli (1991) failed to discuss how involvement related to the other milestones of identity process. Such information would have been useful to consider as students left the awareness and exploratory stage related identity processes. Despite these limitations, though, D'Augelli did show that identity development was a process.

Lopez and Chism (1993) researched the classroom concerns of lesbian and gay college students at a large state institution. Part of this qualitative investigation included careful attention to the identity issues of the students. The researchers contacted students through the LGBT office on campus and provided students with three different options of responding: focus group, individual interviews, or written response to open ended questions. In the three formats questions remained virtually consistent. In their analysis the researchers coded the responses and used outside reviewers to confirm the themes they found.

Lopez and Chism (1993) found that participants continually thought about their identities. The participants' thoughts circled around who they were, how they portrayed themselves to the outside world as LGB individuals, how to deal with sexual prejudice,

how they self-identified, and how they would want others to classify them. Some students reported that coming out had an impact on school performance and activities. The stress experienced during the initial stages of coming out distracted students from their studies, resulting in declining school performance. This trend continued for some students even as they came to terms with their gay or lesbian identity. For these students the excitement of resolving their identity opened up new social opportunities for them. They became more involved in activities and social experiences that were previously perceived to be closed to them. Lopez and Chism reported that students' grades eventually rose, which indicates that students may have found more balance in their lives after the initial explosion of interest in the LGBT community. Most identity theories would describe this as moving from a pride or immersion phase to an integration phase.

Lopez and Chism's (1993) is a qualitative study, so generalization to the broader lesbian and gay population has to be done with care. The study is further limited because the researcher relied on the LGBT resources office to contact students that the office knew to be lesbian or gay. This sampling strategy therefore excluded students who were not as out or who the office simply had no contact with. Asking other students to connect with students who they knew to be lesbian or gay would have opened up the sample more. Another limitation is that the researchers did not use member checks, where students confirm and give feedback to the themes found from the interviews and questionnaires. This would have been very appropriate since the researchers used multiple means of collecting data.

Despite these limitations, Lopez and Chism (1993) are able to conclude that as students grapple with their identity and struggle to define who they are, their involvement

in coursework changes—both in terms of time and energy. This involvement is redirected towards LGBT related experiences. Over time the energy and involvement of the student returns to non-LGBT subjects. This presumably occurs when that student is in a later phase of identity development and is no longer immersed in his or her gay or lesbian identity.

Rhoads (1995a, 1995b) conducted a two year ethnographic study of the coming out experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. Rhoads used a triangulation method to analyze these experiences: formal interviews with participants recruited from the LGB student organization, informal interviews at various settings (parties, dances, and coffee shops), and a review of documents (articles in the student newspaper). Rhoads used member checks to corroborate the findings from these interviews and documents review.

Rhoads (1995a, 1995b) found themes supporting the notion that coming out is an ongoing process that never really ends. The process usually begins with self-acknowledgement and personal changes as a result of coming out to self and others. Students reported higher self esteem, self-confidence, and self-reflectivity when coming out. Furthermore, students in these studies also reported that coming out resulted in their becoming more interested and more involved in the political process, particularly in issues like gay rights. Some of the students self-identified as queer, which they described as having a political component. These results have limited generalizability since the study was qualitative, but it does suggest that identity development can affect one's political interest and perhaps behavior.

Rhoads (1995a, 1995b) findings are further limited by having used participants who were already out to some degree, were mostly male, and who were involved to some extent in the student LGB organization. The students were also older, consisting primarily of upper-class and graduate students. Thus, the study did not address the experiences of non-involved LGB students, younger students, and students who were not out. Finally, the study took place at an institution in a conservative, rural area. There were not any resources in the surrounding community for LGBT students. The experiences at such an institution would be very different than at an urban or suburban institution with more resources in the nearby geographical area.

In her dissertation, Stevens (1997) explored the critical incidents that facilitated lesbian identity development. The researcher used a naturalistic inquiry qualitative method and interviewed women from four different institutions. The researcher also used a grounded theory method to develop a model that explains how incidents affected the development of the students.

Through the interviews, Stevens (1997) found several themes of critical incidents that affected lesbian identity. These included: exposure to homosexuality, feelings of same-sex attraction, experiences that made the individual question her sexual orientation, exploration of this lesbian identity, building self-awareness, receiving support from others, same-sex relationships, lesbian role models, risk taking, and challenges of sexual prejudice. Stevens developed a model to classify the role these incidents had: “sparks and triggers, searching, convergence, fundamental awareness, shifts and turns, taking control and actions, and affirmations/confirmations” (p. 300).

Stevens (1997) adds credence to the “challenge and support” model often used in student affairs programming; she asserts that having LGBT organizations, for example, is a valuable resource for the development of lesbian identity development. The presence of such a group, as well as informal groups, provides an opportunity for self-exploration and self-awareness for an individual who is self-questioning.

Stevens’ participants were mostly white; therefore, important influences of race and ethnicity were left out of the study. Experiences of lesbians of color could be very different from those of white lesbians.

Another study (Stevens, 2004) also explored incidents that facilitated identity development for gay college men. Using a grounded theory approach, the researcher recruited a diverse sample of participants that include several different racial and ethnic groups. The participants were interviewed three times, and the researcher used member checks to corroborate his coding of their responses. He found a central theme in the responses: finding empowerment. Furthermore, Stevens found five integrative categories: self acceptance, disclosure to others, individual factors, environmental influence, and exploring multiple identities. Stevens defined empowerment as a comfort with one’s gay identity, having gay pride, education of self and others, and activism. This theme of empowerment was closely linked with involvement in LGBT issues and involvement. The lack of distinction between the two concepts suggests that gay identity development and experiences of involvement are closely interconnected.

It is important to note that many of the themes that Stevens (2004) found overlapped with what Stevens (1997) concluded. A notable exception was the last category of Steven (2004), exploring multiple identities, suggesting the need for diverse

sampling in qualitative research that covers identity. Jones and McEwen (2000) acknowledge that individuals address the different components to their identity at different times. Any discussion of sexual identity development has to take these other identities into consideration as they may challenge or contribute to the sexual identity development of an individual.

### Identity Development and Involvement

Currently no research has examined the relationship between lesbian and gay identity development and involvement in LGBT organizations. Porter (1998) researched some aspects of identity development and leadership in LGBT organizations and non-LGBT organizations, and Renn and Bilodeau (2002, 2003) have researched the developmental outcomes for students participating in LGBT organizations, but no one has researched the role of identity development on LGBT organizational involvement.

Despite this neglect of lesbian and gay identity based groups, other cultural and identity based groups have been researched in terms of identity development and involvement. Many of these studies consider the impact the organizational involvement has on identity. Some also have explored the reverse: how identity development influences involvement.

### *Involvement Theory and Research*

Student affairs literature is replete with studies and articles on student involvement. A particular emphasis in the literature is the influence that involvement has on development and learning. Astin's theory of involvement (1984) for example, suggests that involvement and development are highly correlated. Inkelas (2004) found that involvement in ethnic organizations can lead to further ethnic identity commitment.

Finally, some studies have considered the impact that development has had on involvement, which is the specific topic of involvement that this study is exploring. The following section is meant to provide an overview of basic involvement theories and studies that have investigated how involvement and development interrelate.

### *Astin's Involvement Theory*

Astin's involvement theory has often been cited in the literature on student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities (1984). In this theory, Astin defines involvement as the physical and psychological energy a student puts into an activity. This definition includes how much time a student may put into an activity as well as the degree of attention the student puts into that activity. In many ways the concept of *effort* is comparable to involvement; though, Astin believes effort is a narrower construct.

Astin sees involvement as a behavioral based construct that represents internal psychological states: motivation, commitment, and even identification. Other theorists have tried to measure those constructs directly. Astin prefers to measure involvement as a behavior, because a behavior that is observable is easier to measure than internal feelings. Also, from a practitioner point of view, it is easier to focus on increasing a behavior than a feeling.

Astin's involvement theory (1984) states that involvement and learning are highly correlated. In other words, the greater amount of involvement a student puts into an activity the more the student will learn from the experience. His theory also suggests that educational policies and practices should focus on increasing student involvement in activities to increase student learning.



Student time is a valuable resource—both to the student and the institution. Many different areas of a student’s life compete for his or her time: course work, extracurricular activities, employment, friends, family, and other areas which Astin defines as objects in which the student psychologically invests. According to Astin, an institution should develop programs to help students invest time into certain learning activities which will facilitate the desired learning outcomes. In a similar way a student organization can develop programs to increase its own membership involvement.

This study uses Astin’s theory of involvement to define the investment of time and energy students put into LGBT organizations. As Astin theorizes, this investment has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions and can be measured by observation of behavior. According to Astin, high involvement suggests high motivation, commitment, and identification.

### *Followership*

A segment of the leadership literature has focused on the role and characteristics of followers who become involved with organizations and activities—often referred to in the literature as followership. Not nearly as much research has investigated followership as compared to leadership. Historically, researchers have been more interested in leaders, how they are effective, and how they influence the organizational dynamics. In the 1980’s and 1990’s, though, researchers became more interested in followership. In particular, Kelley created a model for followership that included an important component related to this study: active engagement (1992). Active engagement addresses the amount of energy an individual invests into their involvement with an organization. As a construct, active engagement is very similar to Astin’s concept of involvement. Kelley

described those followers with high engagement as being the high performers that significantly contribute to the performance of an organization (1988).

*Involvement and identification with organizations*

In an early study, Brown (1969) researched the concepts of involvement and identification with organizations. His study sought to understand what factors would contribute to identification in an organization. Brown theorized that involvement was related to the individual's perception of what the organization could provide him or her. Part of involvement included identification, which was described as an individual's membership, commitment, and loyalty to an organization. Brown hypothesized that individuals would tend to identify with organizations if the organization provided opportunities for personal development; if the individuals had power in the organization; and if there were no other competing sources of identification. Brown surveyed 834 individuals in twenty-six different organizations associated with the Tennessee Valley Authority and asked the participants about attitudes, behaviors, and feelings towards the work area, themselves, and the organizations that employed them. He found that identification is mediated through symbolic motivation as opposed to pragmatic motivation. Symbolic motivation is the sense of satisfaction one feels from participating in activities. Pragmatic motivation, on the other hand, is the satisfaction one receives from the *result* of activities he or she is engaged in. Brown's study suggests that the more meaning the members have associated with the groups and activities, the greater identification the member will have with that organization and therefore involvement will be high.

Brown also found that identification with the organization can be negligible if there are other objects of identification that are indirectly or directly associated with the organization. For example, the presence of friends in an organization can affect the level of identification with that organization. If a student participates in an organization because his friends are in it, then that student is less likely to have high identification with that organization. Even if involvement in the organization is high, that student's identification is with his friends and not the organization.

Based on Brown's findings (1969), it is reasonable to hypothesize that students will have a higher identification and involvement with organizations that create symbolic motivation. The meaning and importance of a lesbian/gay identity changes during identity development, and at a certain point in development (the immersion phase), the lesbian/gay identity becomes central to the individual. According to the Fassinger model, a person's interest in the gay and lesbian community also is high at the immersion phase. During this time, then, a student is more likely to be satisfied from experiences in an LGBT organization. Therefore, he or she is more likely to be involved with an LGBT organization during these phases of identity development.

#### *Research on Development and Involvement*

As Astin (1984) suggested in his theory on involvement, many studies have shown that a beneficial relationship exists between involvement and development. Kegan (1978) found that students involved with extracurricular activities reported higher satisfaction with their social life and field of study. Students who are involved become more committed to the institution (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfe, 1986; Tinto, 1993), and involved students are more likely to graduate (Astin, 1977; Kapp, 1979, Tinto, 1993).

Schuh and Laverty (1983) found that extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to hone their leadership skills: teamwork, decision making, and planning. In their research into leadership identity development, Komives et al. (2004) found that focused involvement in one or two activities (instead of a minor involvement in a lot of activities) provided relatively meaningful experiences that contributed to the leadership identity development of those students (Julie Owen Casper, personal communication, November 16, 2004). Extremely high involvement can have negative effects on the student experience. Whitla (1981) found that students who have extremely high involvement benefit less from extracurricular activities than students who participate at a moderate level. Hartnett (1981) also found that high involvement is associated with lower academic performance. These studies suggest that involvement can contribute to the development of individuals, particularly when that involvement is focused on one or two specific activities and is not too excessive.

Hess and Winston (1995) considered how development could influence involvement. The researchers surveyed two hundred students to investigate the effect developmental level had on the intention to participate in developmental activities. The researchers defined development in terms of Chickering's seven vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), used the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1987) to measure development, and used the Student Activity Preference Survey (Winston & Miller, 1987) to measure the intention to participate.

The researchers found that students are most likely to participate in programs related to developmental outcomes which they had already mastered and that students are less likely to attend programs that focus on the next steps in their development. For

example, if the student had already developed a sense of purpose (according to Chickering's seven vectors), the student is more likely to engage in activities that further facilitate the development of purpose, such as career planning. It should be noted, though, that the intention to participate is not always the equivalent to actual participation. As Hess and Winston point out, students can attend a program on a whim or because their friends attend.

The results of Hess and Winston's study (1995) have many implications for student organizations that program for and educate their members. The clearest implication is that programs should match the developmental level of the group in order to increase participation. High levels of participation, though, are not always the primary goal of an organization. Personal development of its members may be more important. Therefore, organizations should develop strategies to assess the developmental levels of their members and plan programs that appropriately address their developmental weaknesses. These programs should not be too challenging; otherwise the programmers run the risk that no one will attend.

#### *Identity Development and Involvement*

There are many similarities between models of racial identity development and models of gay and lesbian identity development. Both models suggest that an individual undergoes an internal process of becoming aware of an identity, learning about it, investing in it, and finally integrating the identity with other identities. Research has shown that a relationship between racial or ethnic identity development and involvement does exist (Chavous, 2000; Mitchell & Dell, 1992; Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995). Most of this research supports the idea that during certain stages of identity development

involvement in identity based organization is especially low or especially high. For example, during the early phases of racial identity development, an individual is not aware of or uncomfortable with the existence of an identity based organization. Therefore their involvement is very low. On the other hand, during later phases of identity development, an individual is very interested in expanding their knowledge and understanding of their identity; membership in an identity based organization could facilitate the pursuit of these interests. Therefore, involvement is high.

Mitchell and Dell (1992) researched the relationship of racial identity development and participation in types of campus activities. The researchers surveyed 101 black undergraduates at a predominantly white university. The sample was obtained from an introductory psychology course and from a list of black students from the registrar's office. To measure racial identity development, the researchers used the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS) (Parham & Helms, 1981), and the researchers developed their own instrument to measure campus involvement. Mitchell and Dell hypothesized that racial identity development would contribute to the type of involvement in student organizations. Specifically, the researchers suspected that students in the immersion-emersion phase of identity development (when they experience more interest in their racial group) would be more involved with culture and racial identity groups on campus than students in the pre-encounter stage (when interest in their racial group would be minimal).

Mitchell and Dell (1992) found that racial identity development was a factor in type of involvement. The researchers used a linear regression test of racial identity development, along with a number of other factors (gender, number of hours working,

age, and SES). Significant betas were found for the pre-encounter stage, the encounter stage, the immersion stage, and the internalization stage as they explained involvement in cultural organizations. Pre-encounter had a negative relationship with involvement in cultural organization, and the other stages had a positive relationship. For non-cultural organizations, only the internalization stage was significant, with a positive correlation.

The data from Mitchell and Dell (1992) confirms the original hypothesis that racial identity development contributes to involvement in cultural organizations. As the researchers predicted, participation was negatively related to the pre-encounter stage and positively with the immersion stage. It is interesting that internalization was positively correlated with involvement in both cultural and non-cultural organizations. Identity development research would suggest that during this stage the individual would be more interested in non-cultural organizations because the individual has integrated their racial identity into the rest of their identity. The researchers found no significant differences between the two types of involvement for the participants overall, but they did not check for specific differences between each stage. Such data would have been useful.

A limitation of Mitchell and Dell's study (1992) was the basic way they measured involvement. Their measure considered the number of organizations with which one was involved, but they did not consider the quality of that involvement. Another limitation was that the participants were drawn from just one (large) institution. The study therefore is limited in its generalizability, especially since the culture of involvement could be unique to that school as well as the number of opportunities for students to be involved.

Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) also researched the relationship between racial identity development and student involvement, specifically for African American

males. Unlike Mitchell and Dell (1992), this study included participants from ten institutions which were predominantly white (N=117). Student affairs professionals at those institutions assisted in distributing the surveys to students they knew. The researchers used the Student Involvement Survey (Erwin, 1991) to measure student involvement and the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (RIAS-B) (Helms, 1990) to measure racial identity development.

The researchers hypothesized that students in the pre-encounter stage would report lower rates of involvement than students in the immersion stage. The researchers further hypothesized that students affiliated with Greek letter organizations would be more involved and more likely to be in the immersion or internalization stages.

The researchers found that racial identity development was significantly correlated with overall student involvement measure. Overall student involvement included participation in clubs and organizations, academic experiences, sports involvement, faculty and staff interactions, and community service.

When the researchers analyzed the contribution of individual variables, they used a stepwise regression. Affiliation was the only variable that significantly contributed to involvement and racial identity development, which is not surprising since affiliation with a Greek organization implies higher involvement by definition. Interestingly, Greek affiliated participants scored higher in development than non-affiliated participants.

The results of Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) support some of the findings of Mitchell and Dell (1992) and suggest that racial identity development does play a role in involvement. Unfortunately, the type of instrument used to measure involvement failed to distinguish non-cultural groups from cultural groups. This information would have



been more useful in understanding the types of organizations with which the participants were involved. The results are slightly questionable since the researchers failed to properly show their statistics or outline the statistical tests they planned to use.

Chavous (2000) explored the relationships of racial identity, perceived ethnic fit, and organizational involvement for African-American students at a predominantly white university. Unlike previous studies of identity and involvement, Chavous addressed a new variable: how the student perceived the institution. In this study, the researcher surveyed 164 students from one institution.

Racial identity development was measured differently than in previous studies. Instead of using a developmental model, the researchers used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), which includes philosophical attitudes towards race: assimilation, humanism, minority, and nationalism. The instrument used to measure these views was the Multidimensional Inventory of African American Identity (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). For involvement, the students were asked to list the organizations (both cultural and non-cultural) with which they were involved. The Perceived Ethnic Fit Scale was used to measure perceived ethnic fit with the institution (Ethier & Deaux, 1990).

The researcher created a statistical model that used racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit to predict involvement in cultural and non-cultural groups. Both racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit were positively related to involvement in cultural groups. The interaction of the two variables was negatively related to involvement in cultural groups. This suggests that there the combination of racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit is an important factor to consider.

Chavous (2000) also used a multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of the students' background information and racial identity. Student background information (family income, mother's education, father's education, and neighborhood) was not significantly related to perceived ethnic fit or involvement in cultural organizations. Chavous did find a significant negative relationship between involvement with non-cultural organizations and the number of African Americans in the neighborhood where the participant was raised, suggesting that the community in which an individual grows up in can influence the type of involvement later in life.

The findings of Chavous (2000) are useful because it acknowledges the importance of perceived fit with an institution. Marginalized groups certainly experience the institution differently than majority groups. Lesbian and gay students, for example, are much more likely than heterosexuals to report that an institution is unwelcoming and hostile. Chavous showed that there is an important interaction between identity and environment that affects involvement. Unfortunately, the study failed to collect data from multiple institutions, which would have given more data for the perceived fit variable.

### Conclusion

Despite the vast amount of literature on LGBT students, identity development, and involvement and the growing literature on the relationship of identity and involvement there has yet to be any investigation of lesbian and gay identity development and involvement patterns in LGBT organizations. Much is known about the experiences of lesbian and gay students at institutions; not much is known about how they formally (or informally) organize themselves. Some is known about their experiences as leaders in LGBT and non-LGBT organizations, but not much is known about the participants and

dynamics of LGBT organizations. There are many models of lesbian and gay identity development and a fair amount of research confirming that identity development is a process marked with a series of challenges; it has also been shown that the environment (particularly other lesbian and gay individuals) influences identity development. The role that involvement in co-curricular activities has on development is clear, and it has been shown that development can even impact involvement for students in general (Hess & Winston, 1995) and certain identity populations (Chavous, 2000; Mitchell & Dell, 1992; Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995). It has yet to be shown if the involvement of lesbian and gay students is affected by identity development similar to the effect that racial identity development has on African American students. The present study addressed the unanswered question of how lesbian and gay identity development relates to involvement in LGBT organizations. This study also addressed to some degree the experiences of lesbian and gay students in LGBT organizations and the dynamics within those groups.

## CHAPTER III

### Research Design

To review, this study explored the relationship between lesbian/gay identity development and the level and type of involvement in LGBT campus organizations. There were three null hypotheses set by the researcher: 1) there is no difference in time of involvement in LGBT organizations among varying phases of sexual identity development; 2) there is no correlation between time, breadth, and depth of involvement in LGBT organizations and the scores of sexual identity development phases; and 3) there is no difference in the type of involvement (such as advocacy, support, social, education, and cultural) based on sexual identity development.

A survey method was used to investigate these hypotheses, and the research design was a combination of comparison of means, correlations, and a comparison of frequencies. One of the instruments used was the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire (Revised) (Fassinger, 2001a; Fassinger, 2001b), which is based on the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). The instrument that was used to measure level and type of involvement was created specifically for this study and is based on the programming model used at the University of Maryland (University of Maryland, 2004, <http://www.union.umd.edu/diversity/index.html>). The involvement instrument was in the form of a questionnaire that was given with the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire. Both questionnaires are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

This research design was intended to shed light on how the two variables, development and involvement, relate to each other. There were a number of challenges,

though, that needed to be resolved for this design to work. These challenges involved the population being surveyed, the sampling strategy, and the collection procedure.

### Sample

This study surveyed gay and lesbian university students, which included both graduate and undergraduate students. The sample consisted of university students who self identified as gay, lesbian, exploring, and/or questioning; who experienced attraction to the same sex; or who engaged in same-sex behavior. The sample was obtained from a large, mid-Atlantic, state research university.

Several issues are important to note for this sample. As was stated in chapter 1, the transgender and bisexual identities of students were not studied. It is possible, though, for a transgender student who self identified as gay or lesbian to take this survey. For these participants the study focused on their sexual orientation but not their gender identity. Since bisexuality is a type of sexual orientation, it was not covered in this study. The reason for excluding transgender identities and bisexual identities primarily had to do with the lack of a model and assessment instrument to explain the development of either identity.

In their study of lesbian identity development and career development, Tomlinson and Fassinger (2003) designed their study to include those who identified as lesbian, gay, or questioning/exploring. As part of their demographic questions they asked the participants how they identified. Fifty-three percent identified as lesbian/gay, 22% bisexual/primarily lesbian, 13% bisexual/primarily heterosexual, 0.5% heterosexual, 0.5% transgender, and 11% as other. The researchers inferred that the participants who

self identified as bisexual, heterosexual, and other were questioning since they responded to the survey.

Like Tomlinson and Fassinger (2003), this study was targeted toward those who self identify as lesbian, gay, questioning, and exploring, because it was open to those who could possibly be in the first and second phases of identity development. As was mentioned in chapter two, many models suggest that individuals acknowledge an attraction to the same sex in the earlier phases; some even engage in same-sex behavior before self identifying. By including attraction and behavior a larger group of questioning individuals could be obtained in the sample.

The need to recruit individuals early in their sexual identity development was set against the need for internal validity. In one of the questions in the survey, participants were asked to describe their sexual orientation in a word or phrase. Those who indicated that they were bisexual were excluded from the sample. In two instances, participants self identified as straight. Because their identity development scores were outliers compared to the rest of the data, they were also excluded from the sample.

### Sampling Strategy

The goal of the sampling strategy was to obtain a sample diverse in terms of sexual identity development and involvement in LGBT organizations.

Multiple challenges are associated with sampling the LGBT population, especially when trying to obtain a representative sample of developmental phases. The biggest challenge is accessing the population and getting a sufficient response rate. Because of current attitudes towards LGBT individuals as well as the potential discrimination and social isolation associated with being identified as LGBT, this

population is difficult to find, hard to reach, and very resistant to identification with a sexual identity minority (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003).

Another challenge associated with sampling is obtaining a sufficiently diverse sample. The goal of this study was to analyze how different levels of identity development relate to the multiple ways of being involved. The students who are at the very beginning of their identity development were least likely to self identify as gay or lesbian and were probably the least likely to respond to the study. The results in chapter 4 indicate this. Additionally, those individuals in early phases of identity development are the least likely to even hear about the study (Tomlinson & Fassinger, 2003). Though it was speculated that it would be difficult to find students with none to little involvement, a large portion of participants indicated that they were not involved.

In response to these challenges non-probability sampling was used (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003). Specifically, a purposeful and snowball strategy was used. By being purposeful, this normally hard to reach population was surveyed and students from a wide variety of organizations were reached. By using a snowball approach, participants themselves could contact individuals who are not as developed or as involved in an organization. A quasi quota approach was also employed since sufficient numbers were needed from each phase of development. In order to do an ANOVA and chi-square, at least thirty participants were needed for each phase.

Unfortunately, using non-probability sampling limits generalization of the findings. The need to get a sample sufficiently large, however, was considered more important than overall generalizability. In this study, internal validity is more realistic to achieve than external validity. Even if a random sample approach were used, it would

still be very difficult to find a sufficient number of students at the beginning their development.

### *Ethical Concerns and Limitations*

Ethical concerns were extremely important in the sampling (and collection) strategy. Confidentiality was paramount. Fortunately, the membership of e-mail list-servs are traditionally kept confidential by LGBT organizations. When e-mails were sent to these list-servs, the researcher did not have to worry about breaching confidentiality. For mass e-mails that were sent out, though, individual e-mail addresses were kept hidden by using the “blind carbon copy” option for e-mailing. Additionally, student affairs staff were asked to forward announcements of the study to the students with whom they worked. In all correspondence, the confidentiality of all participants was stressed. Staff were asked not to forward the study announcement if it would have potentially put someone in an awkward or uncomfortable position. All correspondence from participants who expressed an interest in the study or had follow up questions after they had taken the survey were stored in password protected files on one password protected computer.

Another ethical concern was intrusion into the space of the LGBT students. Most students attend meetings and subscribe to e-mail list-servs to receive support and information about LGBT topics. Meetings in particular are intended to be a safe space. It was not the intention of the researcher to disrupt these meetings or to intrude. Therefore, the permission of the officers and advisor of the organizations were obtained beforehand. Also, the two primary staff members who work directly with LGBT students were consulted on how best to distribute the surveys.



The limitation of using only one institution is that the types of organizations and activities available to the participants are limited to what is offered at that institution. To counter this problem, participants were asked to list any off campus LGBT related organizations they participated in. It would have been better for the study if multiple institutions were included in this study. If that had been the case a broader range of type of involvement could be analyzed. Due to limited resources, though, one institution was the focus.

Since the survey was web based and individuals were asked to forward the information to others they knew, it was very likely that some students from other institutions would have responded. Since IRB approval was not obtained for those institutions, those participants were excluded from using the survey. At the beginning of both the web based and the paper based survey the participants were told clearly that students only from the institution being studied could participate. On the web based version, if the participant indicated that they were not from the institution, he or she was directed to an exit page thanking them for their participation.

## Measures

### *Gay and Lesbian Identity Development*

The model used to understand gay and lesbian identity development was the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). There had been two survey instruments developed for this mode that were used in this study: the Lesbian Identity Questionnaire (revised) (Fassinger, 2001b) and the Gay Identity Questionnaire (revised) (Fassinger, 2001a).

The rationale for using these instruments was due to their measurement of lesbian and gay identity development based on the Inclusive Model produced by Fassinger and associates. As was discussed in Chapter Two, the Inclusive Model provides unique insight into the development of attitudes of one's self as a gay/lesbian individual and the attitudes one has toward the lesbian/gay community. Unlike other models, the Inclusive Model suggests that these two attitudes develop concurrently. This paradigm provides a more complex understanding of gay and lesbian identity development that can perhaps shed more light on how development impacts behavior (e.g., involvement) than if other models were used.

The Lesbian Identity Questionnaire (revised) and the Gay Identity Questionnaire (revised) are similarly structured. Both ask 40 Likert Scale questions concerning how strongly the participant agrees or disagrees with a statement about their current attitudes about his/her homosexual identity (1= completely disagree, 7= completely agree). Five questions are devoted to each phase of the Inclusive Model (which is a total of eight phases). Examples of items for each phase are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Example items for the Gay and Lesbian Identity Questionnaires*

	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Group Membership</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	“I feel pulled toward women in ways I don’t understand” (lesbian version)	“I had no idea there were lesbian/gay people out there.”
<b>Phase 2</b>	“I want to be closer to men or to a certain man” (gay version)	“I think a lot about fitting in as a gay man and developing my own gay style” (gay version)
<b>Phase 3</b>	“I clearly feel more intimate sexually and emotionally with women than men” (lesbian version)	“I prefer spending time with gay people because I find them much more interesting than heterosexuals” (gay version)
<b>Phase 4</b>	“I feel a deep contentment about my love of other men” (gay version)	“I rely on my lesbian friends for support, but I have some good heterosexual friends as well” (lesbian version)

There are two ways to score the responses. One way to interpret the instrument is to assign one phase to each process based on the highest scores for each process (Fassinger, 2001a; Fassinger, 2001b). For example, a student could be found to be in phase three for individual identity development and phase two for group membership development. These two phases represent the level of development for the respondent.

Another way to interpret the instrument is to consider the individual’s scores in each phase (Fassinger, 2001a; Fassinger, 2001b; Tomlinson & Fassinger, 2003). For each

phase, scores can range from 5 to 35. According to McCarn and Fassinger (1996) this second method better captures the concept that a person can exhibit attitudes that represent multiple phases at even given time. People are not often fixed in just one phase. This second method provides eight continuous variables for each participant.

This study used both scoring options. Using both provides a better understanding of the relationship between identity development and involvement. Using both methods will also be useful for future studies as researchers decide between the two methods.

The different interpretations of the instrument produce different types of variables. Assigning someone to one level produces categorical data. All of those individuals who are in the same phase developmentally can be considered to be a group; therefore a comparative design can be used to see how involvement is different between those groups. This method was very useful since involvement could be quantified.

On the other hand, using the scores from each phase produces continuous data (scores from 5 to 35). Comparing this data to involvement involved a bivariate correlation.

Porter (1998a) used the first method as it provides a useful way to compare group means for the different phases; Tomlinson and Fassinger (2003) used the second method since the continuous variables helped with tests for correlations and regression.

There are some potential limitations of the instrument. These mainly have to do with internal consistency and confusing instructions.

In his dissertation, Porter (1998) analyzed the reliability of the original questionnaires. Specifically, he found the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the eight scales (phases) and separated them for men and women. Most of his alphas were above .60, but

three scales were much lower. Individual phase three (Deepening/ commitment) for women was at .57. Group phase two (Exploration) for women was at .53. Group phase four (Internationalization/synthesis) for men was .29, which is very low. Porter provided no clear explanation as to why these scales were so low. The last scale in particular was low enough to suggest the questions were not capturing the construct at all.

Porter (1998a) reported that many students wrote comments in the margin of the questionnaire. Many participants indicated that they were confused about how they should respond to some of the questionnaire's statements. The questionnaire directs participants to respond based on how they feel currently. Students indicated they were confused on what time parameters "currently" means. This confusion could explain some of the lower alphas, but unfortunately it was not reported which specific questions students were confused about. This confusion could explain why specific scales are so low or why in general the coefficients are low.

Mohr and Fassinger (2000) offered an explanation for the low coefficients. They, too, found low alphas for male and female participants for group phase 3 and individual phase 4 (the only two scales they analyzed). Mohr and Fassinger (2000) suggested that the internal consistency might be low due to the constructs being multidimensional.

Since these studies, Fassinger has created a revised version of both gay and lesbian questionnaires (Fassinger, 2001). Tomlinson and Fassinger's study (2003) is the most recent one that used the revised version for lesbians. The study focused only on women participants, and the alpha coefficients were all much higher than what was reported by Porter (1998). Though this data does not include males, it does suggest that

the revised version of the questionnaire addressed some of the confusion, or better measured its constructs at least for lesbians.

The current study revealed that there was some improvement in the reliability of the revised version of the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha coefficients are reported in Table 6 in chapter four. The coefficients are high for the individual phases for both males and females (ranging from  $r=.8002$  to  $r=.9292$ ), but the coefficients are consistently lower for group phases. The group phase four for males is especially low ( $r=.1582$ ).

To see if participants experience similar confusion as they have in previous studies, an open question was added to the end of the questionnaire. Based on the recommendations of Fassinger (Ruth Fassinger, personal communication, November 11, 2004), participants were asked, “regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences your gay/lesbian identity?” The participants were also asked, “regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences the gay/lesbian community?” In the event the participants experience confusion in the questionnaire, how they respond to these two open ended questions might provide some insight. In addition, at the end of the entire survey, participants were given a chance to provide any feedback or comments, too.

#### *Involvement in LGBT Organizations*

For this study an instrument was created to measure the level and type of involvement in LGBT organizations. Unfortunately there are no current instruments to use that would adequately measure the variables in this study. Most of the literature has not focused on involvement in specific organizations, let alone LGBT organizations.

Therefore a new survey had been created (please refer to Appendices C and D for the lesbian and gay versions). Components of this survey are based on the programming model of the Office of Campus Programs at the University of Maryland (University of Maryland, 2004, <http://www.union.umd.edu/diversity/index.html>). This programming model has not been used in an assessment or survey instrument.

Clearly, some of the major disadvantages for using a new instrument is that psychometrics have not been determined.

An advantage to this new instrument, though, is that it directly addresses the key variables being analyzed in this study unlike any other instrument in the field currently.

The instrument measures four primary aspects of involvement in LGBT organizations: time of involvement, breadth, depth, and type of involvement. Time was defined as the number of hours per week a participant contributed to an LGBT related organization. Breadth was defined as how many organizations the individual was involved with. Depth was defined as to what degree the individual was involved with each organization. Depth was operationalized on a four point Likert Scale (0=not involved, 1=spectator, 2=participant, 3=leader). Finally, the type variable was based on how the participants categorize the purpose of each of the organizations they are involved with.

In the instrument the participants were given a list of every LGBT related organization at the university. The Director of the LGBT resource center, the graduate assistant who advises LGBT programming, and the president of the primary undergraduate LGBT organization were asked to brainstorm the organizations on campus that primarily serve the LGBT community, focus on LGBT topics in its programming,

and/or has a majority of LGBT members. Based on this feedback a list of organizations was created for the survey. Since the list generated was not exhaustive there was a free response question for students to add any other organizations not listed.

A description of each level of involvement— level one (spectator), level two (participant), and level three (leader)—were given to the participants so they knew how to rate their involvement.

The spectator level of involvement is the most basic and lowest level of involvement. It includes subscribing to the e-mail list-serv of the organization, attending meetings on an infrequent basis, and basically keeping up with the goings on of the organization but not actively contributing time or work to the group.

The participant level of involvement is a higher level of involvement than the Spectator level. It would include all of the activities associated with the Spectator level in addition to attending meetings and events on a regular basis, becoming an active member, serving on a committee, or volunteering at an event. In this level the individual becomes an active contributor to the group.

The leader level of involvement is the highest level of involvement; these are individuals who serve as positional or non-positional leaders. This would include officers, chairs of committees, and discussion facilitators. It would also include individuals who ran or applied for these positions. This level could also include those who influence the discussion and decisions of the organizations but do not have any formal position. This level represents those individuals who actively influence the organization or group to accomplish its goals.



Each level was given a point value. The responses were scored such that 1=participant and 2=leader. The depth score was the cumulative score for each individual based on the sum of the number of organizations with which they were either participants (scored as 1) or leaders (scored as 2). No involvement will be given a zero score.

Breadth of involvement will be the number of organizations the survey participant rated at least a “spectator” level of involvement.

After rating their level of involvement, participants categorized the purpose of those organizations which they participate in. These categories included: advocacy, support, social, education, cultural, and other. Instead of the researcher pre-categorizing the organizations, this method allowed the participant to explain what they interpreted the role of the organization to be, based on their involvement. Conceivably, two members of the same organization could interpret the mission of the organization differently if their identity development was at different phases. Potentially, their interpretation of the organization could also differ based on their level of involvement. Definitions of each type of organization were provided so that participants had an understanding of the terms.

The participants were then asked how many hours a week they spent on the organizations they listed that they were involved with. This time could include meetings, events, volunteer work, or even reading e-mails.

Along with these questions about involvement, students were asked a number of demographic questions concerning their age; class standing; how they identify in terms of sexual orientation, gender, race, and ethnicity; how many class credit hours they are taking this semester; and how many hours they work at a job. These demographic questions were helpful to determine if a diverse sample was obtained.

It was difficult to test for reliability of this instrument. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients could not be determined since only one item was used to measure involvement. As was discussed earlier, though, “time” encapsulates both concepts of depth and breadth. Testing to see how the depth and breadth scores correlate with time might be one way to test for reliability.

Some potential threats to internal validity include subject effects. Participants, if interacting with each other while completing the questionnaire, could experience rivalry as they rate their own involvement levels. Results would then be exaggerated. To avoid this from happening, the researcher directed all participants in the written version of the questionnaire to quietly fill out the survey.

Another potential threat to internal validity was the sample selection. The multiple ways of defining who could take the survey may have created wide variations in the results. If sufficient numbers had been obtained, it might have been useful to compare the scores of those who self identify as gay, lesbian, questioning, or exploring to those who do not. Unfortunately, sufficient numbers were not obtained to conduct this comparison.

#### Pilot test

Before the participants were surveyed, a pilot test was done to check for any problems or unclear instructions in the questionnaires. Graduate assistants and students at another institution were asked to give feedback on face validity and on the layout of the questionnaire. Concerning construct validity, it was crucial that the questionnaire sufficiently capture the construct of “involvement.” Experts in the community were also consulted; these individuals included staff members in the Campus Programs office, the LGBT resource center, and faculty.

Both the written version and the web based version were included in this pilot test. This provided a good opportunity to see if any confusion exists about the directions of the Lesbian/Gay Identity Questionnaire. Based on the feedback from the pilot-test participants, appropriate changes were made to the survey. The most important change recommended was the wording of the question asking individuals to identify their sexual orientation. Originally, the question asked participants to select from a list of terms which best described. The pilot test participants suggested that this question allow free response. Therefore, the question was reworded. Also, it was determined how long, on average, the written version and the web based versions take to complete. The pilot test individuals reported that the survey took approximately twenty minutes.

#### Data Collection

Students were contacted about the study through multiple means. The current student organizations existing on campus were asked to promote the survey amongst their members. E-mails announcing the study were sent to all of the LGBT related list-servs, ally list-servs, and other list-servs. Also, instructors who taught LGBT related courses were asked to mention the study to their students. Individuals in key administrative positions who knew many lesbian and gay students were asked to pass along the information regarding the study. Examples of these positions included the staff of the LGBT Resource Center and the Office of Campus Programs. All individuals contacted were encouraged to pass information to others who are not currently involved in any LGBT organizations.

Two versions of the questionnaire were used: a paper version and a web based version. The paper version is intended to be distributed at meetings and classes. There is

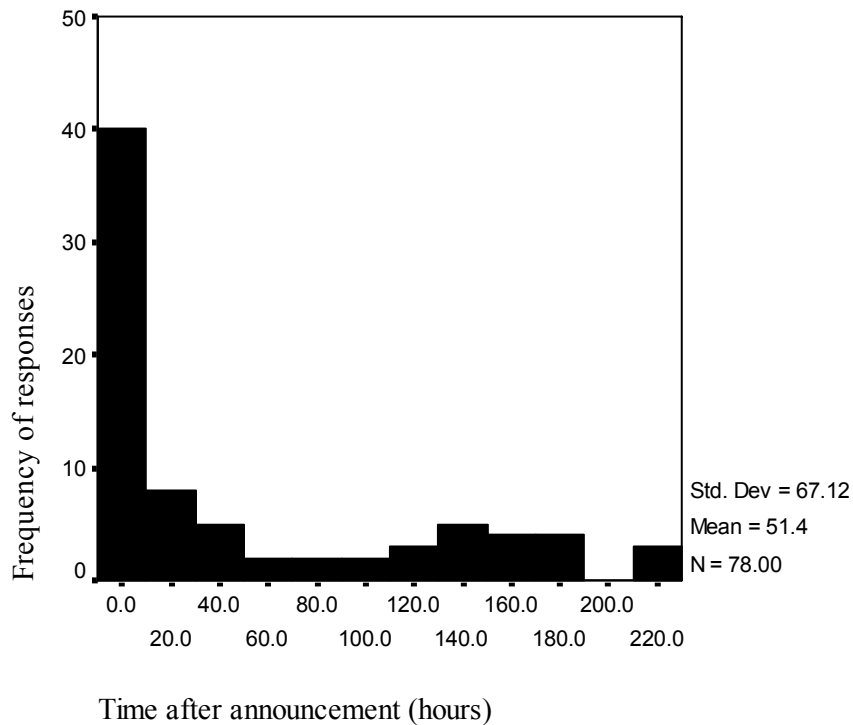
a higher rate of response associated with surveys given out in person than with the web based version. The web based survey was targeted towards those individuals who were questioning their identity and/or were not very involved in organizations. The e-mails distributed included a hyperlink to the survey's website. It was intended that these two forms of the survey captured a wide enough segment of the population.

Tomlinson and Fassinger (2003) used a web based approach to survey lesbian and questioning students. Respondents first had to contact the researchers to obtain the password to access the web based survey. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, the researchers wanted to prevent internet surfers from stumbling onto the survey and taking it. Secondly, the researchers wished to track the response rate for the web based version: the number of participants who completed the survey out of the number of students who contacted them for the password. This response rate was .78 for their study. Though the present study did not have a password protected site, it was hoped that similar high rates of completion would occur.

Chart 1 shows the frequency of completed responses to the online questionnaire over the course of data collection. As is shown, the majority of responses occurred at the very beginning of when the survey was announced. Two reminder e-mails were sent out during this time period as well. The first occurred after 121 hours, and the second occurred after 192 hours. There was a slight increase in frequency immediately after the reminders.

Chart 1

*Frequency of responses during data collection*



### Procedure

Two versions of the questionnaire were made available for participants to complete: a written version and a web based version. As stated in the sampling strategy section the study was announced on multiple e-mail list-servs, and university staff and faculty were encouraged to pass along the information to students they worked with.

Organizations were also approached. The staff that worked with LGBT students recommended to the researcher that only certain organizations be approached. To avoid any threats to confidentiality or anonymity, organizations and groups like the support groups in the counseling center were not approached. Instead, the researcher approached

several LGBT organizations that the staff members recommended because of the openness of those organizations. One organization responded saying that they were not holding any events during the time period of the data collection. Another organization did not respond. One organization did express interest, and the researcher arranged with the officers and advisor of that organization to spend a portion of their biweekly meeting on the survey.

At that meeting the researcher explained the purpose of the study, answered any questions, and emphasized that students should not take both the web-based version and the written version. Once initial questions were over the researcher distributed the consent form which included written information about the study, contact information of the researcher and the advisor, and explanations of any potential stress the questionnaire might create. The consent form, as well as the researcher, emphasized that at any point the participant may terminate his/her involvement with the study. The researcher also emphasized that all responses would be kept confidential and secured until the research of the data was concluded. Once the research was over the responses would be destroyed.

As an incentive to participate, the researcher arranged with the organization to have food and drinks provided for the participants. Also, attached to the survey was a raffle form for participants to complete if they would be interested in winning one of two \$50 gift certificates to the University book store. Participants would separate this from the rest of the questionnaire and turn it into the researcher when he/she was done with the questionnaire. Again, it was emphasized that this raffle form was kept extremely confidential.

When the e-mails advertising the survey were distributed to the list-servs, these messages included a link to the web based survey. The first page of the survey repeated the same information as the e-mail announcement: purpose of the study; that it would be limited to the students of that institution; and that the survey was for those who self identified as gay, lesbian, exploring, and/or questioning; who experience attraction to the same sex; or who engage in same-sex behavior. The participant then clicked a link that said, "By proceeding with this survey you acknowledge that you qualify as a participant."

The next page included the consent form. Just like the written version, it included more specific information about the purpose of the study, what would be involved, the contact information of the researcher and the advisor, any stress the participant may experience during the questionnaire, and finally, that the participant might stop participation at any time. There was a mandatory check box the participant had to select to be able to proceed. This check box stated, "by checking this box, I give consent for my responses to be analyzed." If an individual did not click the box, then he or she was taken to a "thank you" website. If the participant did click the box, then the next page was the first page of the study.

At the end of the web based version the participant submitted their responses. After submission, the participants were taken to a page thanking them for their participation, reviewing the two instruments they completed, and giving them the option to include their name and contact information for the gift certificate raffle. It was emphasized that their contact information was not being associated with their responses (since their responses had already been submitted). Once they decided on whether to complete this section they could submit their information.

All web based responses were automatically added to an excel type document, to which only the researcher had access. The responses from the written version were secured and only in the possession of the researcher. The responses from the raffle were destroyed once two names were drawn and the gift certificates given to the winners. The responses to the study were saved until that data was no longer needed for research.

#### Statistical tests

Several statistical tests were used to analyze the results of the study. As already stated, multiple sub-variables were gathered from the instruments. Some of these variables are categorical and some are continuous. Therefore, the tests being used included t-tests, correlations, and Chi-squares. Several supplemental statistical tests were also performed to investigate the relationship between other variables that were not directly related to the hypotheses of the study.

The identity development measure produced two types of variables: categorical data and continuous data. Based on their responses, participants were assigned a phase for individual identity development and a phase for group membership identity development. Since small numbers were found for the early phases of identity development, the first three phases of individual identity development were collapsed together. The mean time involved for these individuals was compared to the mean time involved of participants who were in the fourth phase of individual identity development. The same collapsing and comparison by a t-test was done for group membership identity development: the mean time involved of participants in phases one through three were compared to the mean time involved of those participants in phase four.



In addition to being assigned to phases of identity development, each participant also had a continuous score for each phase of identity development (a total of eight phases). These continuous scores were correlated with the three measures of involvement: time, breadth, and depth. This included 24 correlations.

The types of organizations that participants were involved with were analyzed. The five types of organizations included advocacy, support, social, education, and cultural. Within each phase of identity development, the frequency of each type of organization was analyzed using Chi-square tests. Just like with the t-tests described earlier, the first three phases were collapsed together because of small numbers. Follow up tests were performed to investigate significant differences that were found within phases.

Finally, several supplemental analyses were performed. Correlations were performed between age and the age of certain coming out milestones (coming out to friends, coming out to immediate family, coming out to extended family, and coming out to coworkers). Age and ages of coming out also were correlated with the scores of the phases of identity development. The scores of undergraduate and graduate students were compared to see if any differences existed in coming out, identity development scores, level of involvement, or type of involvement.

## CHAPTER IV

This chapter presents the demographic characteristics of the participants of the study and the results of statistical analyses proposed for this study. Three hypotheses were tested to determine whether identity development was related to involvement in LGBT organizations. The first hypothesis tested the difference in the mean time involvement among the phases of identity development. This hypothesis was tested by using t-tests to compare the means (shown in Table 14). The second hypothesis tested the correlation between time, breadth, and depth of involvement and the scores of phases of identity development. Correlations were used to test this hypothesis (shown in Table 16). The third hypothesis tested the type of involvement for each of the different phases of identity development. A chi-square test was used to test this. For all tests, the null hypothesis was that no difference existed. In all statistical tests, the level of significance was set at .05. Identity development was measured using the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire (Revised) (Fassinger, 2001a; Fassinger, 2001b), which is based on the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). Level and type of involvement were measured by the questionnaire developed specifically for this study.

In addition to testing the study's hypotheses, several supplemental tests were applied to the data. Though these tests were not directly related to the original three hypotheses of the study, they were done to gain a better understanding of the findings. For example, correlations were done to examine any relationship between age, coming out, and identity development. Intercorrelations among identity development phases were also done to investigate any possible relationships.

## Participants

The total sample size included 89 participants. Originally 103 participants completed either the written or online survey. Out of these, 11 self identified as “bisexual”, “bicurious”, or “bi” only when asked to describe in a word or phrase their sexual orientation. They did not indicate any other terms. As was originally discussed in chapters one and three, it was decided that individuals who self-identified as bisexual would be excluded from the sample. In addition to these 11 individuals, three individuals self identified as “straight” or “heterosexual.” The identity development scores of these three individuals were the lowest possible scores, meaning that they did not agree with any of the statements. Even if these individuals experienced some emotional or physical attraction to the same sex they should have gotten at least some score on the questionnaire. Therefore, it was decided that most likely they were indeed heterosexual, and they were excluded as well. Other individuals who self described themselves as “straight” or “heterosexual” did have scores on the identity development scales. Therefore, they were included in the study.

Table 2 includes a summary of how individuals self described their sexual orientation. A large number of individuals self described themselves as gay. A lower than expected portion of the sample used the term “lesbian” (13.5%, n=12). A sizable portion of the sample did not even use the descriptors “gay” or “lesbian” (29.2%, n=26). Some examples of terms and phrases that were included in the “other” category included, “nondiscriminating,” “fag,” “other,” “closeted,” “not straight,” “menlover,” and “due north.”

Table 2

*Summary of responses to self described sexual orientation*

Keyword or phrase	% (n)
“Gay”	57.3% (n=51)
“Lesbian”	13.5 (12)
“Homosexual” or “homo”	10.1 (9)
“Queer”	6.7 (6)
“Bisexual” or “bi”	4.5 (4)
“Curious” or “exploring”	6.7 (6)
“Straight” or “heterosexual”	3.4 (3)
Continuum: “fluid” or “Kinsey scale” or percentage	3.4 (3)
Other	9 (8)
Combination of terms	13.5 (12)

Note. Singular responses could result in being categorized in multiple labels, which is why sections add to more than 100%.

As is indicated in Table 3, the majority of participants took the online version (87.6%, n=78) in comparison to the written version (12.4%, n=11) of the questionnaire. There was a large portion of the sample that used the male version of the questionnaire (70.8%, n=63). When asked about gender identity, 68.5% (n=61) self identified as male, and 29.2% (n=25) self identified as female. It is important to note that individuals had the option to select multiple forms of identity for gender, and 5.6% (n=5) identified with male or female and several items such as transgender, gender queer, and other.

For race and ethnicity, 72% (n=64) of the participants self identified as white. Twenty-eight percent (n=25) of participants identified as students of color, which is comparable to the 27% students of color at the university (University of Maryland, n.d., <http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/facts/quickfacts.cfm>). African Americans represented 7.9% (n=7) of the sample, and the overall African American enrollment at the University is 10.8%. Asian Americans represented 11.2% (n=10) of the sample, and the overall enrollment of Asian Americans is at 12.7% of the enrollment.

For class standing, 60% (n=53) of the sample were undergraduate, and graduate students accounted for 33.7% (n=30) of the sample. Graduate students at the university account for 28% of total enrollment (University of Maryland, n.d., <http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/facts/quickfacts.cfm>). Though there were no comparison tests done to look for significant differences, it does seem like the proportion of graduate students is higher than it should be based on the university demographics.

Table 3

*Demographics of participants*

		% (n)
Type	Written	12.4% (11)
	Online	87.6 (78)
Version	Male version	70.8 (63)
	Female version	29.2 (26)
Gender	Male	68.5 (61)
	Female	29.2 (25)
	Transgender	2.2 (2)
	Transsexual	1.1 (1)
	Gender queer	6.7 (6)
	Other	2.2 (2)
	Multiple answers	5.6 (5)
	No answer	0
Race/ethnicity	African American	7.9 (7)
	Asian Pacific American	11.2 (10)
	Caucasian	71.9 (64)
	Latino/Latina/Hispanic	3.4 (3)
	Native American	1.1 (1)
	Multi-racial/ethnic	6.7 (6)
	Other	7.9 (7)
	No answer	0
Class standing	Freshman	10.1 (9)
	Sophomore	21.3 (19)
	Junior	13.5 (12)
	Senior	14.6 (13)
	Graduate student	33.7 (30)
	Other	2.2 (2)
	No answer	4.5 (4)

Note. For the questions related to gender and race/ethnicity, participants could select multiple categories, which is why sections add to more than 100%.

As is indicated in Table 4, the mean age of the participants was 23.28 (SD=4.14).

Out of the total sample, 78.7% (n=70) indicated that they had disclosed their sexual orientation to their immediate family. The mean age of when they came out to their immediate families was 19.17. Forty-nine percent (n=44) of the sample indicated that

they were out to their extended family, and the mean age of coming out for these participants was 20.30. Those who had come out to friends represented 92.1% (n=82) of the total sample. The mean age of when they came out to their friends was 18.41. Lastly, those who had come out to coworkers accounted for 65.1% (n=58) of the sample; the mean age of coming out for these individuals was 20.00.

Table 4

*Age and Age of Coming Out Demographics*

	Out % (n)	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Age	--	18	38	23.28	4.14
Age participant came out to immediate family	78.7 (70)	12	31	19.17	3.75
Age participant came out to extended family	49.4 (44)	12	31	20.30	3.98
Age participant came out to friends	92.1 (82)	12	31	18.41	2.94
Age participant came out to coworkers	65.1 (58)	15	31	20.00	2.99

As was explained in chapter three, the primary method of determining the phase of an individual's identity development was decided by the individual's highest score amongst the four phases of individual identity development and the highest score amongst the four phases of group membership development. Based on this procedure, each participant was placed in two phases: an individual identity development phase and a group membership development phase. Table 5 indicates the frequency of individuals in each phase of individual and group identity development and the frequency of individuals in combined individual and group identity phases. There was a considerable concentration of individuals (66.3%, n=59) in the last phases of both individual and

group identity development phases. Table 18 (located in Appendix F) includes examples of responses to open ended identity development questions.

Table 5

*Number of participants in each phase of identity development*

Phase	Total % (n)	Group Membership Phase 1	Group Membership Phase 2	Group Membership Phase 3	Group Membership Phase 4
Total % (n)	N=89	3.4 (3)	7.9 (7)	20 (16)	70.8 (63)
Individual Phase 1	3.4 (3)	2	1	0	0
Individual Phase 2	4.5 (4)	0	1	1	2
Individual Phase 3	10.1 (9)	1	1	5	2
Individual Phase 4	82 (73)	0	4	10	59

Note. Phase of identity development was determined by the participant's highest score in individual and group membership phases.

Preliminary Analyses

The means and standard deviations, as well as the minimum and maximum levels for each measure are presented in Table 6. The participants scored high in both individual and group phase four (M=28.51 and M=24.86 for males, and M=28.42 and M=25.15 for females). The largest variability was found in individual phase three for both men and women, as shown by the relatively large standard deviation (SD=8.44 and SD=8.27, respectively). Also included are the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the identity development phases for both the male version and the female version of the questionnaire. The coefficients were high for individual phases for both the male and female version (ranging from  $r=.8002$  to  $r=.9292$ ). On the other hand, the coefficients were low for the group membership phases for both males and females (ranging from



$r=.1582$  to  $r=.7893$ ). In particular, the coefficient for group membership phase four for males was remarkably low ( $r= .1582$ ).

Table 6

*Means, standard deviations, and reliability measures for each variable, by gender*

Variable	Total (N=89)				Males (n=63)			Females (n=26)		
	Min. <sup>β</sup>	Max. <sup>γ</sup>	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Mean	SD	$\alpha$
Time	0	30	2.77	4.83	2.94	4.80		2.36	4.99	
Breadth	0	9	2.79	2.04	2.78	2.06		2.81	2.04	
Depth	0	21	2.55	3.43	2.52	3.59		2.62	3.09	
I 1	5	33	10.92	6.35	10.59	5.91	.8143	11.73	7.39	.8983
I 2	5	35	10.48	6.97	10.03	6.58	.8650	11.58	7.89	.9292
I 3	5	35	15.63	8.49	14.62	8.44	.8455	18.08	8.27	.8069
I 4	9	35	28.48	6.41	28.51	5.97	.8002	28.42	7.50	.9152
G 1	5	25	11.08	5.77	10.84	5.69	.6789	11.65	6.02	.7893
G 2	5	31	15.02	6.15	14.67	6.57	.6881	15.88	5.00	.5312
G 3	8	30	19.97	5.49	20.29	5.79	.5935	19.19	4.72	.4238
G 4	10	32	24.94	4.58	24.86	4.22	.1582	25.15	5.46	.6592

Note. Males and females refers to the participants who took the male or female version of the study  
 $\alpha$  is the Cronbach alpha coefficient statistic.

$\beta$  Based on how the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire scores items, “five” is considered to be absolute zero for scores on the identity development scales for phases.

$\gamma$  The maximum possible score is 35, based on how the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire scores items. Time was the number of hours a week (on average) the participant spent with LGBT related organizations. Breadth was defined as the number of LGBT related organizations in which the participant was involved. Depth was measured by adding the number of LGBT organizations in which the participant was involved as a “participant” (assigned the value of 1) or as a leader (assigned the value of 2).

I1, I2, I3, I4 refer to individual phases of identity development 1, 2, 3, and 4

G1, G2, G3, G4 refer to group membership phases of identity development 1, 2, 3, and 4

Table 7 shows the correlation between time involved with LGBT organizations and time spent with employment. Even though the correlation is negative ( $r=-.115$ ), there does not appear to be a significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 7

*Correlation between time of involvement and time at work*

Variable	Time involved	Time at work
Time involved	1	
Time at work	-.115	1

Table 8 show t-test comparisons between undergraduate students and graduate students for the submeasures of involvement: time involved, breadth, and depth. There does not appear to be a significant difference in the breadth or depth of involvement between undergraduate and graduate students. However, there does appear to be a significant difference in the mean time involved in LGBT organizations between undergraduate ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=6.02$ ) and graduate students ( $M=1.27$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ),  $t(81)=2.165$ ,  $p=.033$  (two-tailed). The mean time involved of undergraduate students is significantly higher than the mean time involved of graduate students.

Table 8

*Comparisons of mean time involved, breadth, and depth for undergraduate and graduate students*

	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Time		Mean Time (hours)				
Undergraduate	53	3.68	6.02	2.165	81	.033*
Graduate	30	1.27	1.18			
Breadth		Mean Breadth Score				
Undergraduate	53	3.02	2.21	1.734	81	.087
Graduate	30	2.23	1.50			
Depth		Mean depth score				
Undergraduate	53	2.83	3.93	.849	81	.398
Graduate	30	2.17	2.25			

\*significant at .05

Table 9 shows the correlations of age, ages of coming out milestones (to immediate family, extended family, friends, and to coworkers), and identity development phases. As the tables indicates, the ages of coming out to different populations are strongly intercorrelated. Age had a strong positive correlation with the ages of coming out (ranging from  $r=.595$  and  $r=.756$ ). There was also a positive relationship found between age and the scores of phase four in both individual and group membership ( $r=.333$  and  $r=.224$ , respectively). A negative relationship between age and the early phases (one thru three) was also found (ranging from  $r= -.353$  to  $r= -.449$ ). Coming out to immediate family, extended family, and coworkers also had negative relationships with some early phases of identity development.

Table 9

*Correlations between age and age of coming out to different populations and the individual and group phases*

	Age	Age coming out to immediate family	Age coming out to extended family	Age coming out to friends	Age coming out to coworkers
Age	1				
Age coming out to immediate family	.746**	1			
Age coming out to extended family	.713**	.898**	1		
Age coming out to Friends	.595**	.790**	.811**	1	
Age coming out to Coworkers	.756**	.765**	.806**	.836*	1
I 1	-.353**	-.269*	-.319*	-.162	-.225
I 2	-.356**	-.217	-.253	-.120	-.153
I 3	-.410**	-.286*	-.336*	-.182	-.266*
I 4	.333**	.181	.202	.095	.251
G 1	-.449**	-.278*	-.244	-.177	-.304*
G 2	-.425**	-.251*	-.254	-.124	-.221
G 3	-.204	-.243*	-.166	-.138	-.104
G 4	.224*	-.043	.030	-.090	-.104

\*significant at .05, \*\*significant at .01

Another series of correlations were performed to see the relationships between the scores of the identity development phases. These correlations are presented in Table 10. For both individual and group membership, early phases (one, two, and three) tended to have a significant positive correlation with each other and a significant negative correlation with the fourth phase. Additionally, phases in one process had a significant positive correlation with its corresponding phase in the other process. The fourth phase of group membership tended to not be significantly correlated with the individual phases except for individual phase four ( $r=.587$ ).

Table 10

*Correlations amongst individual and group phases of identity development*

Phase	I 1	I 2	I 3	I 4	G 1	G 2	G 3	G 4
I 1	1							
I 2	.878**	1						
I 3	.718**	.714**	1					
I 4	-.401**	-.461**	-.196	1				
G 1	.731**	.715**	.664**	-.516**	1			
G 2	.682**	.677**	.767**	-.398**	.729**	1		
G 3	.434**	.440**	.497**	.081	.332**	.576**	1	
G 4	-.148	-.200	-.029	.587**	-.380**	-.282**	.112	1

\*significant at .05

\*\*significant at .01

Table 11 presents t-test comparisons between the mean identity development scores of undergraduate and graduate students. The analyses indicate significant differences for all phases of identity development except individual phase four,  $t(81)=-1.84$ ,  $p=.069$  (two-tailed), and group membership phase four,  $t(81)=-.475$ ,  $p=.636$  (two-tailed). Except for these last two phases of identity development, undergraduate students have significantly higher mean scores than graduate students for phases one through three for both individual identity development and group membership development. The mean score for individual phase four for undergraduate students is not different from the mean score for graduate students. Nor is the mean score for group membership phase four for undergraduate students different from the mean score for graduate students.

Table 11

*Comparison of mean scores of identity development phases between undergraduate and graduate students*

Phase	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Individual						
Phase 1						
Undergraduate	53	12.5	6.675	3.93	81	.000**
Graduate	30	7.3	3.834			
Individual						
Phase 2						
Undergraduate	53	12.0	7.813	3.26	81	.002**
Graduate	30	7.0	3.783			
Individual						
Phase 3						
Undergraduate	53	17.8	8.603	3.90	81	.000**
Graduate	30	10.8	6.224			
Individual						
Phase 4						
Undergraduate	53	27.6	6.584	-1.84	81	.069
Graduate	30	30.3	5.886			

\*\*significant at .01



Table 11 (continued)

Phase	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Group						
Phase 1						
Undergraduate	53	12.5	5.642	4.09	81	.000**
Graduate	30	7.6	4.286			
Group						
Phase 2						
Undergraduate	53	16.2	5.829	3.23	81	.002**
Graduate	30	11.9	6.005			
Group						
Phase 3						
Undergraduate	53	21.1	5.383	3.03	81	.003**
Graduate	30	17.5	4.883			
Group						
Phase 4						
Undergraduate	53	24.7	4.624	-.475	81	.636
Graduate	30	25.2	4.877			

\*\*significant at .01

Table 12 shows the categorical comparisons of type of involvement for undergraduate students and graduate students. Undergraduates had a significant difference in the frequency of some types of organizations,  $\chi^2 (4, 421) = 10.081, p = .039$ . Graduate students did not have a significant difference in the frequency of some types of organizations,  $\chi^2 (4, 166) = 8.337, p = .080$ . Follow up chi-square analyses reveal that for undergraduate students, social type organizations are significantly more frequent than cultural type organizations,  $\chi^2 (1, 175) = 4.806, p = .028$ , and social type organizations are significantly more frequent than advocacy type organizations,  $\chi^2 (1, 174) = 5.172, p = .023$ .

Table 12

*Comparison of Type of Organizations for participants, by status of students*

Type of Organization	Advocacy Frequency (expected n for row)	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$ df p-value
Undergraduate Students (n=53)	72 (84.2)	98 (84.2)	102 (84.2)	76 (84.2)	73 (84.2)	10.081 4 .039*
Graduate Students (n=30)	35 (33.2)	41 (33.2)	39 (33.2)	31 (33.2)	20 (33.2)	8.337 4 .080

\*significant at .05

Note. For undergraduate students, social type organizations are significantly more frequent than cultural and advocacy organizations.

Additional chi-square analyses reveal significant differences in frequency of types of students in each type of organization. Table 13 shows that for social type organizations, there is a higher than expected frequency of undergraduate students than graduate students,  $\chi^2 (1, 141) = 4.257, p = .039$ . There is also a higher than expected frequency of undergraduate students than graduate students in cultural type organizations,  $\chi^2 (1, 93) = 8.480, p = .004$ . The proportion for the expected frequency of undergraduate students and graduate students was based on the proportion of undergraduate to graduate student ratio in the sample of the study.

Table 13

*Comparison of Type of Organizations for participants, by status of students*

Type of Organization	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
	Frequency (expected n for column)				
Undergraduate Students (n=53)	72 (68.5)	98 (89)	102 (90.2)	76 (68.5)	73 (59.5)
Graduate Students (n=30)	35 (38.5)	41 (50)	39 (50.8)	31 (38.5)	20 (33.5)
$\chi^2$	.503	2.552	4.257	2.294	8.480
df	1	1	1	1	1
p-value	.478	.110	.039*	.130	.004**

\*significant at .05

\*\*significant at .01

## Main Analyses

### *Differences in Level of Involvement by Phase of Identity Development*

*Null Hypothesis 1:* There is no difference in the time of involvement among the phases of identity development.

Originally, a 2-way ANOVA was to be used to analyze any significant differences in time of involvement by each identity development phase. Unfortunately, the early phases were not well represented in the sample, so it was decided to collapse phases one, two, and three together and compare them to phase four for both individual and group (refer to Table 14), allowing for larger subsample comparisons. The alpha level was lowered to .025 to protect against Type 1 error. (The initial table including all four phases with the mean time involved for each phase can be found in Appendix G.)

Table 14

### *Mean time involved based on identity development phase*

Phase	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Time (hours)						
Individual						
Phase 1-3	16	3.29	6.07	.472	87	.638
Phase 4	73	2.66	4.56			
Group						
Phase 1-3	26	1.93	1.92	-1.06	87	.293
Phase 4	63	3.12	5.59			

There were no significant differences between time of involvement for phases one through three and phase four for either individual or group identity development. Specifically, for individual identity development, there was no significant difference between the mean time involved for individuals in phases one through three ( $M=3.29$ ;  $SD=6.07$ ) and phase four ( $M=2.66$ ;  $SD=4.66$ ),  $t(87)=.472$ ,  $p=.638$  (one-tailed). Nor was there a significant difference between the mean time involved of individuals in group membership phases one through three ( $M=1.93$ ;  $SD=1.92$ ) and phase four ( $M=3.12$ ;  $SD=5.59$ ),  $t(87)=-1.06$ ,  $p=.293$  (one-tailed). Therefore, the first null hypothesis was not rejected. There appears to be no difference in time of involvement between the phases of identity development.

*Relationship between Level of Involvement and Identity Development*

*Null Hypothesis 2:* There is no relationship between level of involvement (time, breadth, depth) and the scores of the phases of identity development.

To explore the data, the different measures of involvement were correlated with one another. As is shown in Table 15, there was a significant, positive correlation between time and breadth ( $r=.398$ ), time and depth ( $r=.413$ ), and breadth and depth ( $r=.618$ ) of involvement.

Table 15

*Correlation amongst Measures of Involvement*

Variable	Time	Breadth	Depth
Time	1		
Breadth	.398**	1	
Depth	.413**	.618**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The next correlations analyzed the relationship between the different subscales of involvement (time, breadth, and depth) and the different subscales of identity development (the score from each phase of identity development). These correlations revealed no significant relationships. The correlations seemed to be the strongest for depth amongst most of the phases of identity development, but they did not reach significance. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 16

*Correlation between Identity Development Phases and Involvement Measures*

Phase	Time	Breadth	Depth
Individual-Phase 1	.120	.053	-.106
Individual-Phase 2	.040	-.041	-.177
Individual-Phase 3	.128	.020	-.154
Individual-Phase 4	-.014	.183	.122
Group- Phase 1	-.009	-.068	-.047
Group- Phase 2	.041	.039	-.087
Group- Phase 3	.014	.195	.037
Group- Phase 4	.070	.175	.097

*Differences in Type of Involvement by Phase of Identity Development*

*Null Hypothesis 3:* There is no difference in type of involvement for each of the phases of identity development.

Since there was an insufficient number of individuals in the first three phases of both individual and group membership, it was decided to collapse the first three phases. Chi-Square analyses were performed to examine differences within phases one thru three and phase four. (The initial table including all four phases with the type of involvement for each phase can be found in Appendix H along with the breakdown of undergraduate and graduate students by phase of identity development and type of involvement.)

Table 17 shows the type of organizations in which participants were involved, according to their phase of identity development. The individual phases and group phases

are presented separately. A Chi-square test comparing expected and observed organization membership revealed a significant difference in the types of organizational involvement for individual phase four,  $\chi^2(4, 510) = 13.627, p = .009$ . Follow up Chi-square tests reveal that these differences exist between support and cultural,  $\chi^2(1, 200) = 9.680, p = .002$ ; support and education,  $\chi^2(1, 213) = 4.512, p = .034$ ; and social and cultural,  $\chi^2(1, 197) = 8.533, p = .003$ . A Chi-square test also revealed that a significant difference exists in the group membership phase four,  $\chi^2(4, 439) = 12.606, p = .013$ . Follow up Chi-square tests reveal that significant differences exist between support and cultural,  $\chi^2(1, 175) = 9.606, p = .002$ ; support and education,  $\chi^2(1, 187) = 4.497, p = .034$ ; and social and cultural,  $\chi^2(1, 168) = 6.881, p = .009$ . Therefore the third null hypothesis is rejected.

In phases one through three of both individual and group membership identity development, participants seem to be involved equally in advocacy, support, social, education, and cultural types of organizations. In phase four, however, more involvement than expected was in support and social types of activities, as opposed to advocacy, education, and cultural. There does appear to be a significant difference in type of involvement within individual phase four and group membership phase four.



Table 17

*Comparison of Type of Organizations in which individuals were involved, by phase*

Type of Organization	Advocacy Frequency (expected n)	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$ df p-value
Individual-Phase 1-3 (n=16)	7 (15.4)	17 (15.4)	22 (15.4)	16 (15.4)	15 (15.4)	7.61 4 .107
Individual-Phase 4 (n=73)	100 (102)	122 (102)	119 (102)	91 (102)	78 (102)	13.627 4 .009**
Group-Phase 1-3 (n=26)	23 (28.6)	31 (28.6)	35 (28.6)	28 (28.6)	26 (28.6)	2.979 4 .561
Group-Phase 4 (n=63)	84 (87.8)	108 (87.8)	101 (87.8)	79 (87.8)	67 (87.8)	12.606 4 .013*

\*significant at .05

\*\*significant at .01

Support is significantly higher than education and cultural in individual phase 4.

Social is significantly higher than cultural for individual phase 4.

Support is significantly higher than education and cultural for group phase 4.

Social is significantly higher than cultural for group phase 4.

## Conclusion

In summary, the first two null hypotheses were not rejected. Based on the results of this study, there does not appear to be a difference in time of involvement by phase of identity development. Also, there does not appear to be a correlation between time, breadth, and depth of involvement and the scores of the phases of identity development. The third null hypothesis, though, was rejected. There does appear to be a significant difference in type of involvement for some phases of identity development. For both individual phase four and group membership phase four, involvement is significantly more frequent in support and social type organizations compared to educational and cultural type organizations.

## CHAPTER V

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between gay and lesbian identity development and level and type of involvement in LGBT organizations. The null hypotheses of this study were 1) there is no difference in time of involvement in LGBT organizations among the phases of sexual identity development; 2) there is no correlation between time, breadth, and depth of involvement in LGBT organizations and the scores of sexual identity development phases; and 3) there is no difference in the type of involvement (such as advocacy, support, social, education, and cultural) in the phases of identity development. As was shown in Chapter 4, null hypotheses one and two were not rejected, and null hypothesis three was rejected. There does not appear to be a relationship between identity development and time, breadth, and depth of involvement in LGBT organizations, but there does seem to be a relationship between certain phases of identity development and types of involvement.

The following chapter discusses the findings related to these three hypotheses. The limitations of the study are discussed, as well as the implications for theory and practice and suggestions for future research.

### Discussion of Findings

The following section summarizes the findings presented in Chapter 4 and discusses implications of those findings. The data analyses are discussed, in addition to trends related to the findings.

## *Participants*

### *Demographics*

There was a high proportion of individuals that self described themselves as “gay.” Unexpectedly, the number of individuals who self described themselves as “lesbian” was low. Many individuals used a term other than “gay” or “lesbian” to self describe themselves, suggesting that the two terms do not adequately encapsulate everyone.

A relatively high proportion of men participated in this study, and graduate students were also well represented. A relatively low number of African Americans participated.

One reason for why fewer women than men participated could be that the study was not effectively advertised to females. This can be partly explained by the sampling strategy. When the study was advertised by e-mail it went to the e-mail list-servs of LGBT organizations that had a higher male membership than female. The researcher was intentional about advertising the study to organizations that had high female membership rates (e.g., “Woman2Woman” and the women studies organizations), but that approach was clearly not effective. Nothing in the literature indicates that that women are less likely to respond to questionnaires about LGBT issues, so at present the reason for the difference in response rates is unknown.

A large proportion of graduate students responded to the questionnaire. Representing more than a third of the sample (33.7%), graduate students had a higher participation rate than their enrollment percentage at the university. The University of Maryland website states that graduate students represent about 28% of the total

enrollment (<http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/facts/quickfacts.cfm>). It is possible that graduate students are more committed to participating in studies since they can empathize with the researcher or they may be in a higher phase of gay and lesbian identity development and as such understand the need to participate in this type of research. None-the-less, the high mean age of the sample ( $M=23.38$ ) was no doubt influenced by the large portion of graduate students. Since age and the scores of phase four were positively correlated, the large graduate student population could also be an explanation for the high frequency of phase four development.

Overall, the participation of students of color (28.1%) was comparable to the portion of students of color at the University (27%). The participation rate of Asian Americans (11.2%) matched the overall Asian American population (12.7%), but the African American participation rate (7.9%) did not match the African American population (10.8%).

Like the high male participation rate, this low African American participation trend could be explained by the sampling strategy. Since Asian Americans were proportionately represented, though, it seems like the snowball strategy reached populations beyond just white students. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the literature shows that African Americans do experience more internalized homophobia and more pressure to remain closeted. When African Americans remain closeted, it is often referred to as being on the down-low or the “DL” (Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000). Considering these cultural factors, it is possible that African Americans were less likely to respond to an LGBT related study.

It is interesting to note that a small portion of the sample (5.6%) identified with multiple genders. One participant, for example, self identified as “male” and “gender queer.” The number of individuals who identified with multiple gender identities was not large enough to analyze, but it might be interesting to examine this subportion of the population qualitatively in a future study. Likewise, the participants were asked to describe in a word or phrase their sexual orientation. The responses yielded a plethora of qualitative data that could be coded in the future. Some responses included, “gay,” “lesbian,” “homosexual,” “98% homosexual,” “I like men,” “lovely lesbian,” “menlover,” “queer,” “fluid,” and “explorative.”

It is also important to note that several individuals complained about being forced to decide which type of questionnaire to use (male vs. female). The questionnaire used for determining gay/lesbian identity development had two different versions, one for gay men and another for lesbians. The first question in the online version of the study asked participants to choose the male version or female version (whichever was more appropriate). The participants who complained and individuals who decided not to take the survey for this reason communicated that they did not appreciate the reinforcement of a gender dichotomy. This is a reasonable complaint and the dichotomy should definitely be reconsidered in future studies.

### *Age and Coming Out*

The mean age of the participants ( $M=23.38$ ) was older than expected, considering that the traditional college ages are between 18 and 22. The large graduate student participation in the study no doubt influenced this high mean for age. The minimum

(min= 18), maximum (max= 38), and standard deviation (SD=4.14) indicate that the ages were varied.

Because of this diverse range of ages, though, the data allowed for some interesting findings about age and “coming out.” The general findings were that most participants had disclosed their sexual orientation to friends (92.1%), then to immediate family (78.7%), then to coworkers (65.1%), and then to extended family (49.4%). The mean ages of each milestone coming out experience paralleled this pattern: the youngest age of coming out was to friends (M=18.41 years), then to immediate family (M=19.17), then to coworkers (M=20.00), and then to extended family (M=20.30). Though a pathway analysis was not done, it does appear that participants in general came out to friends first, then their immediate family, coworkers, and then extended family. The relationship between these two variables is discussed more in a later section.

One of the participants made an important comment on his or her questionnaire that suggests a caveat about the findings: a person’s “coworkers” can change on a regular basis (especially for students whose jobs tend to have high turnover rates). Therefore, asking participants if they were out to their coworkers and at what age they came out might produce confusing and unreliable responses. Coming out to coworkers might not be a useful milestone of coming out experiences.

It is noteworthy that the mean age of coming out to friends (M=18.41) was approximately the traditional student age at the end of high school or beginning of college. The mean age for coming out to immediate family (M=19.17) is approximately around the traditional age of the beginning of college or one year into college. One explanation for this is that as students become more autonomous in the first year of

college, they also become more comfortable to disclosing their sexual orientation to their immediate family. A common fear associated with coming out to parents is rejection and disownment (Stevens, 2004). Perhaps this fear subsides as the students become more autonomous during the first year of college.

### *Identity Development*

The data provided several noteworthy findings about identity development. Many participants were in the last phases of identity development. Those individuals who were in phase four for both individual and group membership accounted for 66.3% of the sample. Age and coming out milestones have significant relationships with the phases of identity development. The phases of identity development also have significant associations with each other.

The reason why many participants categorized themselves in the late phases can have several possible explanations: people who may be far along in their sexual identity development are more likely to respond to LGBT related surveys; many of the participants were graduate students at the university, who may be further along in their development; the instrument used may not be adept enough in distinguishing among the earlier phases of identity development; or there was a social pressure to respond to questions in a way that made the participants look more integrated. It is possible that all four of these possibilities are correct.

It seems logical that individuals further in their development more likely would respond to LGBT related surveys as compared to those who are at the very beginning of their identity development. Individuals who are not out or who have not made connections to the LGBT community would not have gotten the survey through the



snowball sampling strategy. They would not subscribe to the e-mail list-servs, would not have friends or know individuals who could have forwarded the survey to them, and even if they did receive the advertisement of the survey, they may experience feelings of internalized homophobia or fear about being discovered if they actually participated.

The literature suggests that individuals might be far along in their identity development by the time they reach college (Draganowski, 2004). Possibly, the fact that some schools have gay-straight alliances in which students are active suggests that they are exploring their sexual identity before they reach college which may enhance their sexual identity development.

Finally, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the fourth phase of group membership identity development is very low ( $r=.1582$ ). This statistic indicates that there is low internal reliability for this particular subtest of the measure. Apparently, the specific items of the questionnaire do not describe the concept very well, which may mean that the actual concept is not clearly defined yet. The low reliability of the subtest of the measure suggests, however, that it will be difficult to explain the large number of participants in this phase, as the construct is still unclear. This uncertainty is further discussed in the limitations section of this chapter.

#### *Age, Coming Out, and Identity Development*

Subsequent analyses revealed relationships between age, coming out, and the identity development scores. Specifically, significant positive correlations were found between age and the ages at which coming out milestones occurred. So, the older students came out later in life compared to the younger students who came out earlier in life. Also, there were significant correlations between age and the identity development scores, and

there were several significant correlations between some of the coming out milestones and identity development scores.

All milestones of coming out were significantly correlated with age. Coming out to coworkers had the strongest, positive relationship to age ( $r=.756$ ), and in descending order the other relationships were immediate family ( $r=.746$ ), extended family ( $r=.713$ ), and friends ( $r=.595$ ). Most likely, the fact that most participants were already out to friends (regardless of the participant's age) reduced the strength of the correlation.

A positive correlation between age and coming out indicates that younger students came out at earlier ages than did the older students. This is an interesting and not too surprising finding. There is a general sentiment that society is changing and becoming more open to issues about sexual orientation, and as a result, students feel more comfortable coming out at a younger age (Draganowski, 2004).

Age was negatively correlated with the early phases of identity development. This is understandable since the questionnaire items are time specific, so that if someone accepted their gay or lesbian identity a long time ago (when they were younger), they would get a lower score; likewise, individuals who are older are currently in phase four for individual and group membership and got a higher score for those phases. Fassinger (1998) says that identity development through the phases is not linear, but it does appear that a general trend is that over time individuals do reach the later phases.

The negative correlation between age and identity development is further supported by t-test comparisons that were done between undergraduate and graduate students. These comparisons revealed that undergraduate students have lower mean scores for the early phases of identity development compared to graduate students.

Undergraduate students are younger than graduate students, and these correlations and t-tests suggest that at these younger ages, these students are experiencing the developmental tasks associated with early phases of identity development. There was no significant difference in the fourth phases of identity development, suggesting that once an individual reaches it, their experiences are similar over many ages.

Certain milestones of coming out were significantly related to the identity development scores. Coming out to immediate family had a significant, negative correlation with most of the early phases of identity development. Coming out to extended family and coming out to coworkers also had significant, negative correlations with several early phases of identity development. These negative associations suggest that the lower their score for the early phases of identity development the more likely one had come out to immediate family, extended family, friends, and coworkers. This finding suggests that individuals who have come out have developed beyond the early phases of identity development. Another explanation is that those who have come out respond more negatively to statements related to developmental tasks that they have already passed.

#### *Correlations amongst Identity Development Phases*

Further subsequent analyses revealed significant correlations between the phases of identity development. Early phases of identity development are positively correlated with each other. This is not a surprising finding since most participants had a very low score for these phases. Also, early phases of identity development are negatively correlated with the last phase. This is also consistent with the rest of the findings. Most of the individuals are in the last phases; therefore, their scores are high in the fourth phases

and low in the previous ones. These negative correlations also indicate that there is a clear distinction between the early phases and the last phase.

Membership in individual and group phases ran mostly parallel, which is understandable since most likely a person would not have progressed through many phases in one area and not the other. The Inclusive Model of Sexual Identity Formation (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) predicted this phenomenon. Though the different tracks of development occur concurrently, some things must happen in one phase for the individual to move into another phase.

#### *Involvement and Work*

The correlation between time of involvement in LGBT and time spent with employment revealed no significant relationship. It was expected that there would be a negative correlation between the two variables, indicating that individuals who spent high amounts of time with work would not be as involved in volunteer organizations. However, this was not found. In fact, the lack of a relationship suggests that individuals who spend high amounts of time with work are just as likely to have low or high involvement with LGBT organizations.

#### *Undergraduate and Graduate Students*

Several comparisons revealed significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students in identity development and involvement. Undergraduates had higher mean scores of the early phases of identity development than graduate students. This suggests that the younger undergraduate participants are still experiencing the developmental tasks than graduate students.

Comparisons of time of involvement revealed that undergraduate students spend more time than graduate students in LGBT organizations. This is understandable, since undergraduates typically have more time to spend on extracurricular activities than graduate students.

Comparisons in the frequency of types of organizational involvement were done for both undergraduates and graduate students. These analyses revealed that undergraduate students are more involved with social type organizations than cultural and advocacy type organizations. Undergraduate students were also more involved with social and cultural organizations than graduate students. These findings suggest that undergraduate students are more interested in connecting with other students through social activities compared to other types of organizations. It would be interesting to investigate any clustering of types of organization. For example, students may be interested in socializing while doing some other type of activity as well. Because of the nature of the data, this was not possible to analyze for this study but would be interesting for a future study.

#### *Involvement and Phase of Identity Development*

The primary reason for collapsing both the first three individual and group phases and doing a t-test instead of a two-way 4x4 ANOVA was because the numbers in each of the early phases of development were too low. Instead, t-tests were done, preventing the researcher from examining interactions, which a two-way ANOVA would have allowed.

The t-tests revealed no significant differences in the mean time involved in organizations between the individual identity development phases or the group

membership development phases. The lack of significance suggests that there is not a strong linkage between development and level of involvement (as it is defined by time). There were several factors, though, that make the tests and this conclusion questionable.

Despite collapsing the first three phases, individual and group phases one through three had low numbers ( $n=16$  and  $n=26$ , respectively). Also, the dependent variable, time, was not normally distributed. Most individuals had a low amount of time of involvement. Also the data showed high standard deviations for all the means, particularly group membership phase four ( $M=3.12$ ,  $SD=5.59$ ). This indicates that there was a high degree of variability of time involved for individuals in phase four. It was understandable why the variability is high for the first three phases: they were all collapsed into one group. The variability in phase four in both individual and group membership is unclear, though. It might be a heterogeneous group of people and not clearly definable. There are many other factors that may contribute to time of involvement for individuals in this phase.

#### *Time, breadth, and depth of Involvement and Identity Development Scores*

Participants were assigned to a particular phase by their highest score for that phase. However, it was possible for participants to score high in more than one phase, so therefore it was decided to correlate identity development scores with the three measures of level of involvement: time, breadth, and depth.

#### *Measures of Involvement*

Before correlating involvement to the phases of identity development, the subscales of involvement were correlated with each other. These subscales included time involved with LGBT organizations, the number of organizations an individual was

involved with (referred to as breadth), and the summation of weighted values associated with levels of involvement with LGBT organizations (depth). Specifically, “no involvement” and “spectator” levels of involvement were scored as zero’s for the formula to determine depth. “Participant” level of involvement was given a value of 1. “Leader” was given a value of 2. An individual’s depth score was the summation of these values for all of the organizations in which he or she was involved.

Correlations among the subscales of involvement revealed significant, positive associations. The finding that time correlated highly with breadth and depth is understandable since time captures both concepts of involvement. Someone who is involved with a lot of organizations would most likely be spending a lot of time. Similarly, an individual who was very involved with one or two organizations would also be committing a lot of time.

Depth and breadth had the highest positive correlation ( $r=.618$ ). This correlation could mean either two things. One possibility is that individuals who have a large breadth of involvement (meaning, involved with many organizations) also tend to have deep involvement (meaning, taking on leadership roles in those organizations). This suggests that depth and breadth of involvement are not really two separate constructs. Another possibility is that the measures do not sufficiently distinguish the two concepts of involvement. Future research needs to focus on an in-depth analysis of involvement measures for validity and reliability purposes. Though the two concepts of breadth and depth seem very different, they are highly correlated. Future researchers who consider using these concepts of involvement should be more intentional with how they define the concepts.

### *Relationship of Involvement and Identity Development*

The correlations between the measures of involvement and the scores of identity development yielded no significance. In fact, the correlations were extremely small; some were extremely close to 0 (no correlation). At first glance, this would indicate that the responses to the items for each phase have no relationship with involvement in LGBT organizations.

To explain this, it is important to remember that sample size for each of these correlations included the entire sample (N=89) since each participant received a score in each phase. When the study was first being proposed, it was thought that the identity development scales were scored in such a way that an individual would have a high score in each phase up to the phase he or she was in. In fact, this test was already done by Tomlinson and Fassinger (2003). So, for example, if an individual was in phase three, then they would have already gone through phases one and two and would most likely respond in the affirmative to most of the items in those phases (and therefore have a high score for each of those phases). Actually, the scales were scored much differently.

The directions for the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire asked participants to respond affirmatively to statements that applied to him or her “right now.” So, if a participant had realized that they were attracted to members of the same sex a long time ago, they would respond to the statement, “Recently I have come to understand that I am attracted to members of the same sex,” with “disagree” or “disagree strongly.” Therefore, participants typically received extremely small scores (near “zero”) for the phases that preceded the phase in which they were in. If a participant was in the fourth phase of individual identity development, then most likely his scores for the first three phases were



near five (which was considered absolute zero based on how the questionnaire was scored).

Many participants had a “zero” score for all phases except their highest phase, limiting variability, which, in turn, probably limited correlations. The majority of scores were simply not diverse enough. Possibly, in the future, the directions of the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire could be changed to allow participants to respond affirmatively to every statement that applies to them or had ever applied, regardless of how much time had elapsed. Though this would change the way in which scores are interpreted, correlations like the ones for this study might show. It would therefore give a better idea of how the items of each phase are related to involvement or other appropriate variables.

Another reason to change the directions is that there was a lot of confusion and frustration expressed by participants. It was difficult for them to decide how to respond to a statement because the directions asked the participants to respond negatively to statements that did not apply to them at the current time. “Current time” was never clearly articulated. When the written version of the study was distributed the researcher was able to clarify these directions. The majority of participants completed the survey online, so they did not have the opportunity to clarify any confusion they had. This may have produced some faulty results. Porter (1998a) also reported similar confusion on the part of participants in his study.

#### *Type of Involvement and Identity Development Phases*

Participants were asked to categorize the organizations with which they were involved. There were six categories in which an organization could be categorized: advocacy, support, social, education, cultural, and other. In the questionnaire, advocacy

was defined as an organization that “promotes LGBT issues of concern to university officials, or local, state, or national officials. Builds coalitions with other organizations and enlists allies.” Support was defined as an organization that “offers a safe environment where members can comfortably explore their sexual orientation.” Social was defined as an organization that “provides outlets where students can meet each other and have fun.” Education was defined as an organization that “organizes programs that promote understanding of and impart knowledge about LGBT issues. Programs can be for LGBT individuals or non-LGBT individuals.” Cultural was defined as an organization that “celebrates the values and history of the LGBT community and/or movement.” Lastly, “other” was defined as “an organization [that] has a type of mission that does not fall into any of the previous categories.”

For type of involvement the data was analyzed based on how often a participant indicated he or she was involved with each type of organization. For example, participants who were in the fourth phase of individual development referenced being involved with 100 organizations that were advocacy related, 122 organizations that were support related, etc. Clearly, these high numbers reflect the high number of participants who were in the fourth phase. Comparatively, the number of organizations in which individuals were involved in phases one, two and three, was considerably smaller. Therefore, just like in previous statistical tests, these three phases were collapsed into one group to produce better numbers to compare. This was done for both individual and group membership. The fourth phases of each type of involvement stayed the same.

A significant difference in the frequency of types of organizations was found for individual phase four and group membership phase four. Specifically, for individual

phase four, the differences were significant between support and cultural organizations, support and education organizations, and social and cultural organizations. Participants in individual phase 4 favored support and social type organizations over education and cultural organizations. The same results were found with group membership phase four. There was a clear preference of support and social type organizations over education and cultural organizations.

It appears that those later in their sexual identity development are more drawn toward support and social organizations. This finding is rather remarkable. Support organizations were clearly articulated as those organizations that offer a safe space for those who are exploring their sexual orientation. Why would those far along in their identity development be interested in this type of organization? It is possible that they are interested in offering support to other individuals or further understanding their own identity—after all, the fourth phase is intended to be an ongoing process that an individual never completely finishes. Since phase four (individual and group) is questionable psychometrically, it is possible that participants who were categorized in phase four really belonged in earlier phases, which may be another explanation as to why they indicated a wish to be in support organizations or phase four members are a heterogeneous group of people, some of whom may still need support. Future studies that employ a qualitative approach might be able to further explore this finding.

The preference for social organizations seems less remarkable. Socializing and participating in fun activities with others is clearly an important component to college life, and it is understandable that the majority of the participants preferred this.

If a larger and more diverse sample would have been obtained more Chi-square tests could have been done. Specifically, it would be interesting to investigate whether those involved with advocacy organizations would be more likely in a certain phase of identity development.

#### Limitations of Study

There were clearly many limitations to this study. Some were simply unavoidable because of the nature of the population being studied and the limits placed on the research study.

The most important limitation of the study had to do with the lack of diversity in terms of identity development. There were just not enough participants in the early phases of identity development to do the kind of comparisons that were originally planned. Without sufficient numbers in each phase of identity development, ANOVA's could not be performed. Even with t-tests, the results are questionable because of some of the smaller numbers being tested.

The high frequency of participants in the later phases was expected considering that they more likely had heard about the study and were more self-aware and more comfortable responding. Since the study was not conducted randomly it is impossible to know how many individuals who are at the beginning phases of identity development were missed. This is an inherent limitation since there is no master list of lesbian and gay students, and since the population is so fragmented.

It was clearly articulated in Chapter 3 that reaching the LGBT population would be a challenge, and getting those individuals who were highly integrated was expected. The online questionnaire seemed very successful with a high participation rate. In future

studies, more time might be spent distributing the study to individuals in person (for example, at classes, meetings, events, etc.), because this procedure might result in a more diverse sample in terms of identity development. Getting access to these students, however, would have been a challenge because of the potential breaches of space meant to be safe.

The high frequency of individuals in the highest phases of development could also be explained by social bias, because participants rate themselves (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Individuals naturally want to respond with the socially desirable answer. Being at the very end of development and experiencing no concerns about sexual orientation are both very socially desirable. It is possible that this desire led some participants to more strongly agree with items that reflected the end of development than those items earlier in development.

The second most important limitation was the low reliability of some of the measures. The group membership phases of identity development showed low Cronbach Alpha Coefficients. In particular, the fourth phase of group membership for males was  $r=.1582$ . With such a low number, it is very questionable that the items for this measure are measuring a cohesive concept. Ironically, 48.3% ( $n=43$ ) of the total sample was in the group membership phase four for males. The fact that nearly half of the sample was placed in this questionable phase calls into question the validity of the findings. Since reliability is so low, the validity of some of the assertions about the fourth phase of group membership—indeed, all of group membership development—comes into question. A more detailed analysis is needed to check the reliability and validity of the group membership phases.

The third most important limitation of the study has to do with the directions concerning the identity development items. As was described before, participants were told to respond affirmatively to statements that applied to them at the present time. If a statement did apply to someone in the past, then the participant was instructed to respond negatively. This caused a great deal of confusion amongst the participants and may have led to some participant error in how they responded to questions. It also may have influenced the correlation between the identity development phases and involvement. Therefore, it would have been more useful and pragmatic to adapt the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire to allow for more general instructions asking the participant to respond affirmatively to statements regardless of how present that statement applied to the participant.

Most of the limitations are related to identity development concerns. There were also limitations related to the involvement part of the study. First, the participants were not asked about their involvement in non-LGBT organizations. It might have been informative to learn whether the nature of their overall extracurricular involvement changes as they develop their sexual identity.

The questionnaire failed to ask participants at what age they came out to themselves. Though it may have been more difficult for participants to answer this question accurately since coming out to self is a more nebulous event compared to coming out to others, asking this might have provided a insight into the different milestones of coming out and how much time elapses between each milestone.

The way in which participants were asked about their type of involvement yielded difficult data to organize and analyze. Since the ultimate intention was to see what type of

organization the participant was interested in, it may have been more efficient to ask the participants directly what types of organizations they participated in and which types interested them more.

Another useful approach would have been to survey students from more than one university. Though this would have taken more time and resources, it would have given a wider perspective on the different types of involvement that may not have been available at the University of Maryland.

The results showed some confusing quantitative results. For example, it is unclear why individuals in the fourth phase of identity development are interested in support organizations. If the study could have been expanded to have a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative data, this finding could have been better explained.

Finally, the Gay/Lesbian Identity Questionnaire produced some negative reactions. Some participants were very opposed to the instrument because it reinforced the gender dichotomy by having one version for males and a different version for females. In fact, there were some individuals who decided not to take the study because of this, as was communicated to the researcher by e-mail. Others communicated with the researcher about their concerns. Though the gender dichotomy limitation did not affect the reliability or validity of the data collected, it did reduce the number of participants who responded. More importantly, it reinforced a gender dichotomy to those who participated in the study—and that was not an intention of the researcher. In the future, one should be cognizant of the unintended consequences that research can have on participants.

## Implications for Theory

It is still unclear if there is a connection between sexual identity development and involvement in LGBT organizations for college students. The results did not show any significant relationship between identity development and level of involvement, but the results did show a relationship between identity development and type of involvement. Once again, though, these results are questionable because of the reliability and validity issues of the study.

### *Identity Development and Level of Involvement*

As was discussed in chapter two, other studies have found a connection between the two variables for other identity based populations. Mitchell and Dell (1992) found that racial identity development phases were significant factors in involvement with identity based organizations. Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) also found that African American men further in the development phases were more involved than those who were in the earlier phases of identity development. On the other hand, Chavous (2000) did not find a significant relationship between identity development and involvement.

This study showed that there is a large amount of variance in the mean time involvement with organizations. This variance is not sufficiently explained by the identity development variable. There are several possible explanations.

First, the results of the statistical tests may not be conclusive because the sample size was small and the data was not normally distributed.



The second possibility is that the measures for identity development used in this study are not sufficiently accurate. This is also very possible since the reliability measures for certain phases of identity development were particularly low.

Finally, there maybe other factors that are influencing level of involvement. Chavous (2000) included a perceived institutional fit factor in his study to see if it affected involvement. Other studies like Mitchell and Dell (1992) also included work hours, study time, and other time engagements in the linear regression model they used to test the significance of development. Including these variables into a linear regression model with identity development would give a better idea as to the role development has with involvement.

#### *Identity Development and Type of Involvement*

This study did show that individuals in the latter phases of identity development prefer support and social type organizations. This was found for individuals who were in the fourth phase of individual identity development and individuals in group membership identity development. There were no other significant findings in terms of type of involvement.

This finding is interesting because there is no clear reason why individuals further along in their development would be interested in participating in support organizations. It is possible that they are interested in providing support to others. It is also possible that one continues to need support in later phases of identity development. Without having done qualitative research, though, it is not possible to infer why the students are interested in certain types of organizations.

One study does provide some insight into this finding. Hess and Winston (1995) found that students are more likely to participate in programs related to developmental outcomes which they had already mastered and that students are less likely to attend programs that focus on the next steps in their development. In their study, Hess and Winston used Chickering's seven vectors to define developmental outcomes. Chickering's developmental outcomes are not directly related to identity development. Despite this difference, though, the findings of Hess and Winston may explain why lesbian and gay students far along in development are interested in support. The next question to research would therefore be, what developmental needs do students in the later phases have? At this time, the literature has not addressed this question.

#### *Fassinger's Inclusive Model of Lesbian/Gay Identity Formation*

The supplemental findings of the study both support and challenge Fassinger's Inclusive Model of Lesbian/Gay Identity Formation Phases (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). As a result, there may be some revisions necessary for the Inclusive model and the instrument that measures it.

Many of the individual phases of the model had measures that had high Cronbach alpha coefficients. This means that as concepts, these phases seem to be described well by the questionnaire. Most likely, the concepts themselves are described well in the model. On the other hand, the group membership phases were found to have low alpha coefficients, meaning that the measures have low reliability. This could mean either two things. Either the instrument itself poorly measures the concepts, or the concepts themselves are not cohesive. In any event, this issue needs to be better clarified.

The early phases of identity development were negatively correlated with the last phases of identity development. This makes a lot of intuitive sense and suggests that the early phases are distinct from the last phases. On the other hand, the first three phases for both individual and group membership were highly correlated with each other, meaning that the different concepts might be blurred to a certain extent. Since there was some reliability issues with some of the measures of this study, that analysis might be inconclusive but should be looked at in future research.

Corresponding phases of identity development were positively correlated with each other, which is predicted by the model. Individuals cannot get too far in their development with one track of development without developing also in the other.

Finally, coming out experiences were significantly related to identity development. The Inclusive model specifically states that coming out is not necessarily a factor in identity development. Fassinger and associates wanted to be sure to emphasize that development can occur despite an individual not being able to come out due to situational factors. However, this significant relationship with coming out may provide a better insight into how coming out can effect on identity development. Coming out may not be a prerequisite, but may be a factor nonetheless.

#### *Coming Out Trends*

This study also showed that coming out is happening at an earlier age for younger students. This finding is understandable considering how much more open society has become on topics related to sexual orientation. This finding may also address an important characteristic of the “Millennial” generation of students coming into higher education. The gay and lesbian students in the generation feel more comfortable about

their sexual orientation than previous generations. This change suggests that the needs of gay and lesbian “millennials” may be different than the generations before them. If this is true then higher education needs to make greater strides in determining the needs of these students. Also, future studies may want to separate undergraduates from graduate students and examine them separately.

### Implications for Practice

Just like with theory, implications for practice are limited since the data lacks many significant findings. It was found that students in later phases are more interested in social and support organizations. Professionals working with lesbian and gay students can use this information to target programs that have support and social components toward students who have an integrated identity. This information can also benefit student leaders as they plan programs for their peers.

For professionals and student leaders to offer better programs, more research needs to occur to better understand why there is an interest in support organizations for individuals in phase four; it needs to be determined what kind of needs and developmental outcomes are needed at these different phases of sexual identity development. The answers to this question can then shape programming efforts amongst professionals who work directly with lesbian and gay students.

This study also showed that more students are arriving at college having already come out and are already possessing an integrated sexual identity. This trend can be helpful for professionals as they realize that the needs of the millennial gay and lesbian students are different from students in previous generations. The issue of coming out to family is less of importance for these younger gay and lesbian students. As one

participant pointed out, though, coming out to coworkers is an ongoing process. Coming out to non-family members may still be an issue for younger students as they become more autonomous in the work world.

Despite the non-significant findings related to involvement, practitioners and student leaders need to be cognizant of all the factors that may contribute to a person's involvement. Identity development may not have explained a significant portion of the variance of time spent with LGBT organizations, but most likely other factors could play a part in addition to identity development: time spent on academic work, time spent at a job, living on or off campus, the availability of LGBT organizations, the institutional climate toward lesbian and gay issues, and the dynamics of the LGBT organizations that exist. Though it was briefly discussed in chapter 2, the motivation of the student to become involved—to become a follower—can also be a factor in involvement in LGBT organizations (Kelley, 1992).

The concepts of involvement used in the study could also be useful for LGBT organizations. As was discussed in chapter 2, there have not been any measures found that rate level of involvement in specific organizations. Based on the intercorrelations of the involvement measures in this study, time of involvement seems to be a useful and simple concept to measure level of involvement. As organizations evaluate their own membership's levels of involvement, how much time people invest would be a useful factor to analyze.

Organizations may also want to investigate the quality of this time (referred to in this study as depth). The quality of involvement can more accurately indicate the strength of an organization. For example, national advocacy organizations were criticized for false

representing their number of members (Koval, 2005). The Human Rights Campaign reported having 650,000 members in 2004. The organization based this statistic on the total number of individuals who had donated at least one dollar to the organization over its entire existence. Clearly, this criterion reflects a low level of involvement and probably does not accurately represent the current level of involvement with the organization. When asked for more data regarding the numbers of its members—for example, the number of individuals who have paid the \$35 required for full membership of the organization—the Human Rights Campaign refused to divulge the information (Koval). Most likely, the organization did not want to report a lower number of actual members. High organizational involvement is political power for this advocacy organization. It is understandable that they do not want their power to be diminished. As an internally known figure, however, the number of members involved and the quality of their involvement would provide the organization a useful statistic for self assessment.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

This study has generated many unanswered questions that should be pursued in the future. The study also has given insight into sampling procedures for lesbian and gay students and ways to measure lesbian and gay identity development.

#### *Topics of Research*

First of all, there needs to be research using a qualitative approach to better understand the findings of this study. It is unclear why students who are in fourth phase of identity development are interested in support type organizations. A qualitative research study should explore why there is this interest in support organizations as well as the developmental outcomes and interests associated with other phases. A quantitative

study with a larger sample allowing for a better representation in earlier phases of development could also investigate any preferences for type of involvement in other phases of identity development. It is unknown if support type organizations is consistent across multiple phases.

There also should be more research into the factors that contribute to involvement in LGBT organizations. This study looked at only one factor and did not have a large enough sample to run a multiple regression for factors like sexual identity development, the motivation for followership, previous (high school) involvement in LGBT organizations, time spent on academic work, time spent at a job, living on or off campus, the type of LGBT organization(s) available on campus and in the area, the dynamics of the LGBT organizations that exist, the empowering and inclusive nature of the organization, and the institutional climate toward lesbian and gay issues. Using these multiple factors may provide a better model to explain the variance of involvement and give a better idea of how influential sexual identity development is compared to other factors. In this kind of regression model it would probably be useful to include the score of each phase of identity development in the regression model.

A study would be incomplete if involvement in other student organizations was not considered. This study did not investigate whether lesbian and gay students were more likely to be involved in LGBT organizations instead of non-LGBT organizations at certain points in their identity development. This would be useful information, especially for student leaders who try to improve the membership retention of their LGBT organizations.

As student leaders try to motivate students to stay involved, the role of identity development could influence this leader-member exchange. What would happen if there was a mismatch in identity development between the “leader” and the “participant”? Right now, there is no literature that addresses this phenomenon.

The study showed some interesting findings about coming out. A future study should further investigate the milestones of coming out, specifically asking about coming out to self. The study should also investigate the pathways of coming out to determine if individuals are more likely to coming out to friends first, then immediate family, then coworkers, and then the extended family. The mean ages of coming out suggested that many participants in this study went through that progression of coming out.

#### *Methodological Issues to Consider*

In addition to ideas for research, there is clearly a need to improve the methodology related to research with lesbian and gay students. This study experienced many challenges because it lacked a sufficient sample size of individuals in the earlier phases of identity development. Future studies should endeavor to take creative measures in addressing this challenge. The online version of this study was useful in reaching many students, but because of the way the study was advertised (by e-mail), the online survey reached only those students who already had fairly integrated identities. Researchers should consider being more proactive with working with the LGBT organizations and community to reach individuals who are not as integrated.

The Gay and Lesbian Identity Questionnaires need revision. The Cronbach alpha coefficients indicated serious issues with the reliability of the group membership measures, so attention to this will improve not only its reliability but also its validity.



The distribution of scores tended to not have a normal distribution, which made some statistical analyses difficult to perform. The scoring of the questionnaire should therefore be reconsidered. Perhaps normalizing the data would give a better set of data to use in statistical tests.

The directions of the questionnaire were difficult for participants to follow and also limited the findings of the study. It is possible to reword the directions so that participants can more easily complete the questionnaire. At the same time, the questionnaire can be scored so that correlations can be done for each phase of identity development. For example, the questionnaire could ask the participants to respond affirmatively to all statements that ever applied to them. This would require a change in how scores are interpreted.

Also, the questionnaire reinforced a gender dichotomy by having two different versions of the study (one for gay males, and the other for lesbians). The questionnaire should strive to have inclusive language that addresses the experiences of both gay men and lesbians at the same time. It might be possible to use gender neutral terms.

### Conclusion

Overall this study did not produce more insight into the relationship between identity development and level of involvement. It did find that type of involvement in LGBT organizations is related to identity development. Those later in identity development tend to prefer social and support type organizations over cultural and educational type organizations. The study also provided insight into identity development theory, how to measure it, and ways to prevent certain flaws in sampling and data analysis in future research. The study also provided some insight into measuring

involvement and found that age, coming out, and identity development are all positively associated with each other. These findings support the concept that development occurs over time, and that for gay and lesbian identity development, coming out can serve as important milestones.

## APPENDIX A: E-mail Advertisement

From: John Lynch  
To: John Lynch  
Subject: Important study and raffle prize for UMD students

Please distribute widely to Maryland students.

Dear friends,

My name is John Lynch, and I am a graduate student here at the University of Maryland. I am conducting a study on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) student involvement. It is very important that I get participants to complete my survey. The results of the study will help the LGBT community here at the University and add to the body of knowledge surrounding LGBT students.

Please consider spending a few minutes of your time by participating in this study which can be found at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=8159839293>.

What's in it for you?

--As a token of appreciation for your participation there will be a raffle prize: a \$50.00 gift certificate to Best Buy. Two of these gift certificates are being given, so you have a good chance of winning!

What do you have to do?

--Take a 20 minute online survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=8159839293>

Who should participate?

--Undergrads, graduate students, and professional students at the University of Maryland, College Park --Those who self identify as gay, lesbian, exploring, and/or questioning; experience attraction to the same sex; OR engage in same-sex behavior; --Those who are involved, semi-involved, or NOT involved in the LGBT community. (If you are not involved in any way, please consider participating in this study!)

ALL INDIVIDUAL RESULTS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

Need more information? Contact John Lynch at [JohnWileyLynch@gmail.com](mailto:JohnWileyLynch@gmail.com) or 301-314-7447.

Interested in participating? Go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=8159839293>

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Maryland.

## APPENDIX B: Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

**Project title:** The Relationship of Lesbian and Gay Identity Development and Involvement in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Organizations

I state that I am over 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Dr. Margaretha Lucas (principal investigator) and John Lynch (student investigator) at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The purpose of this research is to measure the relationship of gay/lesbian identity development and involvement in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations.

The procedure of this study will involve completing a questionnaire. The first section of the survey will ask me to respond to statements concerning my attitudes towards same-sex feelings and attractions. The second section will ask me questions about my involvement in LGBT related organizations and activities on the University of Maryland campus. The last section will ask me several demographic questions. It will take me approximately 20-30 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that the data I provide will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation and that my name will not be used.

The experiment is not designed to help me personally, but to help the investigator learn more about gay/lesbian identity development and how it relates to involvement in organizations. I am free to ask questions or withdraw from participation at any time and without penalty.

For more information I can reach the principal investigator and student investigator at the following addresses:

Dr. Margaretha Lucas  
1122 Shoemaker Building  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742  
301-314-7660  
mlucas1@umd.edu

John Lynch  
1110 Stamp Student Union  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742  
301-314-7447  
jlynch4@umd.edu

Name of subject (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of subject: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) [irb@deans.umd.edu](mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu); (telephone) 301-405-4212

PLEASE SIGN THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE RESEARCHER.

## APPENDIX C: Lesbian Identity Development

**THANK YOU** for agreeing to participate in this study. Please remember that you may discontinue your participation in this study at any time. If you are not a student at the University of Maryland please do not complete this survey.

The following survey will take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The first section of the survey will ask you to respond to statements concerning your attitudes towards same-sex feelings and attractions. The second section will ask you questions about your involvement in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) related organizations and activities on the University of Maryland campus. If you are confused by any of the questions feel free to ask. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

### SECTION I

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

The following items are intended to identify the beliefs and feelings that you have about your sexual identity NOW. Some of the items may not apply to you, and some may have applied to you in the past but not the present. Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself at the current time. You may want to scan the items quickly before responding so that you get an idea of how the items differ. Remember to endorse most strongly those items that describe you NOW.

The scale of responses for each item is:

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For example, consider the following item:

- I am getting to know lesbian/gay people for the first time, and it is scary but exciting.

If that statement reflects where you are right now, you would indicate Agree or Agree Strongly, depending on the extent to which the statement fits for you. However, if this doesn't fit for you at the current time (e.g., perhaps you experienced this in the past but now you know lots of lesbian/gay people and it isn't scary for you), then you would indicate Disagree or Disagree Strongly for the statement because it doesn't fit where you are NOW.

Also consider the following item:

- I now recognize clearly that I am a person who has intimate romantic relationships with women.

If that statement reflects where you are right now, you would indicate Agree or Agree Strongly, depending on the extent to which the statement fits for you. However, if this doesn't fit for you at the current time (e.g., perhaps you are questioning your sexual identity and are not really clear that you are a person who has intimate relationships with women), then you would indicate Disagree or Disagree Strongly for the statement because it doesn't fit where you are NOW.

The key point is to respond to items according to where you are NOW in your identity process, regardless of how you may have felt in the past or think you might feel in the future.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself <u>at the current time</u>.</i>						

1. I am getting to know lesbian/gay people for the first time, and it is scary but exciting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My lesbianism is now an integrated part of my social and public life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I am just realizing that I may be interested in dating women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am beginning to realize from my choices that I am expressing a clear preference for women, rather than me as partners/lovers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Lately, I am constantly aware that I have been mistreated because of my lesbianism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I am just noticing that there are lesbians/gays everywhere, and I can often sense who they are.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Recently, I have reached the point where I clearly feel more intimate sexually and emotionally with women than men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I am just realizing that homosexuality is not all there is.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I am just now recognizing that the way I feel about women may mean something.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I believe there are many heterosexuals who are accepting of lesbians/gays.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I am just beginning to think the way I am feeling means that I am in love with a woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I have recently been undergoing a personal liberation and getting involved in gay/lesbian culture for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I can now, as a lesbian, relate comfortably to both lesbians/gays and nongays.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. For the first time, it has become very important for me to find and meet lesbian and gay people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I am just realizing for the first time that I feel different from other women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I have just realized recently that I have been conditioned to view lesbians/gays negatively.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself <u>at the current time</u>.</i>						

17. I am beginning to notice for the first time that I have a strong desire to touch another woman's body.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Lately, I have become very aware that many heterosexuals don't even know that lesbians and gays exist.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I now recognize clearly that I am a person who has intimate romantic relationships with women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Lately, I find myself withdrawing from the heterosexual world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I am just realizing for the first time that I might be willing to live with a woman lover.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I get angry a lot lately at the way heterosexuals talk about and treat lesbians and gays.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Now that I am consistently doing what I want to do in terms of love and sex, I feel more integrated as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I am just realizing that I feel pulled toward women in ways I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I am finally at a point where I feel comfortable with my lesbianism no matter where I am or who I am with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Recently, I have discovered that there may be people out there like me who aren't trying to live as heterosexuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I have just become aware for the first time that I have a strong desire to kiss another woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Lately, I have realized that I probably would not consider men as intimate partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I can't even imagine what a roomful of lesbians and gays would be like.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I have reached the point where I feel a deep contentment about my love of other women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I am just noticing for the first time that I feel nervous and emotional around women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Lately, I only feel at ease in lesbian/gay surroundings.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself at the current time.*

33. Recently, I have found myself wondering for the first time what it might be like to be romantic with a woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. These days, I mostly rely on my lesbian/gay friends for support, but have some good heterosexual friends as well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I now fully accept my emotional and sexual preference for women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. The way I feel recently makes me think for the first time that I might like to be sexual with a woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I had no idea before now that there were lesbian/gay people out there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I have reached the point where I feel deeply fulfilled in my relationships with women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I am just realizing for the first time that I have been duped into believing everyone is heterosexual.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I have reached the point where I have successfully incorporated my intimacy with women into my overall identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6

41. Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences your gay/lesbian identity.

42. Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences the gay/lesbian community.



## APPENDIX D: Gay Identity Instrument

**THANK YOU** for agreeing to participate in this study. Please remember that you may discontinue your participation in this study at any time. If you are not a student at the University of Maryland please do not complete this survey.

The following survey will take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The first section of the survey will ask you to respond to statements concerning your attitudes towards same-sex feelings and attractions. The second section will ask you questions about your involvement in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) related organizations and activities on the University of Maryland campus. If you are confused by any of the questions feel free to ask. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

### **SECTION I**

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

The following items are intended to identify the beliefs and feelings that you have about your sexual identity NOW. Some of the items may not apply to you, and some may have applied to you in the past but not the present. Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself at the current time. You may want to scan the items quickly before responding so that you get an idea of how the items differ. Remember to endorse most strongly those items that describe you NOW.

The scale of responses for each item is:

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For example, consider the following item:

- I can't even imagine what a room full of gay people would be like.

If that statement reflects where you are right now, you would indicate Agree or Agree Strongly, depending on the extent to which the statement fits for you. However, if this doesn't fit for you at the current time (e.g., perhaps you experienced this in the past but now you have been in a room full of gay people and you know what it is like), then you would indicate Disagree or Disagree Strongly for the statement because it doesn't fit where you are NOW.

Also consider the following item:

- Recently, I have reached the point where I know clearly that I am gay.

Again, if that statement reflects where you are right now, you would indicate Agree or Agree Strongly, depending on the extent to which the statement fits for you. However, if this doesn't fit for you at the current time (e.g., perhaps you are questioning your sexual identity and are not really sure that you are gay), then you would indicate Disagree or Disagree Strongly for the statement because it doesn't fit where you are NOW.

\*\*\*The key point is to respond to items according to where you are NOW in your identity process, regardless of how you may have felt in the past or think you might feel in the future.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself <u>at the current time</u>.</i>						

1. Lately, I prefer spending time with gay people because I find them much more interesting than heterosexuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have reached the point where I have successfully incorporated my intimacy with men into my overall identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I feel attracted to a specific man, but I'm not yet sure that I'm attracted to men in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I have been wanting to get to know gay people, but the stigma attached to homosexuality is frightening.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I have finally reached the point where I love and appreciate myself as a gay man.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I get angry a lot lately at the way heterosexuals talk about and treat lesbians and gays.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Lately, I have been wondering for the first time if there is something strange about me compared to other men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Just recently, I have noticed that my feelings and fantasies are finally uniting with my sexual behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I am just noticing for the first time that I have a strong desire to touch another man.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Recently, I have begun to realize that some of my suffering could have been avoided if my homosexuality had been encouraged.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Lately, I have become very aware that many heterosexuals don't even know that gays exist.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I have reached the point where I feel a deep contentment about my love of other men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I have reached the point where I fully accept and understand that I am a member of the gay community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Just recently, I have discovered that there are people there who have the same kinds of sexual desires that I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Lately, I have come to realize that I am no longer willing to consider women as intimate partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I am just realizing for the first time that I feel different from other men.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself <u>at the current time</u>.</i>						

17. These days, I mostly rely on my gay friends for support, but have some good heterosexual friends as well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I can't even imagine what a room full of gay people would like.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I am just noticing for the first time that I don't seem to like dating women as much as other men do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Sometimes I get angry at the way gays are treated, but I'm not preoccupied by it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Just recently, I have realized that I am interested in being intimate with men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Now that I am learning about gays for the first time, I feel guilty about attitudes I had about gays in the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I am just realizing for the first time that I might be willing to live with a male lover.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Right now, I'm afraid to associate with gay people because it might reveal my homosexuality to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I have just become aware for the first time that I have a strong desire to kiss another man.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Lately, I have been feeling sad and angry at realizing that societal prejudice stood in the way of my true feelings for men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I am just realizing for the first time that I'm not attracted to women and it scares me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Until just recently, I had no idea how many gay people are out there.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I am just noticing for the first time that I want to become closer to men or to a certain man.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Now that I am consistently doing what I want to do in terms of love and sex, I feel more integrated as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Recently, I have come to realize that I was conditioned to view gay people negatively.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I have come to realize that while some heterosexuals are anti-gay, many are not.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither disagree nor Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Please respond to all items and endorse most strongly the items that capture your feelings about yourself <u>at the current time</u>.</i>						

33. Recently, I have reached the point where I clearly feel more intimate sexually with men than women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I am just noticing for the first time that I feel nervous and emotional around men, but I don't know why.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I have reached the point where my love for men is an important part of me, but it is not the only thing that defines me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. I have recently been undergoing a personal liberation and becoming involved in gay culture for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. Recently, I have reached the point where I know clearly that I am gay.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. Lately, I have been wondering a lot about whether I can fit in as a gay man and develop my own gay style.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I can now, as a gay man, relate comfortably to both gays and nongays.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I have just discovered for the first time that there are gay people out there, and I want to find them.	1	2	3	4	5	6

41. Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences your gay/lesbian identity.

42. Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences the gay/lesbian community.

## Appendix E: Involvement Instrument

The following questions ask about your involvement in LGBT related organizations at the University of Maryland. Please read the following questions carefully and answer them to the best of your ability.

**43. For each of the following campus organizations and activities, please rate your level of involvement (over the current academic year) based on the following terms. When rating your involvement use the definition that most closely matches your involvement.**

- DNP (no involvement):** Do not participate in any way.
- Level 1 (spectator):** Attend meetings/events occasionally and/or subscribed to the e-mail list-serv; keep up with the goings on of the organization but not actively contributing time or energy.
- Level 2 (participant):** Attend meetings/events regularly; serve on a committee, help with a project, or volunteer in some other way.
- Level 3 (leader):** Actively influence the organization or group in accomplishing its goals. Participate in the decisions of the organization; regularly volunteer for projects; serve in an officer position.

*For each organization/activity, please circle only one level of involvement.*

	No involvement	Spectator	Participant	Leader
a. Pride Alliance .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
b. Graduate Lambda Coalition .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
c. True Colors of Maryland .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
d. Trans U .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
e. BAM – (Bisexuals at Maryland) .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
f. Safe Space .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
g. Woman2Woman .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
h. League of LGBT Advocates .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
i. Smith Pride .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
j. Rainbow Terrapin Ally Network .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
k. Speakers Bureau .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
l. Intergroup dialogue: LGBT / Heterosexual .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
m. Intergroup dialogue: Men’s Circle .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
n. Intergroup dialogue: Women’s Circle .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
o. Other ON CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
p. Other ON CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3

*Are there any LGBT organizations OFF CAMPUS that you participate in? If so, please rank your level of involvement in the two off campus organizations that you are most involved with.*

- |   |     |         |         |         |
|---|-----|---------|---------|---------|
| q. OFF CAMPUS organization .....  | DNP | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
| r. OFF CAMPUS organization .....  | DNP | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
| s. If you participate in any unlisted LGBT organizations on or off campus, please list them here: |     |         |         |         |

**44. Think about those organizations that you indicated you were involved with. How would you categorize the mission of each of those organizations based on the following descriptions?**

- DNP:** Do not participate in any way.
- Advocacy:** Promotes LGBT issues of concern to university officials, or local, state, or national officials. Builds coalitions with other organizations and enlists allies.
- Support:** Offers a safe environment where members can comfortably explore their sexual orientation.
- Social:** Provides outlets where students can meet each other and have fun.
- Education:** Organizes programs that promote understanding of and impart knowledge about LGBT issues. Programs can be for LGBT individuals or non-LGBT individuals.
- Cultural:** Celebrates the values and history of the LGBT community and/or movement.
- Other:** If you believe that an organization has a type of mission that does not fall into any of the above categories please use the last page of this survey to describe that organization’s mission.

***For organizations that you participate in, circle all categories that apply. You can skip those organizations that you do not participate in..***

45. Pride Alliance .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
46. Graduate Lambda Coalition .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
47. True Colors of Maryland .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
48. Trans U DNP.....	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	
49. BAM – (Bisexuals at Maryland) .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
50. Safe Space .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
51. Woman2Woman .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
52. League of LGBT Advocates .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
53. Smith Pride .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
54. Rainbow Terrapin Ally Network .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
55. Speakers Bureau .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
56. Intergroup dialogue: LGBT / Heterosexual .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
57. Intergroup dialogue: Men’s Circle .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
58. Intergroup dialogue: Women’s Circle .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
59. Other ON CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
60. Other ON CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
61. OFF CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural
62. OFF CAMPUS organization .....	DNP	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural

45. Think about the total amount of time you spend on those organizations that you indicated you were involved with. On average how many hours a week is that amount of time?

\_\_\_\_\_

46. What word or phrase would you use to describe your sexual orientation?

\_\_\_\_\_

47. What year were you born?

\_\_\_\_\_

48. At what age did you come out to the following individuals: (leave blank those groups you are not out to)

- a. Immediate family: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Extended family: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Friends: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Coworkers: \_\_\_\_\_

49. Which best describes your gender? (check all that apply)

- a.  Male
- b.  Female
- c.  Transgender
- d.  Transsexual
- e.  Gender queer

f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

50. With what racial/ethnic group(s) do you most identify? (check all that apply)

- a.  African American
- b.  Asian Pacific American
- c.  Caucasian
- d.  Latino/Latina/Hispanic
- e.  Native American
- f.  Multi-racial/ethnic

g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

51. What is your current class standing? (check only one)

- a.  Freshman
- b.  Sophomore
- c.  Junior
- d.  Senior
- e.  Graduate student

f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

52. How many hours of coursework did you take last semester?

\_\_\_\_\_

53. How many hours of coursework are you taking this semester?

\_\_\_\_\_

54. If you have a job while attending school, how many hours on average do you work a week? (check only one)

- a.  I do not have a job.
- b.  0-5 hours
- c.  6-10
- d.  11-15
- e.  16-20
- f.  21-25
- g.  26-30
- h.  31-35
- i.  36-40
- j.  40+

55. Where do you reside?

- a.  On campus
- b.  Off campus

56. How did you hear about this study? (check only one)

- a.  E-mail
- b.  From a friend
- c.  From a faculty or staff member
- d.  In class or at a meeting
- e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**57. Please use the space on this final page for any comments you would like to make.**

THANK YOU for completing this survey.

Please return your completed survey to the distributor of the survey. If you have any questions pertaining to this study please contact John Lynch at 301-314-7447 or [Jlynch@union.umd.edu](mailto:Jlynch@union.umd.edu).



APPENDIX F: Identity Development Responses

Table 18

*Examples of Responses to Open Ended Identity Development Questions*

<p>Question: Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences your gay/lesbian identity.</p>	<p>Question: Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences the gay/lesbian community.</p>
<p>I have been out for 5 years now, so I am fully developed as a gay man in the sense that I accept my sexual identity. I think my gay identity is related to my feelings for social justice more than it is to my desire to have a life partner or be coupled sexually with another male. I have reached the point where my emotional attachment to males is more important than my sexual attraction to them.</p>	<p>The gay and lesbian community is extremely fragmented and divided. Because of many societal issues, what it means to be a member of the gay/lesbian community differs greatly for people, including myself. I don't know that I feel like I have a strong gay/lesbian community in my life as I mostly associate with heterosexual individuals just because of their proximity to me.</p>
<p>I don't let my sexuality define who I am, and my identity as a gay man is private; as in most environments, sexuality is not significant. Being gay is just a small part of me that too many people seem to blow out of proportion.</p>	<p>The gay/lesbian community on campus is weak for a number of reasons. It is not properly organized, and the people running it are doing it for a) attention, or b) means to their own ends. It is shameful that so many students view the meetings and events in such a sexual manner.</p>
<p>I am 24. I began same-sex sexual intimacies at 17, told another person at 18, came out to all of my friends at 20, came out to my mom at 21.</p>	<p>Sometimes it seems a bit frivolous and fixated on meaningless and casual sexual encounters. I have found a subset of the community that values long-term partnership and feel most comfortable with this group of peers.</p>
<p>I have known since I was very young that this was a possibility. At this time in my life I am very close to integrating my lesbian identity with all aspects of my life.</p>	<p>I have a small community of gay/lesbian friends whom I depend on for support. The larger community give me a strong foundation and offers a lot of exciting activities.</p>

Table 18 (continued)

<p>Question: Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences your gay/lesbian identity.</p>	<p>Question: Regardless of how you responded to the above statements, please describe in one or two sentences the gay/lesbian community.</p>
<p>I live with my boyfriend of 2 years and want this to be a lifelong condition. I relate to friends and family as a gay man (with a male life partner). I have both straight and gay friends. I participate the gay community and in activities participated by gays (e.g., gay sports club). I would like to participate more actively in campus graduate LBGT group, but time (not willingness or interest) is prohibitive.</p>	<p>Often times (at least for the male side) focused as much on sex as the straight folk who would denigrate us say, but to put it in perspective, we all are men. That I believe is what makes the overwhelming emphasis and feeling of comradery (sp??) about sex. On the opposite hand, there are many, many organizations and activities that are just groups of gays having fun (or taking political action, etc) together. There is an everpresent sense of commmonality that we all share something.</p>
<p>I am an out gay male with many heterosexual and homosexual friends. Both male and female.</p>	<p>The community here is rather clique-y and there is a 'front line' and the 'reserves' of gay men. There is just a different degree of out-ness to all the males but it makes it that much harder for the community to support each other.</p>
<p>I have been in a relationship for 5 years and I have a mix of lesbian and straight friends. I identify as lesbian</p>	<p>I have not been fully integrated into it due to time constraints on my part. I do think the activism community is accessible but there are less opportunities for social involvement.</p>
<p>I identify as a Gay, White, Christian, privileged, left-of-center male, able-bodied male. My politics tend to be more conserative than that of what I know to be the gay community at large.</p>	<p>The gay/lesbian community is really two communities: one gay and one lesbian. These also differ by setting (urban, suburban, rural). The gay community I know is urban and it exhibits characteristics of seemingly unrestricted sexual mores, routine engagement with drugs and alcohol, and colored by a lack of overall low emotional intelligence. Gay men I know tend to have difficulty in emotionally connecting to other gay men in a healthy manner. I lack true familiarity with the lesbian community.</p>

APPENDIX G: Expanded Table for Mean Time Involved

Table 19

*Mean Time Involved by Phase of Identity Development*

Phase	Group	Group	Group	Group
	Membership	Membership	Membership	Membership
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Mean Time Involved in Organizations				
Individual Phase 1	2.59	1.5		
	SD=3.41	SD=0		
	n=2	n=1	n=0	n=0
Individual Phase 2		1	3	0.5
		SD=0	SD=0	SD=0.71
	n=0	n=1	n=1	n=2
Individual Phase 3	0.5	1	2.7	13
	SD=0	SD=0	SD=2.49	SD=16.98
	n=1	n=1	n=5	n=2
Individual Phase 4		0.5	2.25	2.88
		SD=1	SD=1.96	SD=4.98
	n=0	n=4	n=10	n=59

APPENDIX H: Expanded Tables for Type of Involvement

Table 20

*Individual Phases of Identity Development*

Type of Organization	Advocacy Frequency (expected n)	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$ df p-value
Individual-Phase 1 (n=3)	1 (2.4)	0 (2.4)	4 (2.4)	3 (2.4)	4 (2.4)	2.000 3 .572
Individual-Phase 2 (n=4)	1 (2.6)	6 (2.6)	6 (2.6)	3 (2.6)	3 (2.6)	4.947 4 .293
Individual-Phase 3 (n=9)	5 (9.2)	11 (9.2)	12 (9.2)	10 (9.2)	8 (9.2)	3.348 4 .501
Individual-Phase 4 (n=73)	100 (102)	122 (102)	119 (102)	91 (102)	78 (102)	13.627 4 .009**

\*significant at .05

\*\*significant at .01

Table 21

*Group Membership Phases of Identity Development*

Type of Organization	Advocacy Frequency (expected n)	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$ df p-value
Group- Phase 1 (n=3)	1 (3)	1 (3)	5 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4.667 4 .323
Group- Phase 2 (n=7)	4 (2.8)	4 (2.8)	5 (2.8)	0 (2.8)	1 (2.8)	2.571 3 .463
Group- Phase 3 (n=16)	18 (23.8)	26 (23.8)	30 (23.8)	24 (23.8)	21 (23.8)	3.563 4 .468
Group- Phase 4 (n=63)	84 (87.8)	108 (87.8)	101 (87.8)	79 (87.8)	67 (87.8)	12.606 4 .013*

\*significant at .05

\*\*significant at .01

Table 22

*Comparison of Type of Organizations for undergraduate students, by phase*

Type of Organization	Advocacy Frequency (expected n)	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$ df p-value
Individual- Phase 1-3 (n=14)	5 (13.8)	15 (13.8)	20 (13.8)	15 (13.8)	14 (13.8)	8.609 4 .072
Individual- Phase 4 (n=43)	67 (70.4)	83 (70.4)	82 (70.4)	61 (70.4)	59 (70.4)	7.432 4 .115
Group- Phase 1-3 (n=19)	17 (22.8)	23 (22.8)	31 (22.8)	22 (22.8)	21 (22.8)	4.596 4 .331
Group- Phase 4 (n=38)	55 (61.4)	75 (61.4)	71 (61.4)	54 (61.4)	52 (61.4)	7.511 4 .111

Table 23

*Comparison of Type of Organizations for graduate students, by phase*

Type of Organization	Advocacy	Support	Social	Education	Cultural	$\chi^2$
Phase	Frequency (expected n)					df
						p-value
Individual-Phase 1-3 (n=2)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	.750 4 .945
Individual-Phase 4 (n=28)	33 (31.6)	39 (31.6)	37 (31.6)	30 (31.6)	19 (31.6)	7.823 4 .098
Group-Phase 1-3 (n=6)	6 (6.8)	8 (6.8)	9 (6.8)	6 (6.8)	5 (6.8)	1.588 4 .811
Group-Phase 4 (n=24)	29 (26.4)	33 (26.4)	30 (26.4)	25 (26.4)	15 (26.4)	7.394 4 .116

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