BEING THE CHANGE:
RESOLVING INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTION THROUGH
IDENTITY WORK

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We show how gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) ministers in two mainline Protestant denominations in the United States experience and address a salient institutional contradiction between their role in the church and their marginalized GLBT identities. Drawing on this analysis, we offer a theoretical model of the microprocesses through which marginalized actors who are committed to the institution in which they are embedded can begin to think and act as agents of institutional change. This model enunciates the importance of embodied identity work in resolving the experience of institutional contradiction and marginalization.

Following the 2008 decennial conference of the bishops of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, possible schism looms in what some see as an institutional crisis. At a minimum, previously taken-for-granted assumptions about the unity and governance of the Anglican Church have been called into question. Although the result of many complex factors, more than any other single cause, the election of an openly gay bishop in the United States has set in motion institutional forces that are profoundly affecting the Anglican Communion globally. Although Gene Robinson's controversial and visible presence in the role of bishop of New Hampshire positions him as a potential agent of institutional change, getting to that place required his constructing an identity that allowed him to simultaneously claim both his identity as a gay man and his ministerial role, a role many would deny him because of his sexual identity. By occupying this role, he lives at the nexus of an increasingly salient institutional contradiction.

Robinson is not alone, however. There are many like him in the Protestant mainline,[1] although perhaps no other so well known. Like Robinson, the vast majority of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT)[2] people who pursue their divine callings face opponents' claims that homosexuality is inherently incompatible with ordained ministry (Chaves, 1997). These tensions bespeak a deeper contradiction. On the one hand, there are taken-for-granted beliefs regarding the inclusiveness of the Christian Gospel and denominational commitments to civil rights and social justice; on the other is the institutionalized marginalization of GLBT people and in some cases their exclusion from ordained ministry. The lived experience of and re-

[1] The term "mainline Protestantism" refers to the six or seven denominations in the United States that constitute the core of a progressive Protestant Christianity. Wuthnow and Evans (2002) numbered among them the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the American Baptist Association, and the Episcopal Church.

[2] The term "GLBT" is in popular use among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people because it signals simultaneously a distinctiveness of these identities and their common experience of marginalization as objects of heterosexist prejudice. Our interviewees self-identified as gay men or lesbians.

sponses to this contradiction inspired our inductive research question for this study: How do institutionally marginalized people experience and resolve institutional contradictions, and what are the implications of this process for their agency?[3]

The concept of institutional contradiction is of key theoretical importance in efforts to overcome the new institutionalism's (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) theoretical challenge in explaining endogenous agency and institutional change. For example, Friedland and Alford (1991) argued that individual and organizational autonomy and agency can be traced to the contradictory relations among the multiple institutional logics that constitute society. Seo and Creed (2002: 231) took this argument further by claiming that "human agency for institutional change is inseparable from institutional contradictions." (2002: 231). They argued that institutional contradictions can trigger a shift in actors' collective consciousness that can transform them into change agents, while also providing alternative meanings, logics of action, and psychological and physical resources that they can mobilize to effect institutional change. These arguments are predominantly theoretical, however, and rather than extend theories on institutional change, we seek to know more about the *antecedent microprocesses* (processes that occur at a micro level) through which the experience of institutional contradictions can actually lead to change-oriented agency.

Our work here inductively explores how a group of GLBT ministers came to see themselves as active institutional change agents by examining how they engaged in "identity work" that resolved the institutional contradictions that marginalize them. Our focus on identity work complements and extends recent work in institutional theory that focuses on the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions under the rubric of "institutional work" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Identity work is coming to be seen as an important form of institutional work as institutions can be affected through "constructing" and "performing" (Glynn, 2008) particular identities (Creed, Scully, & Austin, 2002; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Rao, Monin, &

Durand, 2003; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). We extend this work by theorizing microprocesses that form the *necessary preconditions* for endogenous change-oriented agency on the part of marginalized insiders responding to institutional contradictions.

Through a systematic analysis of the experiences of GLBT ministers in two mainline U.S. Protestant denominations, we show how these actors, through identity work, resolved institutionalized claims of incompatibility and changed the enactment of their institutional roles in line with a reconciled identity. Drawing on this analysis, we offer three main contributions to the microfoundations of institutional theory (Collins, 1981; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Powell & Colyvas, 2008). First, we offer a theoretical model of the microprocesses through which actors can come to see themselves as agents of institutional change in response to their experience of institutional contradiction and marginalization. This model enunciates the importance of "identity reconciliation," "role claiming," and "role use" (defined below) as a nexus of embodied identity work through which the experience of institutional contradiction and marginalization can be resolved. Second, we show that the actors engaged in this form of institutional work are neither the "cultural dopes" nor the "hyper-muscular institutional entrepreneurs" populating much recent institutional research (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009; Powell & Colyvas, 2008). In our case, they are dispersed actors who claim and authorize their roles by selectively amplifying and reinvigorating institutionally available narratives and meanings in identity constructions that resolve their personal, often highly emotional, experiences of contradiction and marginalization. Third, we show that this process can be both conservative and disruptive; institutional work does not necessarily need to be aimed at either the creation, maintenance, or disruption of institutions, but can paradoxically involve more than one of these categories at the same time.

THE ROLE OF CONTRADICTIONS AND IDENTITY IN INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The concept of contradiction is of key importance to theoretical understanding of endogenous change in institutions. Seeking to correct the new institutionalism's emphasis on institutional isomorphism, DiMaggio (1988) was among the first to argue that processes of institutional change can follow an internal logic of contradiction whereby institutionalization processes can create new sets of legitimated actors who, in the course of pursuing distinct interests, can delegitimate and deinstitu-

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[3] Here, "agency" refers to the capacity to act on the basis of choice and to affect one's environment; "autonomy" refers to an individual's capacity to make informed, self-determining choices, free of coercion; and "logics" or "logics of action" refer to the cultural schemata, rules, scripts, models of causality, and patterns of behavior that make up social arrangements and institutional frameworks.

tionalize aspects of the institutional arrangements to which they owe their own autonomy and legitimacy. Because an institutional script for behavior may be appropriate in one situation, yet dysfunctional in the new conditions brought about by following the script, institutions may produce "their own grave diggers" (Clemens & Cook, 1999: 449); reliable reproduction will be less likely to the extent that contradictory institutional arrangements generate challengers. Friedland and Alford (1991) agreed with the idea that such challengers can use institutional arrangements to their own advantage but pointed out that their "interests" are institutionally constituted rather than objectively given. They maintained that the contradictions *among* the major institutions of contemporary society, rather than conflicts internal to them, are the bases of the most important political conflicts. It is through these politics that the institutional structure of society is transformed (see also Jepperson, 1991).

Seo and Creed (2002) combined these arguments by theorizing that multiple sources of institutional contradiction can form the basis of change-oriented praxis. One key source is increasing exposure to incompatibilities *between* the behavioral expectations of multiple and contradictory institutional arrangements. Another is the fundamental *internal* misalignment between particular social arrangements and the interests of diverse actors who "enact," "inhabit," and "reproduce" those social arrangements. In some circumstances, actors can become conscious of institutional conditions that leave their needs unmet and take action to change them. In other words, through increased "reflexivity," actors can attain some cognitive distance from, and in some cases even a critical stance toward, the institutions in which they are embedded. Transformative action is possible because institutional contradictions may not only trigger a reflexive shift in actors' consciousness, but also provide alternative meanings, logics of action, and psychological and physical resources allowing actors to mobilize, appropriate, and transpose cultural logics and meanings to frame and serve their interests. Thus, a political theory of institutional change has emerged in which change agents skillfully interpret and exploit contradictions within and between institutional arrangements (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

Most empirical research in this field has focused on the ways in which change agents deploy their political skill to legitimate and effect change (Creed et al., 2002; Reay, Golden-Biddle, & GermAnn, 2006; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Research has only recently begun to uncover some of the *conditions* under which contradictions can lead to change-oriented agency. For example, Chung and Luo (2008) showed that when institutional contradictions become amplified, through heightened competitive pressures or through the introduction of a new institutional logic, change-oriented agency on the part of actors predisposed to act as change agents by some lack of cognitive embeddedness becomes more likely. This argument is consistent with other research that has relied on the introduction of cognitively disembedded "outsiders" as a source of cognitive variability explaining change (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Zilber, 2002). Yet, still, little is known about the microprocesses through which the experience of institutional contradictions can cause deeply embedded actors to become more reflexive or able to take a critical stance *within* established institutions and how this experience affects their agency.

Seo and Creed (2002) suggested that to change institutions from within, change agents must recreate themselves in ways akin to how they transform institutions, piecing together the meanings and models available in the broader society (Bernstein, 1997). They pointed out that the experience of institutional contradictions that can cause actors to become more reflexive is not a sufficient condition for change-oriented agency in itself. In order for cognitively disembedded actors to become potential internal change agents, they also need to become "change-minded" (Chung & Luo, 2008; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). This term suggests a change in identity may be a precondition for endogenous change-oriented agency.

Institutional theorists are increasingly recognizing the importance of identity as a mechanism through which institutional change can be effected or blocked. Research has shown that one of the ways in which change agents ensure that their legitimating accounts resonate with their target audience is through the construction of identities that draw on resonant logics or frames in society (Creed et al., 2002; Maguire & Hardy, 2005; Rao et al., 2003; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). The construction of new identities by institutional entrepreneurs is seen as an important form of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) as it is through subsequent identification with proffered new identities that the associated new logics can become institutionalized (Lounsbury, 2001; Rao et al., 2003; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). For this reason, identity construction appears central to entrepreneurial attempts to frame the need for change (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002). Furthermore, identity has also been shown to be an important source of *resistance against* change (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Townley, 1997). For example, Marquis and Lounsbury (2007) pointed out

that institutional theorists have long documented that professional identity is a significant driver of action, especially when autonomy is threatened; it can be an important reason why actors resist institutional change.

In light of this growing recognition of the importance of identity in institutionalization processes, the question of how "insiders" committed to a particular institution can (re)create themselves in the face of personal experiences of institutional contradictions is particularly important for two reasons. First, through an unwitting focus on either activists' strategic rhetorical identity work, on the one hand, or on actors' conservative identity-based resistance, on the other, identity research in institutional theory risks sustaining institutionalism's hero/dope dualism. It is for this reason that Powell and Colyvas (2008) called for an explicit focus on how everyday processes involving existing members of a field can both sustain and prompt shifts in practices and conventions. Second, the identity work of actors involved in change or resistance efforts has generally been portrayed as a disembodied, rhetorical, strategic achievement (Rao et al., 2003; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), rather than an embodied, emotional one. Yet research has shown that changes in identity can be difficult and emotional experiences (Greil & Rudy, 1983; Lofland & Stark, 1965; Sarbin & Adler, 1970), suggesting that one of the reasons the experience of institutional contradictions does not necessarily lead to successful change-oriented agency is that actors may not be able to engage in successful identity transformation.

Hence, it is necessary to focus on how embedded actors can transform themselves through embodied identity work to address the question of how they can become change agents. Our focal research questions are, therefore: *How can insiders who are deeply committed to an institution begin to see themselves as change agents as a result of their personal experiences of institutional contradictions? What does this transition process involve?* In other words, we focus on analyzing the microprocesses by which the experience of salient institutional contradictions can begin to affect the agency of deeply embedded actors. In addressing these questions, we contribute to the literature on the microfoundations of institutional theory by developing a model that conceptualizes the microprocesses through which actors who are deeply committed to an institution can transform themselves into change agents in response to their experience of institutional contradiction and marginalization.

METHODS

Our study focused on GLBT ministers in two mainline Protestant denominations because of their experiences of institutional contradiction outlined above. After reviewing the larger institutional setting in the following section, we present details of our data sources and our approach to the data analysis.

Context: Institutionalized Heterosexism and Contradiction in the Protestant Mainline

The social and moral condemnation of GLBT people is often justified by the assertion that homosexuality is inconsistent with the moral tenets of most major religions. For many social conservatives, abhorrence of homosexuality is a moral stance founded, they believe, on sacred teachings (Creed, 2005). Contemporary Western "heterosexism" has its roots in Christian framings that combined medieval notions of the homosexual as sinner and heretic with Reformation notions of the homosexual as a threat to social order and an enemy of the state (Fone, 2000).[4] These durable ascriptions position gay and lesbian people as natural or legitimate objects of persecution even in recent American history. For example, the 2008 passage of California's Proposition 8, which denied civil marriage licensure to same-sex couples, illustrates how heterosexism continues to be legitimated in American culture.

The American Protestant mainline is embedded in and is largely struggling with this institutionalized heterosexism. For the last three decades, many mainline Protestant denominations have become increasingly embroiled in complex, internal, political conflicts over the proper position of GLBT people in church and society. A complex collection of competing institutionalized beliefs, assumptions, and logics underpins these struggles. On the one hand, what is at issue is how to balance scripture, tradition, revelation, and reason in the effort to frame a moral stance vis-à-vis homosexuality. Implicated in this effort are questions about how to read and understand the Bible, the proper jurisdiction and nature of religious authority, the moral standing of individuals as individuals, the parameters of sexual morality and sacred intimacy, and the role of reason and science in addressing religious questions. On the other hand is the question of what the essence of the gospel message—often

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[4] Herek defined heterosexism "as an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (1990b: 316).

called "the Good News"—is. Christians widely understand their religion as inclusive, in the sense that historical ethnic and political divisions are believed to be healed through Christ, and the excluded and poor are affirmed as the blessed children of God. Herein lies what some see as a fundamental institutional contradiction. How can a church close its doors or deny that God also calls GLBT people to all manner of Christian discipleship and remain a Christian church? Further, although the leaders and members of many, if not most, mainline Protestant churches have come to accept the idea that the "Grace of God" embraces GLBT members of congregations, when those "same brothers and sisters step forward voicing a bona fide Call to ministry," acceptance becomes much trickier (S. Woolston-Bossert, personal communication, July 2008).

A small number of Protestant denominations will ordain openly GLBT people, but most do not, and in those denominations that do not, ordained closeted GLBT people are at risk of being defrocked if their GLBT identities become known. Ministry is contested terrain because antigay activists believe that what is at risk are the evisceration of traditional Christian teachings, the normalization of the "homosexual lifestyle," the well-being of children, and even the survival of the nation (Herek, 1990a). In contrast, advocates see GLBT ordination as congruent with both "the Good News" and with progressive Christian commitment to dismantling prejudice.

Data Sources

Protestant ministers have highly formalized and institutionalized roles (Hughes, 1939) and have been shown to be an appropriate professional community to study in previous organizational research on topics ranging from work-family balance (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009) to motivation (Sherman & Smith, 1984). We focused on a GLBT subpopulation because they are institutionally marginalized by the common assertion that homosexuality and ordained ministry are morally incompatible. Because challenges to the legitimacy of their vocations are based on their very identities as GLBT people, this is arguably an extreme instance of institutional contradiction. Such extreme cases can provide insights into processes and mechanisms that may not be as easily discernible under more moderate conditions (Eisenhardt, 1989; Pratt, 2000). Our data comprise ten in-depth interviews, conducted between 2001 and 2003, with gay and lesbian (GLBT) people from two denominations. This data set was constructed with the help of "in the know" (Goffman, 1963) members of each de-

nomination. "Snowballing" and convenience sampling are common and often inevitable techniques for generating data in organizational research on groups with invisible, stigmatized identities because of secrecy and fear of discrimination (Creed & Scully, 2000; DeJordy, 2008; Douglas, 1976). Each interview lasted approximately 3.5 hours. All interviews were taped and transcribed and comprise 781 pages of data. Informants spanned the East and West Coasts of the United States. One interview was conducted by phone; the rest were face-to-face. Five interviewees, two women and three men, were ordained ministers in the United Church of Christ. Five interviewees, three women and two men, were members of the Presbyterian Church USA, including three ordained ministers, one seminarian, and one theologically trained man who has been denied ordination because he is gay.

We chose these denominations because they have opposing positions on the issue of ordaining GLBT ministers. The United Church of Christ (UCC) explicitly allows the ordination of openly GLBT ministers, but the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) explicitly forbids it. It is important to note, however, that its policy on GLBT ordination notwithstanding, the UCC still remains embedded in the larger institutional contexts of both American Christianity and society at large, which exhibits a certain degree of institutionalized heterosexism, as described above. Though openly gay UCC ministers do not risk being defrocked, they still face career risks, such as never finding a church to hire them. The two denominations also have different governance structures. The UCC is governed through a "congregational polity," which means the denomination is a federation of autonomous congregations. Decision-making authority resides at the level of each self-governing congregation. The Presbyterian polity, on the other hand, employs a hierarchical structure of elected assemblies including lay church elders and ordained ministers. Rules and policies are established by well-defined constitutional processes at higher levels in the hierarchy and apply to the local churches. Table 1 enumerates the relevant distinctions between the two denominations.

The interview protocol was designed to elicit data on individual, situational, and institutional factors affecting the GLBT ministers' pursuit of their callings (see the Appendix for the protocol), as well as each informant's subjective sense of identity in our research context. To address our research questions, we focused on the narratives our informants related when asked to think of their careers as unfolding in chapters and to provide two episodes in each chapter when their sexual identity

TABLE 1
Comparison of UCC and PCUSA Denominations

Characteristic	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)	United Church of Christ (UCC)
Polity	Centralized; hierarchical. All rules and policies established at higher levels in the hierarchy are applicable to and enforceable at the level of the local church.	Decentralized; federation of autonomous congregations. Each congregation is self-governing with localized decision-making authority.
Policy on ordination of GLBT individuals	Explicitly disallowed. No presbytery is allowed to ordain or call an openly GLBT person as a minister.	Explicitly allowed. Individual congregations are free to ordain (or not) and call (or not) openly GLBT people as ministers.
GLBT-based movements or groups	The "More Light" movement is dedicated to the advancement of GLBT causes within the PCUSA. Dissenting congregations can declare themselves "More Light" congregations.	Congregations may declare themselves "Open and Affirming" to signal their acceptance and affirmation of the role of GLBT people within the church and the congregation.
Timetable/history of consideration of GLBT ordination issue	1978: General Assembly (GA) formally welcomes gays and lesbians as members but explicitly prohibit ordination of "self-affirming, practicing homosexuals." 1993: GA voted 72 percent in favor of continuing 1978 ban, but calls for three-year study of sexuality and ordination. 1996: GA receives 45 proposals relating to GLBT ordination. Votes 323/226 against allowing individual congregations and presbyteries to decide for themselves. 1997: Amendment B, which explicitly denies ordination to any person sexually active outside of a heterosexual marriage is ratified by a very slim majority of Presbyteries. 2002: Presbyteries vote 72 percent in favor of continuing GLBT ordination ban by rejecting an amendment that would take the rule out of the Book of Order. 2009: Another amendment to the ban is voted on by the presbyteries and still fails, though at least 40 percent vote for it, showing increasing support for the measure.	1972: UCC ordains first openly gay person to minister to a mainline denomination. 1975: General Synod (GS) declares sexual orientation is not a legitimate ground for denial of civil liberties. 1983: GS passes a resolution recommending to UCC regional associations that sexual orientation not be a consideration in questions of ordination. 1985: GS calls on all UCC congregations to study homosexuality and declare that they are "open and affirming." 1991: GS "boldly affirms, celebrates, and embraces the gifts of ministry of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons." 1994: A UCC Congregation in Seattle calls the first gay clergy couple to copastor a mainline Christian congregation. 2009: Approximately only 760 of the 5,600 congregations in the UCC have declared themselves open and affirming.

became salient in the pursuit of their callings. In response, our informants told nuanced stories about their organizational, institutional, and personal identities (Czarniawska, 1997).

Data Analysis

We used inductive, thematic analysis (Mischler, 1986; Riessman, 1993) of these narratives to investigate the interplay of identity, the experiences of institutional contradiction, and individual responses to contradiction, answering Zald's call for the use of narrative analysis in organization studies "to examine how people in organizations represent and construct their lives" (1996: 254). We adopted narrative analysis because it is well suited to exploring meaning-based constructs, such as personal experiences of identity and contradiction, as well as the process-based research questions we posed

(Mischler, 1986; Riessman, 1993; Zald, 1996). As Ewick and Silbey explained, "Stories people tell about themselves and their lives both constitute and interpret those lives; stories are media through which identities are negotiated" (2003: 1341). Thus, we followed Callero (2003b) in thinking of the self at its most basic level as a reflexive narrative process that regulates the acting, agentic human being. In this sense, our use of informants' narratives aligns with the poststructuralist literature on identity construction, in which personal identity is viewed as an *ongoing reflexive accomplishment* that addresses the questions "Who am I?" and—by implication—"How should I act?" (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Cerulo, 1997; Watson, 2008). As an ongoing accomplishment, identity is neither fixed nor given, especially in the face of multiple institutional logics and contradictions that may marginalize one's identity (Meyer-

son & Scully, 1995) or undermine the coherence of the self (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; DeJordy, 2008).

In keeping with other interpretive research based on qualitative data (Locke, 2001; Reay et al., 2006), throughout our analysis we moved iteratively between the data, the emerging themes, and existing theory in several phases. In the first phase of our analysis, we performed grounded thematic analysis of the narratives using NVivo, a computer-based qualitative research package. We started by isolating the relevant career narratives. To help structure our analysis, we adopted Czarniawska's (1997) perspective that narratives of identity include materials drawn from available "cultural resources." These have been discussed under a variety of names (e.g., "cultural toolkits" [Swidler, 1986]; "cultural frames" [Callero, 2003b]); we adopted Weick's (1995) elaboration of six "cultural vocabularies" to help sensitize us to the materials used by our informants in the narratives they told and to construct a consolidated narrative for each informant (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). To capture the informants' experiences, we constructed these narratives by interweaving verbatim quotations with transitional summaries. These narratives served as the basis for future theorizing. To "minimize the violence" (Pratt, 2008: 499) done to these data through translation for presentation, we followed Pratt's recommendation of using both in-line quotations and summary tables to present the extremely rich accounts of our informants' identity construction and to convey the emic "power" of their lived experiences and emotional commitments. Their length prohibits presenting the complete narratives for all of our informants, but we do present abbreviated versions for four of our informants as case studies in the next sections.

Building on this analysis, we looked within and between narratives to uncover how the informants represented "complicating actions," in our case the manifest experiences of contradiction, their engagement, and subsequent responses, looking for both themes and patterns of action and responses (Gersick, Bartunek, & Dutton, 2000: 1030). As a result of constant comparison within and between both informants and denominations (Suddaby, 2006), we noted several common elements in the narratives they told. For example, one informant invoked the Gospel of Luke to support rejecting the orthodoxy of exclusion and applying the Christian tenet of tending to the excluded to GLBT people. Another asserted her right to play a hermeneutical professor and interpret controversial Biblical passages for others in nonheterosexist ways. These cases, and others like them, show our informants

"challenging orthodoxy from within," a first-level construct from our analysis. In this manner we identified the initial constructs grounded in our informants' narratives. Following Maitlis and Lawrence (2007), we present these constructs and representative quotations in Table 2.

In reviewing our first-level constructs and relating these to prior research, we concluded that all of them represented different phases and forms of identity work. In adopting "identity work" as an abstract category, we drew on Watson, who conceptualized it as "the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives" (2008: 129). Through identity work, actors attempt to deal with perceived disruptions and contradictions, allowing for their reconciliation through elaborating accounts "designed to deal with the troubles created by departures from legitimacy" (Callero, 2003b: 124). This process is not just internal to individual actors, but also has external aspects inherent in the influence actors can have on the social identities or institutional roles that pertain to them (Watson, 2008). As a basis for further analyzing this external dimension of identity work, we drew on Callero's (1994) role theory, which shows that actors can "claim" and "use" institutional roles for particular purposes, thus potentially affecting institutional structure in novel ways.

Using these theoretical lenses, we refined, aggregated, and linked our first-level constructs to three second-level constructs, which we theorized to be microprocesses through which marginalized insiders can resolve institutional contradictions and begin to think and act as change agents. The first, *internalization of contradiction*, comprises the different ways in which actors internalize their experience of unresolved institutional contradiction. As it has identity implications, for example in the form of "not wanting to be gay," it is a form of identity work. Through *identity reconciliation*, the second microprocess, actors attempt to reestablish coherence and the experience of authenticity of the self internally by constructing self-narratives that deny or reject institutional contradictions. This identity reconciliation work enables actors to engage in *role claiming* and *role use*, our third microprocess, thereby changing the content of institutional roles in their external enactments. Modeled on other inductive research (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006), the chart in Figure 1 provides a visual representation of our inductive

TABLE 2
Data Exemplars for First-Order Constructs[a]

First-Order Construct	Exemplars from the Data
Shame and self-hatred	". . . from the age of 14 onward . . . not even going to a Presbyterian church but I would go to a Catholic Church and light candles and say to God, please God, I think these feelings must be bad. People are telling me they are bad. . . . When I talked about it to one friend . . . I can remember her saying this is bad, this is wrong. So that I kept that to myself. So essentially . . . I felt split in half." [PCUSA-A] "I just walked right through and sat underneath the oak tree and just started crying because I was just like, you know—I was basically like, "Fuck you, God. You know? I'm gay and I don't want to be gay." [UCC-A] "And my decision to remain covert was not a political decision within the Presbyterian Church. It was a psychological and emotional decision formed in reaction to the culture at large. . . . The society's condemnation of gay people was the most vivid thing I'd ever heard about gay people. And, you know, on some level I bought it, hook, line, and sinker." [PCUSA-B]
Compartmentalization	"I let myself be as clueless as possible about those other [students'] struggles going on around me. I spoke very little, if at all, with anybody during my first two years . . . in seminary . . . about issues of sexual orientation or this whole institutional struggle. . . . It's a wonder to me that I could have shut it out as effectively as I did." [PCUSA-B] "Yes, it was just so important to gain that identity as a pastor and to do that and to be about that. This relationship stuff was happening but it wasn't fully integrated." [UCC-E] "Compartmentalizing is continuing. . . . Where does a pastor's sensuousness, sensuality, sexuality, being a human being with intimacy needs . . . where does that fit into my vocation, into my fullness of my world and my life? And I went through a period here, again, of compartmentalizing that, and the hunger getting so great that that compartment wasn't getting satisfied." [UCC-C]
Denial of identity	"I was so naïve—I didn't even know what "closeted" meant. I wasn't even that intentional. I didn't even know the word for what that was. I didn't give that much identity around it. . . . It was just too threatening and way too close. . . . To name that I am gay took time." [UCC-E] "The big question is, parish or wholeness? Or, parish or sexuality. It was this thing that haunted me. But I was in my thirties, and what do we focus on in our thirties? We're supposed to focus on our career. So it was like I had to put that first. . . . They'd never had a woman pastor before. I had to show I was legitimate. . . . And I was also trying to figure out how to be with this man that I didn't really like all that much. . . . But I was damned determined to make it work, it was going to be OK, that [my husband] was going to help make me legitimate." [UCC-B] "Before I accepted myself, certainly, I had a dream where I had gone, I was on a street and this gay man walked up behind me and tapped me on the shoulder. I ran from him screaming. Obviously, [one] interpretation of the dream was that the gay man was me, I was running from my own identity." [PCUSA-C] "I hate You [God] and don't know who the hell Jesus is and what the hell am I supposed to be doing?" [UCC-A]
Theologizing the personal	"And it was an absolutely stunning revelation to me. . . . I'd had my conversion experiences to the practice of faith, and even to the choice for ministry some years before, but I think that that moment was, for me, a conversion experience to the wholeness, the seamlessness of my Christian faith, my vocation to ministry, and my identity as [his] partner . . . because my freedom in God's image inextricably entails my identity as [his] partner." [PCUSA-B] "I would drive and yell at God. . . . Because I thought that God was calling me to be out [in my application to seminary], but I just didn't know what that would look like. And if God was really wanting me to be out, then God needed to give me the words to be able to explain what I needed to explain." [PCUSA-D] "One thing that the movement needs is people who are brave and articulate and can take their faith and put it into words that people can hear, and God's given me all of those gifts. So, you know . . . in Esther it says, 'You were born for such a time as this.'" [UCC-D] "If God wishes for me to receive God's gift of hospitality, and if God wishes for me to embody that for others, then that means that I have to be able to accept my sexual orientation." [UCC-C]
Healing and accepting	"I've had to spend a lot of time and spiritual energy in the years since that undoing the damage that I did to myself by believing what society was saying even in those years about gay and lesbian people. We all have to do battle with the demons of our own homophobia." [PCUSA-B]

(Continued)

TABLE 2
Continued

First-Order Construct	Exemplars from the Data
	"I had a very powerful experience, during my whole process of figuring out—I knew I was coming out. . . . I was gaining my strength. [I saw a shaman for a soul retrieval.] You tell her about those places that come to your mind where you've been hurt the most, [and she] travels off into her own journey and sees what those places are [where you] are ready to be healed. And then, out of that . . . she gave me amazing messages." [UCC-B]
	"So I started to drive about 12:00. About 1:00 o'clock, all of a sudden I felt this tremendous calm. . . . I really felt God putting God's arms around me . . . just surrounding me at that moment, and that there was this almost audible whisper 'It's all going to be okay. You're going to be okay. Just go home and go to sleep.' I mean it was just so drastic, from yelling to all of a sudden this tremendous calm at about 1:00 o'clock in the morning." [PCUSA-D]
	"When they were telling this story my heart was pounding so hard and I said inside to myself this is you. This is you . . . and all I can think about was I have got to tell Jimmy. . . . And I burst into the door. I will never forget it. And I burst in and I said I want to say this out loud Jimmy. I want to say it out loud. Jimmy, I want to tell you I am a lesbian." [PCUSA-A]
Moving to more authenticity and integrity	"Because once you come out . . . it actually gives you a freedom to be who you are. It gives you that you don't have to worry anymore about do they know or don't they know." [PCUSA-A]
	"So it was putting those pieces together. It's my [new-found] passion, as those pieces came together—Whoa, I am gay, I am a minister—those pieces have got to come together. It's all of that and that passion for that justice piece that was so defining for me." [UCC-E]
	"Now that I have fully embraced who I am, [being lesbian] is not a problem. It is a wonderful gift that I could have given to the church and could have been really, I think, very helpful in there in debunking the myths." [PCUSA-A]
	"[Coming out to my family] also helped me, I think, internalize [hospitality as core to my theology]. It was that hospitality to myself. It was that beginning of practicing that toward myself; that living in fear with my family and friends is not a way to practice hospitality to a minister." [UCC-C]
Challenging orthodoxy from within	"The question that is always asked is, 'Well, what do you do with those passages in the Bible that condemn homosexuality?' So, you get to play a hermeneutics professor . . . to try and give some explanation about Biblical interpretation." [PCUSA-C]
	"[My senior pastor] preached a sermon within two months of my being there [as associate pastor] about how he didn't agree with everything the UCC stood for and actually, when he thought about two men having sex, it made him want to throw up . . . I stormed into his office and said, 'What in the world were you thinking of?' I said, 'There are people who came this Sunday because you put up this title on homosexuality and another view. . . . We had a family that came who had a gay child.' I remember thinking 'God, what in the world did you give them? You didn't give them any sense of hope, any sense of anything other than just a bunch of prejudice.'" [UCC-E]
	"Another kind of ongoing task is to move people who are favorably disposed toward gay and lesbian people to activism about it. And that's what I have decided is sort of my work within the institution of the Presbyterian Church." [PCUSA-B]
	"[Coming out, I discovered] I really had some stuff I really believed in and really thought of. Ministry can often just be nice. Instead, it was something—whoa, full of fire. I didn't quite know what to do with the fire, but—wow, passion . . . it was my [saying] 'I'm going to bring this also in your face, church, all over the place.'" [UCC-E]
	"I was appointed to this task force. I was the only openly gay person. . . . And as that, then I became a person, a resource person for the denomination because the mandate of the task force was to lead the church in a study, not to simply do a study, but to lead the church in a study. . . . I was called upon a lot, and I traveled a lot during that time." [PCUSA-C]
Being the change	"I believe that Jesus Christ's spirit wants us to all have room at the table, and I got to do my part in being one of the stepping stones or whatever to get us there." [UCC-B]
	[What's hard for me as an openly gay seminarian is] being a poster child. . . . I don't like that role at all. So I fight with that, and everybody is like 'You have to do it. You're not that [sinful person your opponents claim], but you're ministering.'" [PCUSA-D]

(Continued)

TABLE 2
Continued

| First-Order Construct	Exemplars from the Data
	"I kind of look at the Pentecost story as not an actual event, but a story of the way things should have been. When suddenly everybody was attentive and listening to one another, and able to transcend the boundaries of language and different ways in which—and overcoming the divisions that [languages create]. . . . That's what I see my whole life about, is helping people overcome language barriers." [PCUSA-C]
	"I have a goal of making wherever I'm at, whether it's my home or the church I serve, a welcoming place for all of God's children. I don't care who you were, what you dress like, what you believe. When you enter this room, I'm looking at your soul and your essence." [UCC-A]
	"I see myself sort of evolving and growing into how to speak to [the issues of gay and lesbian rights] without being abrasive. And I'm in an odd position. In some ways, I think another dilemma. . . . It's one thing to say you're gay or lesbian and it's another thing to be partnered and for [parishioners] to see you with your family or your partner, or whatever the term is that you want to use, or recognize that you have a life together and you sleep together and you eat together, and kind of fill it out. . . . It's like being embodied, it's like we want to embody our orientation, make it real for people." [UCC-B]

[a] The attributions following quotations indicate denomination and a letter code for each individual.

analysis, showing how we moved from the data presented in Table 2 to identifying second-order microprocesses through which the experience of institutional contradiction can be resolved.

Our final phase of analysis explored differences and commonalities in the patterned ways in which our informants responded to their experiences of institutional contradiction individually and within and across denominations. During each phase of the analysis, we worked both independently and collaboratively. For example, two of the authors individually constructed tables that identified in-

FIGURE 1
The Structure of Identity Work in Response to Institutional Contradiction
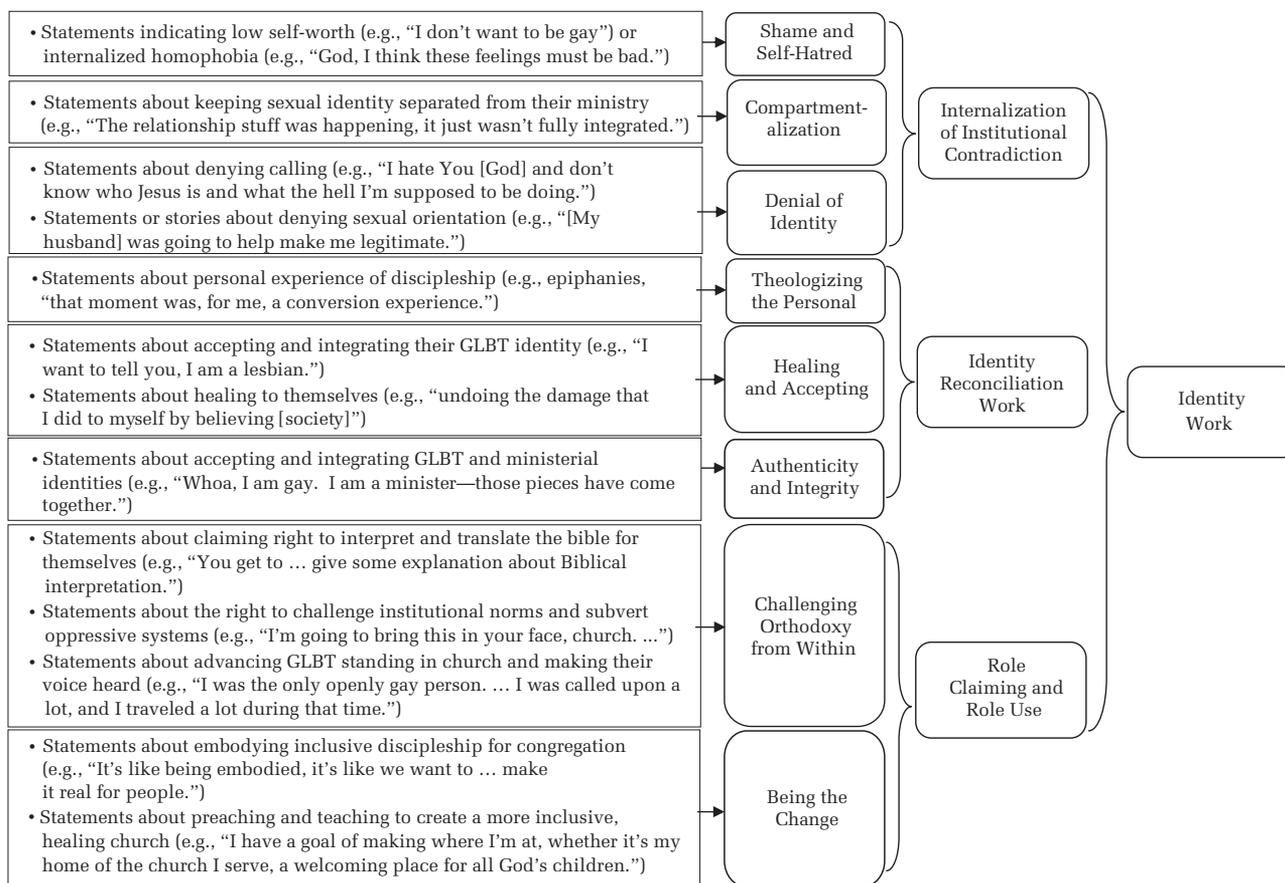
dividuals' responses to experiences of contradictions and examples of identity reconciliation, role claiming, and role use. These were then compared, discussed, and combined into a single table. This iteration between independent and collaborative analysis of the data fostered debate and dialog that helped refine our coding and theorizing (Vaughn, 1992).

FOUR CASE STUDIES

In the following section, we briefly introduce four of our informants, two from each denomination.

UCC Ministers

Matt (UCC-A).[5] Although for Matt "every moment of my job is spiritual work," the real "honor of being a pastor" has been tied to enacting radical inclusiveness:

> [The Gospel of Luke] just tears down all these barriers of morality and social codes and really gets to the crux of the matter, [the Great Commandment], to love God with all your heart, mind and soul and to treat your neighbor as yourself. . . . You see it in [Jesus's] healing of Samaritan women and reaching out to the Gentiles. . . . That's why I shape my ministry and my theology around that particular gospel.

Throughout, Matt presented himself as committed to both pastoral ministry and social justice, but he also related what it took to get to this point. As a gay teen, he internalized antigay messages in society. In college, this persistent self-hatred prevented his hearing affirming messages from his religion professors. Nonetheless, he still felt a calling to ministry; he decided to apply to seminary, believing it would be up to God if he were accepted. In seminary, Matt tapped into a network of openly gay UCC ministers, a move that helped him connect with role models while still remaining closeted. His growing self-acceptance was incremental and fitful until a pivotal change happened during his first year in seminary.

> I was trying to study [and] couldn't breathe. . . . I had to get out. I eventually ended up on [the site of the Revolutionary War's Battle of Princeton]. . . . I was basically like, "Fuck you, God. . . . I don't want to be gay and I hate you and don't know who the hell

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Jesus is and what the hell am I supposed to be doing?" I was crying. . . . And, at that time, on the WalkMan was the song "Let Me Walk the Road with You, I Can Dare Myself."

> . . . I saw the battle erupt on the battlefield . . . and then, silence [and] people on the ground . . . moaning for help . . . I looked to my far left and I saw Jesus walking towards me with his arms open and then . . . he was walking from all sides and all directions. . . This incredible fire just filled my soul and my body and this voice [said] "I love you."

> And . . . I said to myself, "I can be a minister and I am gay and God could care less what my orientation is." . . . From that moment on, I just wiped my theology slate clean and began digesting all kinds of books . . . and really claiming Christ and God and theology as my own. . . . Just because Calvin says it, it doesn't mean it's so.

Matt described himself as ever stronger and more independent after this event. He labeled himself "the mouse that roared," as he became his own theologian and a leader of an emergent GLBT seminarian network on campus, even to the point of coming out in the seminary's newsletter. During this period, he explored his gay identity, rejected gay stereotypes, and forged his own authentic gay spirituality, selectively coming out in more professional settings (interviews, pastoral internships) and embracing his role in the GLBT civil rights movement. He came to see himself as both pastoral and prophetic, called to address important social issues. Being so outspoken made him feel, at times, "like Daniel in the lion's den," as when his coming out to the president of the seminary in an office visit was greeted with a response equating gayness with bestiality. Nonetheless, he carried that outspokenness into his later ministries.

> You don't let people get away with things. . . . In New Hampshire, when I came out, one of my parishioner's . . . favorite phrases was "ignorance is bliss." And I said to her one day, "No, ... if you look at young boys and girls who are growing up gay, who are told . . . not to talk about it, and they commit suicide . . . ignorance is not bliss."

Despite—or because—of what he called his occasional "take no prisoners" stance, his church in rural New Hampshire did not want him to leave when his partner took a medical residency in the Pacific Northwest. This was despite the mixed response to his coming out a few months into his pastorate. Matt attributed parishioners' attachment to his being both genuine and a "contextual" leader (one who gauges what situations call for).

> I say to myself, "Okay. What is the most productive and what do I feel God is calling me to do? . . . Let's

see what's going on." But, other times when I feel, "No, my voice needs to be heard . . . very strongly and here we go." And, just let the cards fall where they lie.

In his second pastorate, at an officially "open and affirming" congregation in an urban neighborhood with a significant GLBT population, he nonetheless was confronted with stigmatizing by his new parishioners. He developed a style of turning such challenges back on his parishioners, "with care and a calm voice," as he reasserted a ministerial vision of serving the marginalized.

Throughout, he has not seen himself or other GLBT people in the church as having an agenda because:

> That's God's plan. . . . I have a goal of making wherever I am . . . whether it's my home or the church I serve a welcoming place for all of God's children. . . . So that's been my goal. . . . I feel like God prepares me and then says, "OK, you're ready now." Or "You're not yet ready, but you know what, here's the fire. Don't worry. . . . You won't get burnt."

Diane (UCC-B). Diane chose ministry over politics because she "wanted to make a difference" and saw religious leaders as hopeful rather than cynical. For Diane, her vocation and her life are one and the same:

> My faith . . . means to live with integrity and a commitment to the values . . . of compassion and respect and a commitment to justice and inclusiveness . . . in all aspects of my life. Teaching that, and preaching it, and living it, and facing my own struggles with it, all is a part of my day-to-day living; it's not just about my job, but it's about me as a whole person.

Although she was able to frame her vocation in terms of integrity at the time of our interview, integrating her lesbianism into her vocation had been a prolonged struggle. Diane had come out to her church of 350 only 2 years earlier, after about 13 years in parish ministry.

As a seminarian, being a lesbian in parish ministry was an "unfathomable" contradiction. Discomfort over her first serious lesbian relationship compounded this confusion: "Who I was . . . and what my deepest longings were—that they were OK—I just didn't have a very strong inner voice that said that. . . . That's really only come to me with coming out." She decided to try to be "normal," thinking "it will go away and it won't haunt me anymore." After a series of splits and reunions with her lesbian lover, she finally married a man she did not even like because he asked her. For her, the next decade was a struggle between "parish or wholeness."

Diane repeatedly used "compartmentalization" to describe these chapters of her life. For her, this compartmentalization represented an untenable contradiction between how she lived her life and professional ideals of authenticity. For example, at 29 and in her first pastorate, she felt pressure as the church's first woman pastor to prove she was "legitimate" by being "all things for all people," intelligent, feminine, and not too strong: "If I was a like a lesbian that was bad . . . so there was just a lot . . . churning around in me. . . . I had to prove that I could do what I felt called to do, but not step on any toes, particularly any men's toes."

Despite this compartmentalization, her career narratives depict her continually struggling to achieve the compassion, commitment to justice, and integrity that she saw as congruent with her vocation, even when it risked undermining her denial of her lesbianism. So, two years later, after becoming a mother felt like a "great way to sort of say I'm a woman," denial of her lesbianism was tested when a closeted lesbian couple from the parish called:

> . . . during my maternity leave, and basically said . . . "Well, we're coming up on our 10th anniversary a year from now, and so we'd like . . . to get people kind of ready, because on our 10th we'd like to have a party. . . . Are you ready for this?" . . . What could I say? . . . I mean, there was no way I wasn't going to stand behind them. . . . I was scared to death . . . [but] I had, I have a much stronger force in me that says, "'Do right." . . . That voice still is stronger.

Despite the congregation's tacitly knowing for eight years, the "fallout of that was pretty phenomenal" and led to a church meeting where members' concerns were discussed.

> One of the lesbian women . . . stood up, shaking, and talked about having grown up a Baptist and how she had been on her hands and knees so many times, praying to God to "Take this, heal me of my lesbianism." . . . I am weeping like a fool. . . . [I was] not consciously thinking, "Oh, they're going to figure me out," or "I'm a lesbian too." But . . . I sobbed [because] that's what I was doing, on some level, just this complete denial of who I am.

Diane saw self-abnegation as the unifying theme of the middle chapters of her career: "Who you [people] want is more important than who I am. . . . Saying 'who I am matters more,' . . . even hearing myself say that, pushes against my little Christian [role] of putting others first." Through these long years of struggle, Diane evolved into what she calls a "Kleenex box" preacher because the "truth and heart" of her sermons on many occasions moved her congregants to tears.

Before she finally did come out, she prayed, conferred with colleagues and lay leaders in her congregation, and then sent a long letter to the church. The next Sunday, the church was packed with over 300 people. During the regular time for voicing parish concerns, a woman stood and gave thanks for "our courageous pastor." There was a long ovation. In her sermon, Diane spoke of the evolutionary process of coming into herself and of gaining integrity.

Presbyterian Informants

Jessie (PCUSA-A). Ordained in 1974, Jessie, a middle-class white woman, first served a declining, integrated, inner-city parish in Pittsburgh. Her associate, a black woman more experienced in urban ministry, taught Jessie "to preach from [her] neck down." Jessie recalled her colleague's response when, after several years, she revealed that she might be lesbian.

> "Well, I know that child. So what? . . . Look what we are doing here." . . . [She] taught me how to pray with my hands open. . . .We are told, as lesbian and gay people, "We are not spiritual, we are this, we are that," . . . and she said, "but [Jessie], look at your compassion." . . . And I am never the same because of all that. I owe my . . . understanding of oppressive systems, understanding what poverty does . . . to her and to that community.

This acceptance enabled her to continue to relegate the issue of her still not fully acknowledged lesbianism to the background. Jessie and her family (husband, two sons) next moved to California. She became very successful as a youth minister at a large church; kids felt safe talking with her. Around the same time that her husband started leaving a book, "Loving Someone Gay," lying around the house, she was asked to be on a panel.

> They asked me to come to speak about . . . the correlation between a woman in ministry and LGBT people and what were the connective oppressive systems that worked hand in hand there. . . . And I walked in and there was [the first openly gay man ordained in the UCC and the first open lesbian ordained as an Episcopal priest]. . . telling [their] stories. . . . I can remember racing home. . . . I burst in and I said "I want to say this out loud. . . . I am a lesbian." And [my husband] just picked me up in his arms. . . . "I know. I have been waiting for you to tell me for a year." . . . We wept out of relief. . . . And we sat down [to dinner] and he said, "Well, Mom, tell the boys the wonderful thing that has happened to you today." And I just burst into tears. . . . "Well, Mommy has found out who she is and Mommy is a lesbian." . . . [Our nine-year old] just patted me and said "Mommy loves people and that is what is most

important." And [our seven-year old] said "Oh, Mommy, this is great. Let's go tell the church." . . . And I said . . . "You know what, honey? People are not going to be as excited as we are."

Jessie eventually left that church because she feared it would not be able to handle her coming out. A year later, suspected of being lesbian, she was forced to resign from another Bay Area church. With knowledge of her lesbianism eclipsing her successful record, she was unable to find another position.

During this long, rough period, unbeknownst to her, her former husband called the pastor of the growing Metropolitan Community Church (a GLBT denomination) in San Francisco's largely gay Castro neighborhood. This pastor's invitation to Jessie to be a guest preacher led to her first in a series of ministries to the GLBT community that coincided with the onset of the AIDS epidemic. Although serving a church outside her denomination, and despite her open lesbianism, somehow she gained the support of her presbytery for an HIV/AIDS ministry: "I don't know how they did it. It just . . . is that we were doing the work. People were dying. And nobody else was doing it." She received what she thought was real praise for this HIV/AIDS work from family members: "[People] who aren't in the faith at all . . . will say '[Jessie] is a real Christian. . . . It is her actions that tell us. It is not anything that [she] needs to say.'"

In the early 1990s, Jessie was approached by a Presbyterian church in upstate New York about becoming its pastor. From the start, the search committee did something unusual: "They never once asked me . . . to talk about being lesbian. . . . I just talked about the work." After the third interview, they asked that she be their candidate.

> So I went away for a weekend. . . . I wore . . . [the] shirt [of] a friend . . . who died of HIV. . . . I went out to the beach. . . . I really heard God and saw Her . . . and She said to me "Do you trust Me?" and "Haven't we done wonderfully?" And She started naming off some of the work that we had done.

Jessie accepted the job but opponents from other churches in that presbytery challenged the congregation's right to call her. Jessie left for upstate New York promising her supporters that a lot of people were going to have to use "the L word" a lot in the coming fight.[6]

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[6] A presbytery is an administrative unit in the PCUSA comprising the parishes in a geographic territory and headed by an individual, roughly akin to a bishop, known as the "presbyter."

It is like don't mess with me on this anymore because it is killing our people while our church decides . . . whether we are worthy or not. . . . The church is oppressing us. . . . It is a long haul.

Ultimately forbidden to call her as its pastor, the parish instead raised additional funds to hire her as its "missionary to the mainline" advocating for GLBT people in the ministry.

Dan (PCUSA-B). While in divinity school in the late 1970s, Dan had to some degree been able to disregard the contradictions created by the policy on gay and lesbian ordination because it precluded the ordination of "self-affirming" and "practicing" homosexuals. He pretended that because he was far from self-affirming, it did not apply. Yet when, honor bound, he told his beloved childhood pastors and mentors that they were about to ordain a homosexual, he recalled they were very excited:

> "This is wonderful for you and . . . for the great wide church." They were not naïve either about the costs and the nature of the struggle that that entailed. But there was no doubt in my mind, based on my most vivid experience [in their church] that gay people did have a place in the Grace of God because I had a place in the embrace of [those two pastors].

Dan recalled being unsure what being a Christian or a Presbyterian really meant, but that's what his mentors were and their model was his guide. Despite their embrace, he was barely able to be open with himself because society's condemnation was the most vivid thing he had heard about gay people. "I have had to spend a lot of time and spiritual energy in the years since undoing the damage I did to myself by believing what society was saying." Ultimately, he came to understand himself as a "complicated, fleshy human being" and to see sexuality as part "of the ingenuity of God in bestowing blessing upon us." Recognizing the "wholeness" and "seamlessness" of his faith, his vocation, and his identity as a gay man in life partnership with another man was for him a "conversion experience."

At the time of our interview, Dan was still "committed to remaining covert." His complex identity construction positioned his deception as an act of conscience, rooted in what Presbyterians refer to as one's "freedom in God's image." There were great costs for him, one being his inability to give witness to God's "primary gift in my life," his relationship with his partner of 25 years. Another was having to tough it out in many church settings where he repeatedly has had to compromise his sense of integrity and identity.

> I'm thankful that there are so few people with whom I have to not tell the truth anymore, but there are

still some. . . . If the case of me were to come to the floor of [our] Presbytery . . . I would be a very huge parliamentary problem for them . . . because I am in flagrant violation of what is now that paragraph in the constitution. . . . Even some people who wish that paragraph weren't there would presumably feel honor bound to vote against me because that paragraph is in the book. And until it's not, you've got to go by the rules.

Half the ministers in his presbytery, including the presbyter, knew he was gay and supported his continued ministry. Half, if they knew, would seek his expulsion. (As he was ordained after the passage of the policy, his credentials were not grandfathered.) So his supporters have colluded in his deception. Dan described feeling like a member of the resistance behind enemy lines, offering depictions that mix resentment with resolve.

> I don't take off the disguise explicitly. . . . I'm not meaning to sound proud about it . . . but the subversionary quality of the work has really borne fruit in that there are now a group of eight or ten ministers in the Presbytery who meet together every month to strategize about how to subvert the homophobic . . . who have a faithful commitment to each other . . . one Thursday a month to get together and strategize.

Passing as straight, Dan actively and visibly supported the More Light Movement within the PCUSA, instructing dissident parishes on how to actively oppose the policy that precludes GLBT ordination.

IDENTITY WORK AS EMBODIED AGENCY

Our analysis reveals how GLBT ministers' identity work entails the vivid use of available cultural resources, especially role models, biblical narratives, and Protestant traditions, in narratives that move their careers and life trajectories from a state of internalized contradiction, manifested in self-hatred, denial of identity, and compartmentalization, to what we call "identity reconciliation." This reconciliation, which they accomplish through theologizing their personal experiences, accepting and healing their selves, and moving toward greater authenticity, brings them to a position of greater strength, from which they claim and enact a variety of ministerial roles in ways that are more consistent with their GLBT identity. These ministers interpret their experiences—including epiphanies, trials, walks with God, pastoral encounters, coming out, covert subversion, and hostile questioning—in ways that resonate with Christian meta-narratives of grace, conversion, and discipleship and historical narratives of struggles against injustice. This

larger narrative context provides the central mechanisms for accounting for the self and legitimating identity and calling. In short, they theologize the personal in ways that make institutional premises of incompatibility disappear in what Dan refers to as a "seamless integration of faith, vocation, and sexuality."

Yet, in terms of the implications of their identity work for their agency, it is important to note these ministers are not just telling tales. Career psychologists Cochran and Laub (1994) argued that any self-narrative, if it is to lead to the narrator's becoming an agent, depends for success on "the actualization of ideals" through a commensurate quality of action: "To be an agent is to be emplotted in an agentic narrative that is lived" (1994: 178). These ministers work to embody and live as the selves of the narratives they tell by claiming and enacting a variety of roles—pastor, theologian, activist, subversive—all within the larger encompassing role that animates their identity aspirations, that of Christian disciple. Through their role enactments, they provide themselves and others with legitimating evidence for their claims to bona fide vocations and an embodied disconfirmation of the institutionalized heterosexist assumptions of incompatibility between GLBT identity and ministry. Thus, we find a process of emergent endogenous agency moving from individuals' initial internalization of institutional contradictions, to contextualized identity reconciliation that enables role claiming and visible role enactments that can challenge and disconfirm institutional contradictions. As Diane said, "[visibly] embodying that reality for people. . . . [is] one way change happens . . . when they begin to see it with their own eyes."

In the following sections, we examine each of these microprocesses, showing how the experience of institutional contradiction ultimately led to GLBT ministers seeing themselves as agents of change and using their roles accordingly.

Microprocess 1: Internalization of Institutional Contradictions

All of our informants experienced a contradiction between their personal experiences of what Dan described as "having a place in the Grace of God" and the realities of societal condemnation of GLBT people. In addition, when they were in the "stained glass closet," [UCC-D], informants experienced a contradiction between hiding and pastoral ideals of authenticity. For some, the most poignant contradiction was the possibility that the churches that had nourished them in their youths and planted the seeds of their vocations might ostracize

them. Our analysis reveals that, in its initial stage their identity work appears as an internalization of the contradiction made up of self-hatred, compartmentalization, and denial of identity.

Shame and self-hatred. The experience of contradiction led to identity work in the form of shame over being gay and, at its most extreme, a bald self-hatred. Two of our informants reported only moderate levels of shame, but the rest reported struggling with having internalized "society's condemnation of gay people . . . hook, line, and sinker" [PCUSA-B], enacting a socially scripted form of GLBT self-hatred (Fone, 2000). For many, such as Dan, Diane, and Jessie, these struggles persisted for years. The shame/self-hatred nexus manifested in confusion over why God was calling them, anger at God, and fear over the consequences for their careers in ministry. Informants report concluding they were hateful to God, being unable to love themselves fully, and not wanting to be gay or lesbian.

> As I grew older and started . . . struggling with my sexuality . . . I would be praying every night for God to change me. . . . I couldn't think straight, as it were, and so I thought I was just . . . a horrible creature of God . . . and I struggled with suicide in high school, coming from a very strong family and an active family that I felt that I would be dishonoring . . . to come out as a gay man. So, I struggled and prayed, like I said, every night. Every night, I prayed. . . . I went to a therapist at school who was a Christian therapist who told me it was just a phase and just pray harder. [UCC-A]

This UCC minister's experience reflects a paradox that compounded many informants' fusion of self-hatred and anger directed at both themselves and God. Because he had been raised to believe God loved him, he could not fathom why God had made him gay, and therefore hateful, and yet seemed to be calling him to ministry: "I don't want to be gay and I hate you [God] and don't know who the hell Jesus is and what the hell am I supposed to be doing?" [UCC-A]

Compartmentalization. At some point in their careers, all of our informants engaged in compartmentalization. For most, it manifested in what Diane framed as the trade-off between "parish or wholeness." For others, compartmentalization manifested as a cultivated ignorance of the struggles of other GLBT people around them. Most commonly it took the form of hiding one's personal life in ways that would have been uncommon for straight ministers. One UCC minister, whose situation was complicated by her serving in a federated church affiliated with two denominations with opposing policies on GLBT ordination, kept secret not

only that she had a life partner living with her, but also that her partner was recovering from cancer: "You can't know how hard it is, because you're surviving. . . . A divided soul like that; a divided life. Some ministers—many, many [GLBT] ministers—are so successful at dividing themselves, that they're closeted themselves" [UCC-D]. Other research has shown some people prefer to "segment" their work and nonwork lives (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1996), but we believe the level of compartmentalization involved in creating "a divided soul" goes beyond simple boundary management to implicate deeper questions of identity.

Denial of identity. Some informants had also attempted to deny their GLBT identities through various forms of self-abnegation. This is perhaps most evident in Diane's story. Married to a man she did not even like in order to appear "the perfect little pastor," she was convulsed with tears at the echo of denial she heard in her lesbian parishioner's story of praying to be changed. Initially, given what she saw as a mutually exclusive choice, she focused on her career, for over a decade not just excluding her sexual identity from her ministerial one, but going to the extreme of denying it to even herself. Other informants told similar stories, though perhaps no other as extreme or blatant.

Discussion of internalization of institutional contradiction. These three ways of internalizing institutional contradiction form the first phase of the identity work we identified. In this form of identity work, an individual struggles to comply with institutionalized scripts for GLBT marginalization through employing, separately or in conjunction, shame and self-hatred, compartmentalization, and denial of identity. Through this internalization of institutional contradictions, our informants not only embrace but also enact society's attributions of unworthiness and "spoiled identity" (Goffman, 1963), mirroring and reinforcing the basic tenets of institutionalized heterosexism, with its ideological denial, denigration, and stigmatizing of nonheterosexual behavior, identity, and relationships (Herek, 1990b). In marginalizing themselves (and their identities), they become complicit in the institutional marginalization of GLBT people in their denominations, vocations, and society more generally (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Differences in denominational policies on GLBT ordination notwithstanding, all of our informants began their professional training and careers enacting microprocess 1 through one or more of these forms of internalizing institutional contradictions. This highlights the nested nature of these denominations as institutions, embedded in the larger cultural context with its incumbent institutionalized heterosexism. There were, of course, important differences in timing and "sensemaking" between and even within individual narratives. Among our interviewees, we saw varying degrees of self-hatred; some had suicidal ideation, and others essentially never lost faith that they were beloved by God. There were different levels and types of compartmentalization: some experienced divided souls, others were more or less able to frame their compartmentalizing in more instrumental terms. Despite such differences, each did interpret his or her own internalization as a form of self-abnegation and as a form of complicity.

Yet, even though internalization of contradictions served at one level to reproduce institutionalized heterosexism, it also triggered a deep emotional drive for some kind of relief from its unsustainable, painful consequences. Following one institutional script, "have faith in the grace of God," makes following another, "demonize yourself because you are not heterosexual," untenable. For our informants, as strongly religious people called by God, this experience triggered a mix of anger and doubt that collided with a shared predisposition to be open to divine healing. One informant described the unfolding of this drive during his first job as a closeted associate pastor:

> It was a real dark, hard place. . . . In the naming [of my gayness] came a real growing sense—of self and identity and needing to put pieces together, that I could not live. . . . I think I had only been able really to carry it off for like a year and a half. I can't live with pieces apart. Pieces have got to come together. [UCC-E]

Microprocess 2: Identity Reconciliation

Although informants in both denominations we studied varied in how long they sustained this painful internalization (with some moving into the work of identity reconciliation while in seminary and others taking years to do so), all of our informants eventually attended to, and over time resolved, their internalized contradictions in ways that ultimately enabled them to reject the institutionalized notions of incompatibility. This process of reconciliation can take multiple forms and be halting and difficult or sudden and seemingly miraculous.

Matt's recounting of his battlefield epiphany is an especially vivid exemplar of the dynamics of identity reconciliation. He described a dramatic scene in which he was metaphorically embraced by Jesus. However, a story within his story reveals how cultural resources can operate in this phase of

identity work. Matt alluded to a song from the 1970s musical, *Godspell.* Its lyrics relate how a follower pledges "I can dare myself" to walk with Jesus. Here, the lyrics provide a ready, usable narrative template for Matt's identity work, positioning the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between being gay and having a vocation as part of a recognizable, institutionally available narrative about the challenges of becoming a disciple. Matt's experience is both physical and emotional. He reported breathlessness, excruciating despair, confusion, and anger over the conflict between his gayness and his sense of calling as present before his epiphany, and he related being filled with passion and fire upon being embraced. The experience instigated his claiming Christ as his own and gaining a voice as a theologian. Over time, he constructed a new identity as one embraced by God and as an inquirer who must trust his own revelations if he is to claim the complex roles of ministry. Evident in Matt's story, and throughout our informants' narratives, is identity reconciliation through theologizing the personal, healing and accepting, and moving toward greater authenticity and integrity.

Theologizing the personal. Through study and an openness to revelation, our informants came to reframe their personal experiences of contradiction not as evidence of their hatefulness to God, but rather as a disconnect between Christian teachings regarding inclusion—stemming from Gospel depictions of Jesus associating with ritually unclean women, tax collectors, Gentiles, and lepers—and institutional church practices of GLBT exclusion and marginalization. For example, one UCC minister came to see her fear of coming out and publicly solemnizing the lesbian relationship she had hidden from her congregants as an impediment to her fulfilling her calling. If she could not love herself, she reasoned, how could she love her neighbor, as instructed by the "great commandment"?[6] "I did not feel I could teach my people about the love of Christ, until I managed to do that in my own life" [UCC-D].

Dan also explicitly framed aspects of his personal experience of reconciliation in theological terms.

> I was just angst ridden about . . . how I was going to hold, on the one hand, my relationship with [my partner, Craig] and, on the other hand, my vocation, in the same life without going crazy or destroying myself or something. How it was that those things

weren't antithetical, . . . the Church was telling me, at least in the abstract, that. I was making it personal and concrete. . . . So I said [to my spiritual director] "How can I reconcile these two things?" And he said, "[Dan] don't you realize that [Craig] is your vocation?" And it was an absolutely stunning revelation to me. . . . I'd had my conversion experiences to the practice of faith, and even to the choice for ministry, some years before, but I think that that moment was, for me, a conversion experience to the wholeness, the seamlessness of my Christian faith, my vocation to ministry, and my identity as [Craig's] partner. [PCUSA-B]

Both of these ministers came to see their partnerships as not antithetical, but instead integral, to their vocations; at the same time, through their theologizing of the personal, they came to see their compartmentalization and denial of self as antithetical to their vocations. The viewing of the personal through a theological lens was particularly important in their identity work because it was in this way that they cued, employed, integrated, and amplified (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986) cultural meanings and ideals that facilitated healing, self-acceptance, and authenticity. For example, by viewing his recognition of the "seamlessness of his Christian faith" as one in a series of personal conversion experiences, Dan contextualized his self-acceptance and integration of seemingly antithetical forces in his life in the traditional Christian narrative of salvation through the conversion of the soul.

Healing and accepting. Like Dan, all of our interviewees employed cultural resources to advance their identity work through healing and self-acceptance. Though the scope of their healing varied with the degree and persistence of the internalized contradiction, Dan's example was not unusual: "I've had to spend a lot of time and spiritual energy in the years since that undoing the damage that I did to myself by believing what society was saying, even in those years, about gay and lesbian people." In explaining his current acceptance, he invoked an aspect of Presbyterian tradition, its distinctive conceptualization of freedom of conscience: "My freedom in God's image inextricably entails my identity as [Craig's] partner. . . . I can't imagine being the person . . . that I am called to be, that I was made by God right now . . . without that relationship." He came to integrate and accept his identity as a "complicated, fleshy" person and to frame sexuality, even gay sexuality, as one of the "instruments of God's blessing." Dan's conversion and healing found parallels in other informants' stories of shamanistic healing and the spiritual practice of discernment, or praying for knowledge of God's

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[6] Forms of the great commandment appear in both the Torah (Leviticus 19:18) and the New Testament (Galatians 5:14): "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

will. Like Dan, our informants saw this work not only as the repairing of their own identities and sense of self, but also as the undoing of societally imposed injury.

Moving toward more authenticity and integrity. All of our informants would agree with one UCC minister's assessment of the costs of inauthenticity: "When I can't bring my whole self to a situation, then I compromise that situation. I can't be as effective, I can't be as human, I can't be as present" [UCC-C]. And indeed, they all came to understand their career travails and trajectories as ultimately being about authentically responding to God's call. All of the identity reconciliations in our data share an implicit narrative arch bending toward greater integrity.

For example, in her career narratives, Diane moved from lacking an inner voice that could affirm her lesbianism to finally integrating her sexual identity with her vocation by speaking the truth of her identity from the pulpit. Her narratives of compartmentalization and struggle resolved into a new identity that integrated her lesbianism with her calling: "I think I keep moving toward more authenticity, more embodiment, more truthfulness, more courage" [UCC-B]. This concatenation—authenticity, embodiment, truthfulness, and courage—integrates ideals of committed discipleship with contemporary cultural meanings ascribed to emotional strength, healthy sexuality, and self-acceptance. It also evokes an image of someone positioned for voice and action, bespeaking an outcome of reconciliation common among our informants. Identity reconciliation and authenticity animate a variety of decisions on how to claim and use ministerial roles, which is our third microprocess.

Discussion of identity reconciliation. Reconciling their identities allowed our informants to distance themselves cognitively and emotionally from their institutional marginalization, while paradoxically remaining embedded in and committed to their denominations. This mix of distance and embeddedness in turn animated a sense of purpose. One UCC minister related how "putting those pieces together" awakened in him a new voice and a new sense of imperative: "It's all of that and that passion for that justice piece that was so defining for me" [UCC-E]. The PCUSA interviewees' identity reconciliations contain particularly vivid themes of hard-won authenticity, likely because of the PCUSA's precluding of GLBT ordination. Jessie's identity construction as a focused servant with first-hand knowledge of oppression illustrates this. For her, theologizing the personal was not as much about "digesting all kinds of books" as about acting like "a real Christian." Instead, her healing and authen-

ticity arose more from "doing the work that needs to be done." In this sense, the PCUSA ministers presented identity reconciliations more often centered on what they did as a means to move toward authenticity. Unlike among the UCC informants, their authenticity can entail passing as straight while engaging in subverting aspects of the church that marginalize them. Even Dan's dissembling and covert efforts appeared to him to be ultimately about pursuing "the truth of who God is in the world." The UCC ministers, on the other hand, often used who they were to achieve authenticity in what they did (e.g., coming out at the pulpit and living visibly integrated lives as models for their parishioners).

Since identity reconciliation entailed "undoing the damage" of having internalized institutionalized denigration of GLBT identity, our informants embarked on their subsequent identity work practiced in critically questioning institutional prescriptions. Specifically, through theologizing the personal, they came to believe that it was not they who fell short of God's purposes, but those perpetuating such institutional claims. Second, through healing and acceptance, they came to view the church as culpable, as seen in Dan's thoughts on GLBT teen suicide.

> You have to assume that some of these people who die have never seen anyone, never heard anyone say anything that left them believing in any part of them, if it were known that they were gay, they'd still be loved. . . . And the Church bears responsibility every time because the Church is still preaching that on some level, that's what should happen. If somebody is really irrevocably and indelibly gay, it's a mistake. God must have made a mistake. That's the only theological conclusion you can draw. So anybody who is persuaded that that's true really only has one serious option, and that's suicide. So I lay that responsibility at the Church's door. [PCUSA-B]

Other informants' personal internalization of contradiction and subsequent reconciliation underpinned similar indictments of their church. In a sense, the process of reconciling their identities framed the fundamental requirements for "micromobilization" (Gamson, 1992): an injustice frame with an identified wrong (GLBT suffering), a diagnosis of its sources (wrongheaded church teachings), a prognosis for action (authentic voice and healing), an agentic role for the individual (e.g., pastor, advocate), and an animating cultural narrative (narratives of the challenges of Christian discipleship).

Microprocess 3: Role Claiming and Embodied Role Use

After the difficult process of internal, personal identity reconciliation, all of our informants invoked an overarching cosmic goal—transcending the failings of the human institution, framed variously as opening the doors of the church, creating a healing place, welcoming all to the table, or "calling the church to itself"—and claimed personal roles in realizing it. Our informants' career narratives depict the challenges of doing the work of ministry, drawing both on the history of civil rights struggles and liberation theology[7] and models of inclusion from gospel stories of the ministry of Jesus. Further, as they claimed the right to challenge church orthodoxy on the one hand, and enact the changes they wanted to see in the world and in their own congregations on the other, they commonly invoked role models, including biblical figures such as Jesus and Esther; figures from American history, such as Lincoln and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and even beloved mentors and colleagues. As one informant stated:

> Ministry is about overturning tables. It's [confronting] the structure, the institution. Inviting people who don't belong there to the table. Healing people when you're not supposed to be healing people. [UCC-E]

Here, our informant makes an important distinction between "overturning tables" when confronting the structure of the institution, and "inviting" and "healing" the people who are embedded in the institution. These represent the two types of role claiming and role use that appeared possible for our informants only as a consequence of the identity work accomplished in microprocess 2: *challenging orthodoxy from within* and *being the change* they want to see in the church.

Challenging orthodoxy from within. All of our informants claimed the right to publicly challenge the hermeneutical validity of biblical interpretations and institutional practices that either demonize GLBT people or exclude them from the love of God. Instead they framed human sexuality, including homosexuality, as a sign of the "ingenuity of God in bestowing blessing" [PCUSA-B]. Some claimed visible denominational roles in order to advance their challenges to aspects of orthodoxy. For instance, one PCUSA informant became the

most recognizable gay man in the denomination as he continued to fight for ordination after being denied it. Jessie not only fought for her right to serve in the New York church, but went on to travel the country speaking on GLBT inclusion and ordination. Similarly, UCC ministers challenged the tacit orthodoxy of conventional wisdom ("ignorance is not bliss") or the deference to seniority in their church (as when one UCC informant confronted the senior pastor after the latter's offensive sermon on homosexuality). Yet their goal in all these actions was not subverting a church as a whole, for they remained committed to their churches as institutions, but instead focused on its heterosexist teachings and practices.

Their challenges bore the mark of their own lived and often highly emotional experiences of institutional contradiction. Despite successful identity reconciliation, they remained cognizant of those experiences as they claimed explicit and visible roles challenging stubborn institutional presumptions of incompatibility.

> I am angry at an institution that keeps inviting us not to be free. And so my thing is to go after the root of the problem which is the oppressive system of the church. And I meet with a lot of people who are . . . [attempting] . . . to change the atmosphere and the structure that keeps us from being who we are. And that is what I feel my work is to do. [PCUSA-A]

Here, Jesse encapsulates her calling as working to ensure that "that all may freely serve." In seeking to change the institution, she claimed and enacted a role that is a response to her personal process of internalization of institutional contradiction and identity reconciliation. She refused to be denied her calling and worked as a "missionary to the mainline" so others would not be denied theirs. The theme of improving conditions for other GLBT members of the denomination, especially those called to ministry, is common among our informants.

Another common feature of challenging orthodoxy from within is the personal costs associated with remaining in communion even with hostile opponents:

> I really feel like one of the challenges of Christ is to listen to those who would persecute us. And I really do understand their perspective and it bothers me that some of my straight colleagues like can't open their ears. It's like, come on. How can you not understand this? They've been so clear. Come on. You're not listening. Because it costs a chunk of my soul to listen, because it's so painful. But I do it because I see Christ as commanding us to do that. [UCC-D]

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[7] Liberation theology emerged in Latin American in the mid 20th century. It emphasizes the linkages between theology and political activism focused on seeking social justice and human rights.

The theme of being willing to listen even when it is painful illustrates aspects of the second feature of microprocess 3, being the change.

Being the change. Whether in dialogue with opponents or pastoring congregants, our informants saw themselves as having to model an alternative vision of healing and inclusion; they had, to paraphrase Gandhi, to be the change they wanted to see in their churches. The case of the two gay men who applied to over 100 churches for a copastorate illustrates this. During their prolonged job search, they went through a few very painful job visits during which some hostile congregants verbally assaulted them in public. Nonetheless, in 1994 they walked into yet another sanctuary, this time filled with over 800 people. Supported by the ministerial search committee, but uncertain of their level of support among the congregants, they gave a "job talk" sermon on "walking into fear and . . . putting your hand into the hand of God who will show you a better way" [UCC-E]. Their continuing job search modeled what they preached. Like these two men, other GLBT ministers used a variety of traditional pastoral roles in ways that embodied these alternative visions. This translation of vision into action is central to the construct of "being the change" and was evident in both denominations. Another aspect of being the change was modeling this vision of healing and inclusion in their own lives for their congregation. Diane spoke of making her relationship with her partner visible for her congregation:

> We want to embody our orientation, make it real for people, not just words, and to myself, even. . . . [My partner] and I were at our church's dinner theatre on Friday night, and I made a point of—we sat together, I put my arm around her. I leaned on her a little bit—I mean, not being ridiculous—but just to show that we were together, show some affection to her. Because they don't see me on Sunday mornings with her, when I have those opportunities to be with her in public, I do try to embody the reality for people. [UCC-B]

This visible embodiment, she believes, enables change "when they begin to see it and their eyes grow accustomed to it."

Discussion of role claiming and role use. On the one hand, identity reconciliation work (microprocess 2) resolved the experience of contradictions internally by reconstructing personal understandings of self and their personal relationship with God; on the other, role claiming and use were publicly enacted and more (although not exclusively) externally focused. Microprocess 3 was aimed at both the formal institution of the church and the informants' congregants and other members of the church.

All our UCC informants came out in their roles as ministers, providing visible, external disconfirmation for others of the institutional claims of GLBT incompatibility. Similarly, all our PCUSA ministers also claimed and used roles within their congregations and the larger society in ways that were more consistent with their reconciled identities and also visible. At one extreme, a man denied ordination became not only a "denominational resource" as the PCUSA's most visible openly gay man (the "good fruit"), but also an author and role model honored by several GLBT rights organizations [PCUSA-C]. Jessie became a national "missionary to the mainline," advocating GLBT ordination. At the other extreme, Dan passed as straight but also visibly enacted the role of activist through his involvement in the pro-GLBT ordination movement within the PCUSA.

All of our informants saw "challenging orthodoxy from within" and "being the change" as forms of agency, although some denied that it was activism. A PCUSA informant whose parish had become a haven for transgendered folk emphasized just how "pretty much regular" she believes it can and should be.

> I am not a gay activist and I do church. And people who come over here and end up staying are people who just want to do pretty much regular church. . . . They don't want to go somewhere and picket, necessarily, but they also don't want to hide anymore. So, they get to come, join a church where they can . . . have themselves affirmed for who they are; their gifts identified and used, whether that be in— you know, a stewardship or administration, . . . teaching Bible classes, doing the hospital calling, any of that kind of stuff. . . . And to say . . . you're really good at it, and it doesn't have really anything to do with your being gay. So, it's kind of like getting to be a regular person, again, in a church where there's straight people and gay people and families and singles and couples and divorced people and transgender people. [PCUSA-E]

The notion of simply "doing church" bespeaks how the shared cultural narratives of pastoring informed role enactment by all of our informants.

However, these important commonalities notwithstanding, there were also some significant differences between the two denominations that were less evident in microprocesses 1 and 2. In their role claiming and use, the UCC informants were able to make much more extensive, visible use of cultural logics of authenticity, manifested in their narratives of self-acceptance, coming out, and explicit integration of their sexual identities into their ministries. In contrast, whether in or out of the closet, PCUSA ministers' role claiming and use placed

greater emphasis on logics of perseverance ("stamina," "toughing it out," "it's a long haul") in "doing the work" that needs to be done to convert the church. More importantly, PCUSA informants' role claiming and use differed from that among UCC informants in the degree to which it legitimated a larger spectrum of roles, ranging from the well-behaved "good fruit" (a would-be insider working to win over potential supporters), to the basic pastor "doing church," to the covert subversive and activist. With frequent references to doing the work of ministry, direct challenges, and hidden subversion, the PCUSA ministers' identity work and role use is replete with images of rolled up sleeves and resistance that are not evident to the same degree among the UCC ministers.

This suggests that the more centralized, hierarchical polity in the PCUSA was coupled with greater variation in the ways in which marginalized actors claimed and used roles, while the ministers in the decentralized UCC exhibited more isomorphism in their patterns of role claiming and role use. Once UCC ministers reconciled their internalized contradictions, they were free to pursue their institutional roles with a certain degree of legitimacy, and they therefore could pursue career paths that were available and institutionally sanctioned. Granted, they still faced obstacles their heterosexual counterparts would not, but at least they were more or less affirmed by the denomination. In contrast, even after the PCUSA ministers reconciled their identities internally, they had to face the codification of those contradictions in the constitution of the very institution they sought to serve. Because no institutionally sanctioned way to pursue their careers exists, each of our PCUSA informants forged their own distinct course through these uncharted waters.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Researchers examining the effects of multiple, contradictory institutional logics on institutional processes have long argued that institutional contradiction is an important precondition for embedded agency (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Seo & Creed, 2002). Yet little attention has been paid to how individuals experience and resolve (or do not resolve) contradictions within and between institutional logics, especially "insiders" who are marginalized by a dominant institutional logic (Powell & Colyvas, 2008). Our study provides a rare and vividly detailed picture of how such individuals engage in identity work that enables them to claim and use their institutional roles in ways that challenge institutional prescriptions. GLBT ministers experienced institutional assumptions regarding identity-role incompatibility as institutional contradictions that threatened the integrity of both their identities and their vocations. This experience was often highly emotionally charged, indicating that these contradictions were embodied or "lived," rather than merely cognitively experienced. In their narratives, this experience triggered profound and sometimes prolonged identity reconciliation work that, in turn, enabled them to claim and use their institutional roles with the aim of creating a more inclusive church. Claiming access to ministerial roles as a GLBT person involved a self-narrative that legitimated a political challenge to institutional orthodoxy. Through the appropriation and use of cultural meanings that, at least in part, represented institutionally prescribed ways of being, thinking, and acting, our informants engaged in identity work in ways that led to seeing themselves as change agents. Self-narratives were an important means through which their personal experiences of institutional contradictions were addressed. These self-narratives formed deeply personal legitimating accounts for claiming and using institutional roles in ways that were better aligned with their GLBT identities, thus posing embodied challenges to their institutional marginalization.

Watson (2008) suggested that through personal identity work actors can influence, within limits, the various institutionally prescribed social identities that pertain to them. In other words, individuals' notions of who and what they are, accomplished through personal identity work, can act back on the institutional notions of who or what any individual might or should be, thus affecting institutional structure. Our study uncovers some of the micromechanisms through which this may be possible, particularly focusing on the nexus of identity reconciliation, role claiming, and role use. More specifically, Callero (1994), following Baker and Faulkner (1991), argued that roles actually allow actors to create new positions and establish social structures; in this view, institutional structures are the product of role use (Barley, 1986, 1990), with roles functioning as resources. When used as a resource, roles enable purposeful agency: "Rather than simply limiting or controlling action, roles can be viewed as making action possible" (Callero, 1994: 230). By extension, role claiming and role use implicate questions of power, and one form of power embedded in certain roles (e.g., teacher, preacher, expert, and theorist) is the right to make connections and interpret cultural logics and meanings in either traditional or novel ways for others. In our study, GLBT ministers claimed and used their institutional roles to infuse them

with new meaning, namely as living, breathing disconfirmations of the institutionalized heterosexist assumptions of identity-role incompatibility. Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that the reality of a broader institutional community can change when marginalized actors thus become visible disconfirmations of institutionalized identity. This notion suggests that, rather than structurally determining behavior, roles can be resources not only for accomplishing a coherent sense of self, but also for amplifying and reinvigorating certain shared cultural meanings, while challenging and even potentially deinstitutionalizing others at the same time (Snow et al., 1986).

By combining our findings with these theoretical arguments, we induced a process model, presented as Figure 2, showing how the experience of institutional contradiction may affect agency in a way that can challenge institutional prescriptions without necessarily involving organized, strategic activism. This model helps to explicate the microprocesses through which marginalized individuals can resolve the experience of institutional contradictions, thereby possibly affecting the ways institutions are reproduced at the micro level, and, in some cases, even posing an embodied challenge to institutional prescriptions. Central to this model is identity work triggered by the experience of institutional contradiction. Identity work can either perpetuate or resolve the experience of institutional contradictions by drawing on institutionally

endorsed cultural resources. As Watson (2008) explained, identity work has "internal" and "external" aspects, projecting both "inwardly" and "outwardly" as actors have scope to interpret or even modify the roles given to them in institutional "scripts." In our model, both internalization of contradiction and identity reconciliation represent the inward aspect of identity work, the former triggering the latter. Role claiming and role use constitute the outward aspect, as it involves behaviors that are visible to others.

According to our model, internalized contradictions trigger identity reconciliation work, which in turn enables particular forms of role claiming and role use. We propose that the content of the identities that are reconstructed through reconciliation can affect the ways in which institutional roles are outwardly claimed and used. We argue that identity reconciliation and role claiming and use are important microprocesses that enable a particular, embodied form of change-oriented agency. We suggest that in some cases, role use that successfully and openly integrates identities previously considered incompatible with that role may provide visible, embodied evidence that challenges taken-for-granted institutional prescriptions from within. Openly gay Episcopal bishop Gene Robinson famously embodies this for the Anglican Communion, and our informants have the potential to do the same in their denominations.

FIGURE 2
Identity Work as an Enabler of Endogenous Change Agency by Marginalized Insiders
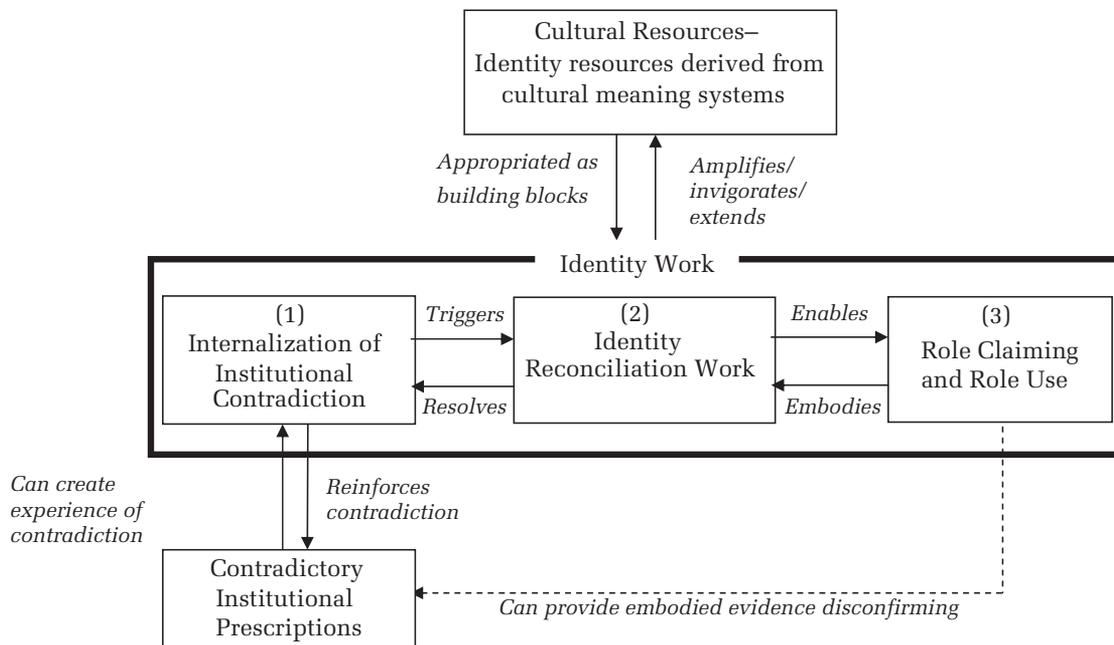
It is important to note, however, that our research design did not allow us to determine whether the microprocesses we describe are *sufficient* for institutional change. In other words, we are not suggesting that identity work that is successful at resolving institutional contradiction and subsequently leads to role use that deviates from taken-for-granted scripts will necessarily lead to macrolevel institutional change. As Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued, "plausibility structures" must not only be widely available and accessible but increasingly accepted before "deviant" ideas and behaviors have any chance of triggering broader institutional change. Furthermore, a significant amount of political skill is required to successfully change established institutions from within (Rao et al., 2003; Reay et al., 2006; Seo & Creed, 2002). This is why in Figure 2 we use a dotted line for the relationship between role claiming and role use and contradictory institutional prescriptions, signifying the potential for embodied role use to provide visible disconfirmations of institutional prescriptions of incompatibility. The questions of whether and how the microprocesses we describe can bring about actual institutional change need to be addressed in future research. Longitudinal studies that establish the causal connections between the content of identity reconciliation and patterns of role claiming and role use over time in broader samples, and studies that uncover the processes by which changes in role use can lead to actual institutional change, would be particularly useful.

Nor are we suggesting these microprocesses are the only way in which endogenous institutional change can be initiated. Greenwood and Suddaby (2006), for example, showed a different process of initiating and implementing endogenous institutional change among actors who were central to particular institutional fields. We restricted our scope to the microprocesses through which marginalized actors who are committed to particular institutions can begin to see themselves as agents of change in response to their experience of institutional contradiction. This focus, combined with the relatively small number of interviews, restricts the generalizability of our findings. However, it enables us to analyze the experience of institutional contradiction and the processes by which actors deal with this experience in great depth. Moreover, as Eisenhardt noted, when the goal is to extend theory, it makes sense to focus on research sites in which the process of interest is "transparently observable" (1989: 537). GLBT church ministers find themselves in a position in which the experience of institutional contradiction and the need for some kind of internal resolution are extremely salient.

Implications for Institutional Theory

Our findings have important implications for institutional theory in a number of areas. The first implication concerns the overly narrow treatment of identity work in institutional theory. Our informants engaged in identity work without fitting the prototypical image in institutional theory of heroic change agents who set out to create new institutions through the strategic construction and deployment of identity (Lawrence et al., 2009; Powell & Colyvas, 2008). These GLBT ministers' identity work and role use were both enabled *and* constrained (Reay et al., 2006) by their embeddedness in and commitment to their denominations. This shaped what they viewed as appropriate ways to respond to their calling and enabled them to frame their challenges in terms of a logic of inclusion that resonated with existing, deeply held cultural models of ministry. Therefore, although the resulting embodied challenge to institutional norms was potentially disruptive of some institutionalized rules, norms and beliefs, it was at the same time necessarily conservative in that it preserved and actively employed traditional logics of church as an institution. In this way, the identity work and embodied role use of GLBT ministers simultaneously promoted change and the preservation of institutional integrity.

This combination suggests that institutional work in the form of identity work does not necessarily need to be oriented exclusively toward the creation, maintenance, or disruption of institutions, but can paradoxically involve multiple categories at the same time. Prior research on institutional work has suggested that institutional entrepreneurs create institutions, incumbents maintain them, and challengers disrupt them. As a result, Hargrave and Van de Ven (2009) pointed out that much of the institutional work categorized as institutional creation, maintenance, or disruption implicitly embraces either change or stability, but not both. In contrast, they proposed that both incumbents and challengers will be more effective in their institutional work when they take actions to both stabilize *and* change institutions at the same time. For example, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) and Rao et al. (2003) showed how change-oriented institutional entrepreneurs provided stability by building on existing arrangements and framing their alternatives in rhetoric that resonated with preexisting logics. Similarly, Zilber (2007) found that entrepreneurial actors who were engaged in constructing a shared story that strengthened the institutional order concurrently told "counterstories" that enabled them to call for changes in it. Our

research complements this work by suggesting that this paradoxical combination of institutional maintenance and disruption may be more than an effective strategic move for institutional entrepreneurs; it may also be the only viable option for actors who wish to remain embedded or become more central in institutions that marginalize them.

The second implication concerns the neglected role of embodiment (subjectively lived experience) and emotions in institutional theory. The embodied nature of the experiences we describe and analyze suggests that institutional roles do not operate only as cognitive/normative structures in the form of behavioral assumptions, expectations, or norms. These ministers experienced their roles as a calling, both deeply meaningful and emotionally charged, that evoked feelings, images, and impulses that went far beyond a set of behavioral expectations. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) pointed out that the new institutionalism's cognitive turn was made at the cost of neglecting the cathectic, affective element of action. Scott (2001: 70) also acknowledged that institutional meaning systems evoke not only ideas but also feelings and desires, and for this reason, he considered cathectic or emotional elements to be candidates for a "fourth pillar" of institutionalism.

Our study begins to bring life and substance to this fourth pillar by showing that institutional work in the form of identity reconciliation and role use can be driven at least as much by lived-affective elements as cognitive-reflective ones. To develop this pillar further, we need a better understanding of embedded actors' lived, emotional experiences of and responses to institutional structures. We note that the relevance of emotions in institutional life is likely to stretch far beyond individual experiences of emotional commitment to particular institutions or emotional conflict triggered by institutional contradictions. Rather, institutions themselves can be seen to shape and evoke emotions to varying degrees (Collins, 1981; 1988a; 1988b). Recent work in social movement theory conducted at multiple levels of analysis and incorporating the role of emotions has shown that emotions are of crucial importance in the maintenance and transformation of institutions (Goodwin, Jasper, & Poletta, 2001; Gould, 2001; Jasper, 1997; Poletta, Goodman, & Jasper, 2004; Poletta & Jasper, 2001). At the micro level, emotions play an important role in the processes by which bystanders become participants in social movements (Wood, 2001). Knowing this, activists draw upon emotional repertoires and use them strategically to elicit support for their projects in different settings (Groves, 1997; Whittier, 2001). In doing so, they

depend on cultural rules about the appropriate experience and expression of different emotions (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Macrolevel shifts in these rules can, in turn, make certain emotions legitimate motivations for protest (Baker-Benfield, 1992). Thus, emotions are of broad relevance to institutional theory and worthy of systematic analysis. Future research should uncover and identify the unique mechanisms at work in this fourth pillar, particularly the many and varied ways institutional prescriptions and roles are subjectively and emotionally ascribed meanings, internalized, enacted, and experienced (Lok, 2007).

A third implication concerns the central role of interests in the political theory of institutional change in which change agents skillfully interpret and exploit contradictions within and between institutional arrangements to further their self-interest. Since DiMaggio (1988) argued that institutionalization is a product of the political efforts of actors to accomplish their ends, and that the success of an institutionalization project depends on their relative degrees of power, a political institutional theory has emerged in which differing interests among field actors play a key role (Leblebici, Salancik, Copay, & King, 1991; Seo & Creed, 2002; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Although institutional theorists now frequently refer to interests as a basis of both change *and* stability, recent studies have challenged the conventional wisdom that people readily recognize their interests and that the most powerful actors get their way when new institutions are being formed (Campbell, 2006; Enrione, Mazza, & Zerboni, 2006; Fligstein, 2006). These studies show that interests can be emergent or obscured. Furthermore, as C. Wright Mills put it, people may not be interested in their interests— that is, they may not be willing to act in terms of an imputation of common interests on the part of outside observers (Mills, quoted in Coser [1982: 150]). Moreover, Friedland and Alford (1991) emphasized that the *symbolic meaningfulness* of participation in social relations is as important to understanding these relations and their transformation as the material interests that they serve. The process and importance of interest identification and articulation within groups may therefore be more problematic than most existing studies suggest they should be (Westenholz, Pedderson, & Dobbin, 2006).

Just as our informants do not fit the typical depiction of heroic institutional change agents, neither does their role use fit the typical depiction of the strategic pursuit of interests. GLBT ministers did not appear to be driven by a strategic pursuit of particular, clearly identifiable interests, and certainly not material interests. Rather, a deeply per-

sonal need to resolve the contradictions between their callings to ministry and the GLBT identities that inhibited full engagement in their social contexts and social relations (DeJordy, 2008) drove them. We believe that it was in the "interest" of realizing their identities and the full potential of those social relations that these ministers claimed and used their roles in particular ways. This implies that the use and meaning of "interest" as a key motivational driver for institutional change in institutional theory may need reconsideration. As Meyer and Jepperson put it:

> The cultural system constructs the modern actor as an *authorized* agent for various interests (including those of the self). This agentic construction . . . accounts for much of the uniqueness of modern actorhood. Notably, participants in modern society enact in their identities substantial agency for broader collective purposes (2000: 101–102; parentheses and emphasis in the original).

We believe identity largely shapes people's interests (real or perceived), implying that the politics of identity are at least as important a factor in institutional change as the politics of material interests. The relationship between identity work and the meaning and role of interests in institutional change politics therefore deserves greater attention in future research. Our study begins to take up this challenge, but more work of this type is needed. In particular, we strongly agree with Powell and Colyvas's (2008) call for greater attention to everyday identity transformation processes of the existing members of a field, and to the role of less powerful members in institutional change and maintenance processes.

Coda: Living Forward

In the management literature, institutional change and agency are most often discussed without reference to their underlying moral or political vision. Social science usually eschews the bias of an explicitly normative stance and systematically denies the ways in which scholars' own theories contribute to patterns of privilege and power (Benson, 1977). In contrast, Callero (2003a) advocated forging a social science with an explicitly emancipatory stance. This entails consciously working to foster political selves, which he defined as "a good self for a good society," embodying a "democratic disposition" comprising tolerance of difference, commitment to reciprocity, capacity to engage in moral discourse, willingness to examine and interrogate one's own preferences, and ability to "recognize domination and assert claims of emancipation

against stultifying forces of control" (Callero, 2003a: 62). The ministers in our study constructed identities and enacted roles that embody the essence of Callero's vision of the good self. Our research sheds light on how, to paraphrase Callero, they became the selves of the narratives they told through embodiment.

Weick (1999) argued that most organizational theories are more or less trivial presentations of ostensible cause and effect. Theory that matters, he believes, should "narrow the gap between understanding and living" (1999: 135). In such theories, organizational scholars would aspire to showing "living forward." Our depiction of these ministers' identity work and role use helps demonstrate how one can overcome "the obvious limits of roles tied to class, gender, race, and sexual orientation" (Callero, 2003a) to become a good self for a good society. By thus overcoming limits, these ministers model "living forward." Theories that embody and explain their ability to do so matter.

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APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

Individual Level

The protocols asked questions about the ministers' sense of vocation (Cochran, 1990), self-acceptance (Chrobot-Mason & Button, 1999), and sense of solidarity with other GLBT people, commitment to the denomination, personal agenda relative to GLBT issues in the denomination, and sense of career vulnerability.

Situational Level

Interviewees were asked to think of their careers as unfolding in stages or chapters. Chapter by chapter, interviewees were asked to identify two episodes in which sexual orientation affected their careers in some salient way. Follow-up questions regarding these episodes elicited directly their own sensemaking about how situational factors were affecting their enactment or deployment of their identities. Examples of situational factors include perceived attributes of their parishes, e.g., its degree of conservatism or liberalism, its stance on GLBT ordination, or attributions of individuals involved in the episode, e.g., their stance on gay and lesbian ordination or the informant's perception of their trustworthiness.

Institutional Level

A third set of questions focused on organizational politics and institutional structure, including (1) the denomination's institutional identity or character, (2) the history of the debate over gay and lesbian ordination within the denomination, and (3) the political landscape of the denomination as it has coalesced around the debate.

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