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THE IGNORED DISEASE: THE AIDS EPIDEMIC 1981-1987

by

Heather L. Graff

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: Journalism and Mass Communications

Under the Supervision of Professor Michael Stricklin

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2003

THE IGNORED DISEASE: THE AIDS EPIDEMIC 1981-1987

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University of Nebraska, 2003

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Less than six months after Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as the 40th president of the United States, the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reported pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, in five gay men. In the United States, AIDS was first diagnosed among gay men in New York City and San Francisco.

There were several media trends for AIDS coverage in the 1980s. In the early 1980s, AIDS was mainly thought of as a gay-related disease. In the mid-1980s, AIDS cases were found in hemophiliacs, intravenous drug users and “celebrities.” Coverage in the late 1980s focused on heterosexuals and the need for mandatory AIDS testing in the United States. AIDS first hit a segment of the population who usually is not covered by the press.

News coverage continues to differ depending on changing editors and media agendas. After Rock Hudson announced that he had AIDS in the summer of 1985, both the government and the media started taking notice of AIDS. But from the analysis of The New York Times and the Omaha World-Herald, it seemed the news about AIDS began appearing in newspapers as more people began contracting AIDS.

Media coverage suggested there is a connection between Hudson’s announcement and the government’s response to AIDS. Others have broken up coverage in the early

1980s into three or four categories. Instead, there are five distinct eras – discovery, scientific, wonder, human-interest and political – three of which are still being reported on today.

Hudson's announcement that he had AIDS is a link, which occurred after an initial stage, when reporters didn't report on AIDS, and a scientific stage, when reporters reported on the scientific aspects of AIDS. Between Hudson's announcement and his death, the media started taking notice of AIDS. For example, the media started interviewing people who became involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS. After Hudson's announcement, reporters started exploring the more human-interest side of AIDS, in which they interviewed people with and affected by AIDS, and the political stage, when the government started allocating resources and setting policy in reference to AIDS.

THE IGNORED DISEASE: THE AIDS EPIDEMIC 1981-1987

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Introduction

The World Health Organization in Geneva issued an alert that was published in The New York Times on March 14, 2003, that a mysterious virus causing flu-like symptoms and pneumonia was been found in China and in Hanoi, Vietnam.¹ Hundreds of people in Vietnam, Hong Kong and mainland China, many of them hospital workers, had come down with a mysterious respiratory illness that has killed at least six people and left most of the others with severe breathing difficulties from which they have not yet fully recovered, officials of the World Health Organization said on March 14, 2003.² The agency said that in the last week it had received reports of more than 150 new suspected cases of the illness, now known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.³ The World Health Organization was coordinating scientists from 11 laboratories in 10 countries to seek the cause of SARS, which it said was a threat to world health.⁴

From January to April 1, 2003, 1,900 people in at least a dozen countries and at least 63 people have died from SARS.⁵ In the period October 1980 to May 1981, five gay men were ill and two gay men died in the United States from AIDS. The New York

¹ Bradsher, Keith. (2003, March 14). Asia: Hong Kong: Alert On Mysterious Virus. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://query.nytimes.com/search/full-page?res=9C02E1DC113EF937A25750C0A9659C8B63&fta=y>.

² Altman, Lawrence K. and Keith Bradsher. (2003, March 15). Respiratory Illness Afflicts Hundreds. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/15/international/...E.html?ex=1049346000&en=ba3602bb685e6f64&ei=5070>.

³ Altman, Lawrence K. and Keith Bradsher. (2003, March 16). Rare Health Alert Is Issued for Mystery Illness. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/16/health/16INFE.html?ex=1049346000&en=a75f393990201f4f&ei=5070>.

⁴ Altman, Lawrence K. and Elizabeth Rosenthal. (2003, March 18). Health Organization Stepping Up Efforts to Find Cause of Mysterious Pneumonia. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/18/health/18INFE.html?ex=1049346000&en=c590088591cd688d&ei=5070>.

⁵ Reuters. (2003, April 1). U.S. Aims to Cut Its Staff in China Due to SARS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/politics/politics-health-pneumonia-usa-diplomats.html>.

Times started reporting on SARS on March 14, 2003, about two months after the first reported cases. The New York Times started reporting on AIDS on July 3, 1981, a month after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's newsletter Morbidity and Mortality Weekly (MMWR) made a reference to five cases of an unusual pneumonia in Los Angeles.⁶

In the three months after SARS was diagnosed, The New York Times had written more than 30 articles on the new disease, which had killed four percent of those infected. In the first three months that symptoms of AIDS had been reported, The New York Times wrote no articles. It took more than three years, technically October 12, 1984, before The New York Times wrote 30 articles.

Perhaps because SARS spread more quickly than AIDS, The New York Times and the mainstream press covered SARS nearly everyday for 15 days. Perhaps because SARS has so far seemed to spread through common contact, not through gay men, that the mainstream press has covered SARS so intensely. In these 15 days, SARS stories have been scientific, human and political in nature. No Hollywood celebrities have thus far died from SARS, but the U.S. government and the media have covered the epidemic. On the other hand, it wasn't until Rock Hudson announced that he had contracted AIDS that the president and the media expanded their coverage of AIDS.

* * * * *

There were several media trends for AIDS coverage in the 1980s. In the early 1980s, AIDS was mainly thought of as a gay-related disease; this may explain why in 1981, what is now referred to as AIDS was called GRID (gay-related immune deficiency). In the mid-1980s, AIDS cases were found in hemophiliacs, intravenous drug

⁶ For a copy of this report, please see Appendix A.

users and “celebrities.” Coverage in the late 1980s focused on heterosexuals and the need for mandatory AIDS testing in the United States. Specifically, newspaper coverage in the early 1980s suggested that there was a coverage gap; literature indicates that AIDS was not on the media’s agenda because it was not on the president’s agenda. Current literature mainly focuses on AIDS in African countries. Few studies on AIDS examine the effects of AIDS in states that were largely unaffected.

AIDS turned 21 this past summer, meaning that newspapers have been writing about a disease with no found cure for the past 21 years. But past coverage should be dwelled on only long enough for reporters to see the lack thereof and find ways to improve it. AIDS first hit a segment of the population that usually is not covered by the press. AIDS coverage should be researched because AIDS can hit anyone and everyone. In the 1970s, the sexually transmitted diseases that people were worried about were gonorrhea and syphilis. In the 1990s, AIDS was the disease on the tip of everyone’s tongue. But sexually transmitted diseases are considered taboo subjects. After media legends Rock Hudson and Perry Ellis died from AIDS complications and former Los Angeles Laker Magic Johnson announced he had been infected by HIV, more people started talking about AIDS.

This thesis will examine the occurrences that led to what I have found to be the turning point that made AIDS a story – the July 23, 1985, announcement by Rock Hudson that he had AIDS. I have found that the Reagan administration started talking about AIDS much more after Hudson, a friend of President Reagan’s, said he had contracted AIDS. “It was not until the diagnosis of Hudson, a longtime friend of the Reagans, that the epidemic crept onto the agenda of the national political reporters.

Reagan had never put the disease on his agenda. Indeed, he did not utter 'AIDS' in public until September 1985, months after his friend's illness was revealed. The media hounds had accepted his silence."⁷

Several journalists have reported similar findings; many have found from newspaper articles a connection between Hudson's announcement and the government's response to AIDS. Others have broken up coverage in the early 1980s into three or four categories. I hypothesized that there are five distinct eras – discovery, scientific, wonder, human-interest and political – three of which are still being reported on today. Hudson's announcement that he had AIDS is a link, which occurred after an initial stage, when reporters didn't report on AIDS, and a scientific stage, when reporters reported on the scientific aspects of AIDS. Between Hudson's announcement and his death, the media started taking notice of AIDS. For example, the media started interviewing people who became involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS. After Hudson's announcement, reporters started exploring the more human-interest side of AIDS, in which they interviewed people with and affected by AIDS, and the political stage, when the government started allocating resources and setting policy in reference to AIDS.

When defining eras, it is also important to consider why AIDS coverage would have differences in coverage. What was the climate like in the newsroom and how did this affect news judgment and biases? How does 1980s AIDS coverage affect medical coverage today?

⁷ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American Media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 144.

Proposal

AIDS is one of the only non-inheritable diseases that has no cure. Kinsella said it is also one of the diseases that journalists took the longest time to discover.⁸ It was a “new” disease until June 5, 1981, when The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s newsletter, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly (MMWR)*,⁹ made a reference to five cases of “an unusual pneumonia in Los Angeles.”¹⁰ Perhaps the coverage of AIDS suffered in the shadow of two other new diseases of this time: toxic shock syndrome and Legionnaire’s disease.

AIDS is defined as “a fatal condition in which one’s immune system is so weakened that it falls prey to opportunistic diseases. One is diagnosed as having AIDS when one is infected with HIV.”¹¹ HIV, the acronym for human immunodeficiency virus, is defined as “the retrovirus that has an affinity for, and kills, white blood cells called CD4 lymphocytes that are found in the immune system. As a result of depletion of CD4 cells, the body is left vulnerable to various opportunistic diseases.”¹² Krim summarized that in order for one to become infected, the virus must be virtually injected into the blood stream and then must come into contact with the cells in which it can

⁸ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 25.

⁹ For a copy of this report, please see Appendix A.

¹⁰ The New York Times on the Web. *AIDS at 20*. [Electronic Version].
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/timeline80-87.html>.

¹¹ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, p. 89.

¹² Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, p. 89.

multiply.¹³ The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is considered the primary agent of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).¹⁴

AIDS is characterized by a severe loss of immunity against diseases and leaves people with AIDS vulnerable to opportunistic diseases that would not otherwise be a threat to them.¹⁵ Sexual practices that have been found to place a person at particularly high risk include receptive anal intercourse, which is defined as intercourse without use of a condom, and sexual contact with multiple partners or with one sexual partner who has multiple partners.¹⁶ There are four documented ways that a person can get AIDS including: blood transfusions, breast milk, infected syringes and unprotected sex.

Less than six months after Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as the 40th president of the United States, the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reported a rare form of pneumonia, called pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, in five gay men. In the United States, AIDS was first diagnosed in 1981, among gay communities in New York City and San Francisco. It has been suggested that AIDS started spreading as early as July 1976,¹⁷ although evidence has indicated that a male teenager was infected with the AIDS virus in the late 1960s.¹⁸ On July 3, 1981, The New York Times reported that doctors in New York and California diagnosed 41 cases of a rare and often rapidly fatal form of cancer,

¹³ Krim, Mathilde. (1985). AIDS: The challenge to science and medicine. (p. 2-7) In *Hastings Center Report Special Supplement*.

¹⁴ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, p. 141.

¹⁵ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, p. 141.

¹⁶ Prohaska, Thomas R., Albrecht, Gary, Levy, Judith A., Sugrue, Noreen, & Kim, Joung-Hwa. (1990). Determinants of self-perceived risk for AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 31, p. 385.

¹⁷ Shilts, Randy. (1987). *And the band played on: Politics, people and the AIDS epidemic*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

¹⁸ Kolata, Gina. (1987, Oct. 28). Boy's 1969 Death Suggests AIDS Invaded U.S. Several Times. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/102887sci-aids.html>.

called Kaposi's Sarcoma, among gay men.¹⁹ Later, in 1982, health officials also reported a total of 34 cases, including 16 fatal ones, of AIDS among Haitians who recently moved to the United States.²⁰ In the early 1980s, gay men started focusing their energy on a new problem – the possible genocide of gay men in the United States. Their sexuality was killing them, and the bullet firing the blow was the acquired immunodeficiency disease.

The same year that the CDC reported the first cases of AIDS among heterosexuals, the U.S. surgeon general declared AIDS the “No. 1 health priority” in the nation. On Dec. 17, 1985, The New York Times reported “it is rare to find a New Yorker who does not at least know of someone who has been stricken (with AIDS).” In 1986, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that more than 73 percent of people with AIDS were gay or bisexual males.²¹ That same year only 17 percent of documented cases were found in heterosexual men or women who used drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, LSD, morphine, amphetamines and barbiturates, intravenously.²²

Everyone is susceptible to the AIDS virus. Because AIDS in the United States is negatively associated with gay men and illegal drug users, it may be that male heterosexuals, non-drug users and women may discount their own risk because they do not identify with the popular image of those who contract AIDS.²³ Not only is there a difference in the way Americans view AIDS amongst their own population, there is a difference in the way they view the way it is plaguing Africa. Treichler said that in the

¹⁹ Altman, Lawrence K. (1981, July 3). Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/health/03AIDS.html>.

²⁰ Five States Report Disorders in Haitians' Immune System. (July 9, 1982). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/09/health/070982AIDS.html>.

²¹ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, p. 141.

²² Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, p. 142.

²³ Prohaska, Thomas R., Albrecht, Gary, Levy, Judith A., Sugrue, Noreen, & Kim, Joung-Hwa. (1990). Determinants of self-perceived risk for AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 31, p. 386

industrialized first-world, populations are “affected” and locations are “AIDS-infected;” in third-world countries, populations are “devastated” and locations are “AIDS-infested.”²⁴

Why do some diseases get coverage and others don't? Were the American government and the media slow to become involved because AIDS first affected the gay population? A noticeable problem with AIDS reporting was the constant negotiation between specialist reporters and the editorial hierarchy;²⁵ because of this, medical reporters often found it difficult to get AIDS-related stories into newspapers.²⁶ The early negative association of AIDS with gay men made it more difficult for medical reporters to get interest from mainstream newsdesks.²⁷ There were struggles over the amount of time and space allowed to report AIDS news, over which reporter should cover the story and over the news organizations' political lines and newsdesk attitudes.²⁸

In 1981, almost no editors or reporters were admitting a personal connection to AIDS, a disease affecting gay men.²⁹ And the media were not contacting the medical community to find out about AIDS research. One AIDS researcher, Dr. Don Francis said, “We weren't supposed to go to them [the media], they were supposed to come to us.” By late fall 1981, when the *New England Journal of medicine* still hadn't reported

²⁴ Treichler, Paula A. AIDS, Africa and cultural theory. *Transition*, 51, p. 88.

²⁵ Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 157.

²⁶ Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 157.

²⁷ Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 157.

²⁸ Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 157.

²⁹ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 3.

on the AIDS epidemic, reporters tended not to write about it either.³⁰ In mid-1982, Dr. Larry Mass, who reported for the New York Native, a gay newspaper, was doing the most intensive reporting on AIDS, and his concern was finding out how to stop gays from getting the disease.³¹

Does a disease have to affect the majority – typically middle class, white men – to get a place on the media's agenda? Simon Watney blamed lack of coverage on reporters because AIDS had news writers scared.³² When reporters thought of AIDS, they thought it only affected gay men.³³ Albert found when writers first covered the disease they sought to create a biological distinction between heterosexuals and gays.³⁴ It wasn't until actor Rock Hudson became infected that the media thought of AIDS as a story.

Often the news doesn't get told until someone in the newsroom was affected by it and was willing to admit the connection.³⁵ Watney said the most alarming part about coverage was the inability of the media and the U.S. population to conceive the problem of AIDS in the present, as it affects millions of people worldwide.³⁶

Why is writing about AIDS important? From a journalist's standpoint, AIDS is a horrendous story that offers magnificent reporting opportunities involving subjects such as politics, sexuality, economics, globalization, sociology, criminology, history,

³⁰ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 15.

³¹ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 18.

³² Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 80.

³³ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 80.

³⁴ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (p. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 172.

³⁵ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 101.

³⁶ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 77.

psychology, sports and fashion. There were so many story possibilities, most of which were ignored. Studying the mistakes the news media created during its first years reporting AIDS will help prevent journalists from making the same mistakes when reporting on other current issues.

Several researchers argue that there are four eras to AIDS coverage, while others suggest there are only three AIDS coverage eras. Rogers, Dearing and Chang suggest there are four AIDS coverage eras. First, there was the “initial era” from 1981 until mid-1983. The “initial era” was marked by relatively little media attention to AIDS. Rogers, Dearing and Chang suggested little coverage was printed because of the absence of attention from media leader The New York Times, which set the agenda for scientific reporting in the 1980s.³⁷ The second era, the “scientific era” lasted from mid-1983 until mid-1985. This era marked media coverage of AIDS issues as depending heavily on scientific findings.³⁸ The third era, the “human era” lasted from mid-1985 until 1987 and is characterized by personalizing AIDS issues.³⁹ The fourth era, the “political era” from 1987 until 1988, is marked by a variety of public controversies which emerged about certain aspects of the epidemic, including governmental public policy about AIDS surrounding mandatory testing and individual privacy.⁴⁰

Other researchers suggest there were three AIDS peaks during 1980s coverage of the epidemic. The first suggested peak came about because of a press release based on an

³⁷ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 17; Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). Real world indicators and the media agenda. *Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 33.

³⁸ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 17.

³⁹ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 18.

editorial in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) dated May 9, 1983. Written by Dr. Anthony Fauci, a biomedical scientist at the National Institutes of Health, the JAMA editorial and press release suggested that “routine household contact” might spread AIDS.⁴¹ Cotton suggested the first “media epidemic” related to AIDS appeared after the 1983 JAMA editorial.⁴² Another suggested first peak occurred later in that month. On May 25, 1983, Dr. Edward Brandt, assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, formally recognized AIDS as the number one priority of the U.S. Public Health Service.⁴³ Later that year, a report that numerous newborn babies in New York City had AIDS raised questions about the safety of the United States’ blood supply.⁴⁴

The second suggested peak occurred two years later, from July to December 1985. It was caused by two consecutive news events. The first was the hospitalization and death of gay actor Rock Hudson.⁴⁵ The second news event was about Ryan White, a 13-year-old Indiana boy living with AIDS. The Ryan White media event surrounded the controversy about whether or not a child with AIDS should attend public school.⁴⁶ Both events alerted the media that AIDS needed to be covered. Now people living with AIDS were made famous through stories, which personalized and humanized the issue of AIDS,

⁴¹ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 11.

⁴² Cotton, Paul. (1990). News media have “discovered” CDC. *JAMA*, 263(19), p. 2584.

⁴³ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 186.

⁴⁴ Dearing, James W. (1989). Setting the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53, p. 326.

⁴⁵ Dearing, James W. (1989). Setting the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53, p. 316.

⁴⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 12.

something that prior media reports based on the CDC statistics about AIDS cases lacked.⁴⁷

The third suggested peak evolved in 1987 around news stories that centered on mandatory testing for HIV and related privacy issues. The controversy about testing for AIDS started in spring 1987.⁴⁸ Hallett and Cannella also suggested that coverage peaked in 1987 due to Hispanic and black minorities, who were being found HIV-positive in record numbers.⁴⁹

I would argue that the eras and peaks that Rogers, Dearing, Chang, Cotton and Baker discuss are not as distinct as they conveyed. These two theories can be combined to form a more distinct theory for the reporting of AIDS. What seems to be important to those interested in AIDS is when the government began to respond to AIDS, which seemed to occur after Rock Hudson's death in October 1985. Contrary to previous literature, I would suggest there were five time periods of change in the reporting of AIDS, not three or four as was previously suggested.

First of all, there was an initial stage, which I would label as a "discovery era," from June 1981 to December 1982, when the Centers for Disease Control, not to mention reporters, knew little about AIDS. During this period the New York Times⁵⁰ printed seven articles, while the Omaha World-Herald⁵¹ printed none.

⁴⁷ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 13

⁴⁸ Dearing, James W. (1989). Setting the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53, p. 316.

⁴⁹ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 124.

⁵⁰ For a list of The New York Times articles, please see Appendix B.

⁵¹ For a list of Omaha World-Herald articles, please see Appendix C.

Second, there was a “scientific era,” from January 1983 to July 1985, when most of the reporting was scientific, or medical, in nature. Still, many of the interviews were being conducted with the CDC, but reporters began gaining insight from the blood banks and state health departments. Notably, most of these articles interviewed entities of the government, not directly with officials from Washington. Stories of the scientific nature never left the AIDS media agenda; other topics became more prevalent after Rock Hudson’s announcement in July 1985.

Third, I suggest there was a peak between July 1985 and October 1985. In less than four months, this stage is defined as the “wonder era.” This is due to actor Rock Hudson’s announcement that he had contracted AIDS. This announcement was defined as a major victory; an achievement that was unsurpassed until Magic Johnson announced he had AIDS on Nov. 7, 1991. Celebrities started to mobilize to fight AIDS and President Ronald Reagan, Hudson’s longtime friend, took notice.

Hudson’s announcement, I argue, spurred a fourth era, the “human-interest era.” AIDS stories were personalized; prior to this people with and affected by AIDS were rarely interviewed by the media. After October 1985, human-interest stories relating to AIDS became more prominent in the media.

The fifth and final era, the “political era,” started in late August 1985 and continues today. The government announced in the August 31, 1985, edition of The New York Times that they would screen all military recruits for AIDS. This is the first indication that the government was taking AIDS seriously and redirecting funding toward intervention.

This thesis will study articles from The New York Times' Web site series "AIDS at 20" and the Omaha World Herald's Sunrise Edition. More than 270 articles in these two newspapers date from 1981 to 1987. The reason to stop at 1987 is twofold: The New York Times uses this as a breaking period, as a change in the knowledge and the response to AIDS by the federal government. Secondly, James Kinsella, one of the best journalism sources on AIDS, said that coverage increased 270 percent from when actor Rock Hudson announced he had AIDS in July 1985 until the end of 1985. Kinsella found this by doing a Lexis-Nexus search. Observing The New York Times' coverage break would also give enough time to evaluate the change of coverage. The New York Times will serve as the national source, with the Omaha World-Herald serving as the state source.

Literature Review

The media's construction of AIDS has influenced how individuals react and respond.⁵² Instead, journalism's "assumed responsibility" – the reliance on authoritative sources, the downplaying of subjects that do not seem to affect the supposed mass audience, the use of revered story lines to quickly grasp new occurrences, the concerns about being revolutionary, and the speed with which topics become old news – contributed to downplay the epidemic in its first four years and continue to favor only certain political slants on the AIDS epidemic. Cook said that journalists have to be more careful in practicing their profession because, at least in the case of AIDS, applying the very definitions of good journalism has contributed to the inadequate depiction of the AIDS epidemic in the news.⁵³

Today, getting AIDS into the paper is no longer the problem.⁵⁴ Many young heterosexuals, female and male alike, profoundly altered their sexual behavior in response to the AIDS warnings relayed by the news media.⁵⁵ The national mass media have responded to the AIDS crisis with substantial publicity.⁵⁶ The local media that may reach the majority of the less-educated population make an important contribution to forming people's attitudes to HIV.⁵⁷ So when covering AIDS, reporters had to make sure that "non-news" and "old news" had to be transmitted into "new news." And driven by

⁵² Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

⁵³ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

⁵⁴ Kramer, Staci D. (1988). The media and AIDS. *Editor & Publisher*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Brecher, Edward M. (1988). Straight sex, AIDS, and the mixed-up press. *Columbia Journalism Review*, p. 50.

⁵⁶ Stroman, Carolyn A., & Seltzer, Richard. (1989). Mass media use and knowledge of AIDS. *Journalism Quarterly*, 66, p. 881.

⁵⁷ Wienrawee, Pawana, & Livingstone, Carol. (1999). Slowly getting bolder. *UNESCO Courier*, pp. 27-28.

the imperative of creating the best clip, the media set up a simplistic point-counterpoint framework – using their own overhyped previous reporting as their reference.

Albert said three categories of people with AIDS can be documented in the media: the innocent, the suspect and the guilty.⁵⁸ The first category – the innocent – includes hemophiliacs, children and surgery patients. He said they are portrayed as innocent bystanders who cannot be held responsible for their illness; this occupying a valued social position, thus deserving all the “benefits that accrue to any unremarkable sick person.”⁵⁹ The second category – the suspect – includes Haitian-Americans with AIDS who were perceived as closet homosexuals or drug abusers. Albert said Haitians concealed their lifestyles from society because of the negative stigma attached.⁶⁰ The third category – the guilty – are comprised of gay men and intravenous drug users. The media attach blame to this group because of their “chosen” lifestyle.⁶¹

Another common theme Kitzinger found in the media coverage of AIDS during the late 1980s and early 1990s was the use of HIV as a weapon of intimidation or revenge.⁶² Media scare stories, the nature of the AIDS story trajectory, the silences and the narrative logic of reporting have all helped to frame how people understand and react

⁵⁸ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 174.

⁵⁹ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 174.

⁶⁰ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 174.

⁶¹ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 174.

⁶² Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998, p. 183.

to the AIDS epidemic.⁶³ Accusations of media distortion and bias in AIDS coverage of a broad range of social and political issues have been common in the past 20 years.⁶⁴

In 1981, the subtopics of “virus” and “cancer” below “homosexuality” pointed to journal articles about the then-unnamed disease, first known as GRID, then AIDS.⁶⁵ From 1981 until 1983, articles on HIV and AIDS could be located under the listing of “homosexuality” in the Times Index and also in The Reader’s Guide to Periodic Literature.⁶⁶ “AIDS” wasn’t added as a separate topic until the beginning of 1983, signaling that the medical community was starting to consider the disease important.⁶⁷

A better understanding of the relationship between media use, media dependency, social identity and group norms in influencing personal attitudes helped mold the reasoning behind media coverage of HIV and AIDS.⁶⁸

Legos and Ball-Rokeach define media system dependency relation as “the extent to which attainment of an individual’s, group’s, organization’s or system’s goals is contingent upon access to the information resources of the media system, relative to the extent to which attainment of media system goals is contingent upon the resources

⁶³ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis*. (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998, p. 190.

⁶⁴ Drushel, Bruce E. (1991). Sensationalism or sensitivity: Use of words in stories on acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) by Associated Press Videotext. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 48.

⁶⁵ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 182.

⁶⁶ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 114; Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 182.

⁶⁷ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 182.

⁶⁸ Morton, Thomas A., & Duck, Julie M. (2000). Social identity and media dependency in the gay community. *Communication Research*, 27(4), p. 439.

controlled by individuals, groups, organizations or systems, respectively.”⁶⁹ Media system dependency treats the media system as an industrialized world country’s primary means of gathering, processing and relating information to its readers and businesses.⁷⁰

Breed argues that standardization signifies that various newspapers contain the same or similar items and those are styled and arranged in the same or similar ways.⁷¹ Breed found that one particular aspect of standardization is the tendency of many papers to feature the same stories atop their front pages, while excluding others.⁷² Critics of standardization feel, however, that the press often exhibits conformity that is not justified by the newsworthiness of the particular stories placed above the fold of page one by many editors.⁷³ Breed said it is worthy to study is the process by which editors select the top stories they will feature based on the newsworthiness of the day.⁷⁴ This is still the case when studying AIDS –what makes editors bury AIDS news on page five?

The ecologies of news perspective incorporates the idea that certain public issues will persevere in mass media coverage over relatively long period of time.⁷⁵ Public issues move through stages of mass media and through public and policy attention in media agendas.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Loges, William E., & Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. (1993). Dependency relations and newspaper readership. *Journalism Quarterly*, 70(3), p. 603.

⁷⁰ Loges, William E., & Ball-Rokeach, Sandra J. (1993). Dependency relations and newspaper readership. *Journalism Quarterly*, 70(3), p. 603.

⁷¹ Breed, Warren. (1955). Newspaper “opinion leaders” and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32, p. 277.

⁷² Breed, Warren. (1955). Newspaper “opinion leaders” and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32, p. 277.

⁷³ Breed, Warren. (1955). Newspaper “opinion leaders” and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32, p. 277.

⁷⁴ Breed, Warren. (1955). Newspaper “opinion leaders” and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32, p. 277.

⁷⁵ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 2.

In the process of “news construction,” news organizations adopt a certain operational logic, which impacts heavily upon the levels and types of coverage a given issue, or group receive, which news organizations use to decide, manage and publish the “news-worthiness” stories confronted daily.⁷⁷ As news is produced, editors rank, in their opinion, what article is the most newsworthy, based on their preconceived notion of what is news.⁷⁸ Media logic helps order these newsworthiness claims and acts as a guide to editors when sifting through the available newsworthy information that takes place daily, thus expediting the construction of raw information into a presentable news form.⁷⁹ AIDS advocates said they believe the considerations of people with AIDS have been secondary to the concerns of the social institutions dealing with the problem, whether it be the medical community or the news media.⁸⁰ Hallett and Cannella said what needs to happen is that media logic must somehow incorporate people with AIDS in human-interest stories, legitimize their voice for public audiences and use them as sources for AIDS-specific information.⁸¹

The tried-and-true responsible methods of journalism as an institution – the reliance on authoritative sources to suggest news, the downplaying of subjects that do not seem to affect the hypothetical mass audience, the use of venerable story lines to quickly

⁷⁷ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 115.

⁷⁸ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 115.

⁷⁹ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 115.

⁸⁰ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 118.

⁸¹ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 123.

grasp new occurrences, the concerns about being inflammatory and the rapidity with which topics become old news – contributed to downplay the epidemic in its first four years and continued to favor only certain political slants on the AIDS epidemic. We cannot just say that journalists have to be more careful in practicing their profession because, at least in this case, applying the very definitions of good journalism has contributed to the inadequate depiction of the AIDS epidemic in the news.⁸²

Issues not only receive mass media coverage because of their newsworthy characteristics. The information must also be timely. The “breaking quality” of news is its most important characteristic.⁸³ Once an issue receives media coverage, it usually remains on the news agenda for a fairly limited amount of time.⁸⁴ Problem resolution is not required for a news issue to become less important on the media agenda.⁸⁵

For mass media decision-makers to consider an “old” issue newsworthy again, not only is new information about the issue required, but the new information must enable writers and editors to recast the issue in a new way.⁸⁶ The media agenda-setting process is influenced by the amount of news coverage given to an issue of study by certain influential media like The New York Times, by editors and news managers.⁸⁷

⁸² Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

⁸³ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 4.

“The media is used as a primary vehicle for both formal and informal messages about AIDS.”⁸⁸ Social issues are brought to life and framed in newspapers, and seeing them in print legitimizes them to many audiences. As soon as the media begins to focus on an issue, so does the public.⁸⁹ Journalists and editors are trained to recognize and value issues which are “newsworthy” by virtue of how much the issue reflects, or can be made to reflect, such newsworthiness criteria as sensation, conflict, mystery, celebrity, deviance, tragedy and proximity.⁹⁰ The media are the primary means of educating the public about issues that are often not talked about in society. This has been the case with AIDS coverage in newspapers. The public first took notice of the disease when media outlets, such as The New York Times, took notice. The New York Times reported the first discovered AIDS cases in July 1981.

While the quality of HIV educational print materials has improved since the beginning of the epidemic, AIDS prevention programs still have limited options when using available print media to convey prevention messages to different target groups. Despite media information many women do not see themselves as fitting a certain profile of a woman at risk and therefore do not relate to many of traditional prevention messages geared toward women.⁹¹ Obviously, the news media must continue providing AIDS-related information to the U.S. readers. As noted above, until a cure is found, AIDS is still a story that needs to be reported in America, not just internationally.

⁸⁸ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 319.

⁸⁹ Seltzer, Richard. (1993). AIDS, homosexuality, public opinion and changing correlates over time. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(1), p. 85.

⁹⁰ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 2.

⁹¹ Bond, Lisa, & Woll, Myra. (1997). Developing non-traditional print media for HIV prevention. *American Journal of Public Health*, 87(2), p. 289.

Media messages about AIDS have been criticized for lack of clarity and for using confusing terminology that undermines educational efforts as well as prejudiced attitudes. The media are blamed for continuing to report misinformation about how HIV is transmitted and for failing to take into account sensitivity to people's lives.⁹² The meanings of media messages are not just about the content of the messages but also about the interpretations different audiences bring to the stories and photographs.⁹³ Messages, whether positive or negative, are nevertheless deciphered within a social context and readers interpret them based on their own personal experiences and their own understandings of better known health issues when they decide on their viewpoint of AIDS.⁹⁴ One way the media strived to better educate the public about AIDS is to form projects to combine mass media messages and public relations to inform readers. In September 1994, one such group, the HIV Mass Media Campaign was launched to target African Americans living in Washington, D.C., by producing media information for youth and adults.⁹⁵ The message this project wanted to convey was to change the perception that AIDS is something that just happens to people, and to encourage the African Americans to avoid risky sexual behavior.⁹⁶ The group wanted to inform people that they can stop the spread of AIDS.

Often, journalists either end up shying away from topics that present the possibility of rising alarm or choose to report on them to reassure readers rather than

⁹² Kitlinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 332.

⁹³ Kitlinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 334.

⁹⁴ Kitlinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 334.

⁹⁵ Thorne, Claudia. (1997). HIV/AIDS mass media campaign: A community partnership. *Washington Informer*, 33(25), p. 2.

⁹⁶ Thorne, Claudia. (1997). HIV/AIDS mass media campaign: A community partnership. *Washington Informer*, 33(25), p. 2.

worry them.⁹⁷ When news organizations chose to report on AIDS, they see-sawed between scaring readers and reassuring them. After initially reporting the “discovery” of AIDS in 1981, the press printed very few stories about AIDS, practically neglecting the topic for about two years.⁹⁸ In the case of AIDS the media reported the statistics about the first cases, relaying to readers that all found cases involved gay men with multiple partners, thus explaining the original name for AIDS – GRID.⁹⁹

The news media know that scare stories, even scare stories about heterosexual AIDS, sell papers and attract mass audiences to prime-time newscasts and sweeps-week television specials; hence their emphasis after 1983 on the coverage of heterosexual AIDS. AIDS, as framed in the media, has merely helped transform a supposedly “contagious disease” into a concrete problem which is identifiable by the public. Watney blames lack of coverage on reporters.¹⁰⁰ Albert found when writers first covered the disease they sought to create a biological distinction between heterosexuals and gays.¹⁰¹

Critics have attacked the press for whipping up AIDS hysteria and for down-playing the true dangers of the epidemic.¹⁰² Researchers have identified factual errors and overquotation of the same medical sources numerous times in AIDS-related

⁹⁷ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222.

⁹⁸ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (p. 179-194). New York: Praeger, pp 179.

⁹⁹ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (p. 179-194). New York: Praeger, pp 180.

¹⁰⁰ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 80.

¹⁰¹ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (p. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 172.

¹⁰² Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 221.

stories.¹⁰³ Mass media outlets can assist in dispelling the common belief that AIDS is only a gay disease by reporting on cases involving heterosexuals, adolescents and children.¹⁰⁴ Although the media's job is not to act as a public relations servant, the mass media are in the unique position to respond to the need for reliable HIV/AIDS information that will motivate both homosexuals and heterosexuals to reduce high-risk behavior.¹⁰⁵

After the mass media agenda was set in mid-1985, U.S. media started paying attention to AIDS and then continued to do so.¹⁰⁶ Currently, everything to do with AIDS is newsworthy. AIDS is caught up in the big conglomeration picture of sales wars and takeover battles within the newspaper industry. And in sales terms, AIDS is "good" news. Watney said in AIDS, we find stories being altered, which alarms the public because newspaper owners are profiting from these untrue stories.¹⁰⁷ These stories had factual errors, more because neither the reporter nor the editor understood the medical terminology related to AIDS. But Williams and Miller question that AIDS stories are intriguing enough not to need invented scenarios.¹⁰⁸

The way in which the media frame an issue also determines whether it climbs the media agenda or falls back down. Typically, issues do not stay on the media agenda for

¹⁰³ Hertog, James K. & Fan, David P. (1995). The impact of press coverage on social beliefs: The case of HIV transmission. *Communication Research*, 22(5), p. 550.

¹⁰⁴ Reardon, Kathleen K., & Richardson, Jean L. (1991). The important role of mass media in the diffusion of accurate information about AIDS. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 65.

¹⁰⁵ Reardon, Kathleen K., & Richardson, Jean L. (1991). The important role of mass media in the diffusion of accurate information about AIDS. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 65.

¹⁰⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 42.

¹⁰⁷ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 94.

¹⁰⁸ Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 148.

very long.¹⁰⁹ Although the news media do not set the political agenda single-handedly, help to determine which private matters (such as disease) become defined as public events (such as epidemics). After all, none of us live in the macrosociety depicted by the news but in microsocieties with which we interact on a daily basis.¹¹⁰

The press is disciplined by the profits, even if it means exposing information that hurts individuals. When Arthur Ashe was faced with the possibility of an article in *USA Today*, which had asked him about rumors that he had contracted AIDS, he went public.¹¹¹ This issue became a debate among journalists – what should be kept private? Some journalists chose to honor what a public figure wanted kept private because they believed there was not an obligating reason for the public to know that Ashe contracted AIDS.¹¹² After this incident, Ashe joined a long list of public figures who cried “foul” at journalists, who often “believe that the right to publish and the need to publish are one and the same,” when often the two situations differ.¹¹³

Articles researched blame the media for the lack of knowledge. Some blame the homophobic editors, while others blame the public’s lack of interest. Many people are afraid of AIDS because they or someone close to them could become a victim.

Although the news media do not single-handedly set the political agenda, they help to determine which private matters, such as disease, become defined as public events, such as epidemics. The media, acting as a fourth estate in the political process, after the executive, legislative and judicial branches, influences the government, thus

¹⁰⁹ Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). Real world indicators and the media agenda. In J.W. Dearing & E.M. Rogers (Eds.), *Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting* (p. 28-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

¹¹¹ Ruby, Michael. (1992, April 20). The private life of Arthur Ashe. *U.S. News & World Report*, p. 84.

¹¹² Ruby, Michael. (1992, April 20). The private life of Arthur Ashe. *U.S. News & World Report*, p. 84.

¹¹³ Ruby, Michael. (1992, April 20). The private life of Arthur Ashe. *U.S. News & World Report*, p. 84.

influences the amount of grant money given to medical research. But more importantly, the media should report on all aspects of life and give its readers information on current events, even deadly diseases like AIDS.

If the mass media set the polling agenda, then survey organizations are channels for mass media-induced agenda setting. Poll results on a public issue like AIDS, when published and broadcast by the mass media, may reinforce the mass media's agenda-setting function by legitimizing the mass media's issue choices.¹¹⁴ News polling could be seen as more acceptable because it informs or diverts a public whose views are gathered, refracted and fed back to them by the media – in other words, media agenda means “making news” rather than reporting it.¹¹⁵

Critics complained that the media provided both a service and a disservice.¹¹⁶ On one hand, the media helps dispel the illusion that the AIDS epidemic is over. The urgency of creating new and better therapies and medicine for infected people was made all the more apparent. And the desperate need for a vaccine was emphasized time and time again. Groopman said the media's disservice was “evident in the faces of the patients and their loved ones who visited my clinic since the conference.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Dearing, James W. (1989). Setting the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53, p. 326.

¹¹⁵ Gollin, Albert E. (1987). Polling and the news media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, p. S89, S92.

¹¹⁶ Groopman, Jerome. (1998). Outside the glare. *New Republic*, 219(7/8), p. 42.

¹¹⁷ Groopman, Jerome. (1998). Outside the glare. *New Republic*, 219(7/8), p. 42.

The Ignored Disease: The discovery era

No one, not even health reporters or the medical community, understood AIDS. In Kitzinger's research, what participants said they thought about when thinking of people with AIDS were the vivid media images of someone who is very ill with AIDS.¹¹⁸ Not everyone infected with AIDS is in this situation – many appear healthy. AIDS should not be thought of as being easily recognizable. This is an incorrect assumption that the media continue to portray.

During the initial stage or "discovery era," reporters were mainly interviewing researchers from the Centers for Disease Control. From June 1981 to December 1982, the CDC, not to mention reporters, knew little about AIDS. Most articles focused on what the doctors had found out about AIDS thus far and what they still didn't know about the virus. More specifically, the doctors were documenting who contracted AIDS, how many had AIDS and how many died from AIDS complications. During this period, which is most notably marked by the lack of coverage by U.S. newspapers and wire services, The New York Times printed seven articles, while the Omaha World-Herald printed none.

In the early 1980s, many newspapers depended on wire services to fill in gaps in coverage, including the United Press International and the Associated Press. United Press International, which was tougher competition in the early 1980s before its onset of financial troubles, recognized it was losing the battle for medical and science scoops.¹¹⁹ The Associated Press was not covering the crisis from San Francisco or Los Angeles or

¹¹⁸ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 332.

¹¹⁹ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 49.

New York, where the majority of the cases were, but from the CDC in Atlanta and from the federal government in Washington D.C.¹²⁰

In June 1981, the CDC reported that pneumocystis carinii pneumonia was found in five gay men.¹²¹ By the end of the month, the CDC's Dr. James Curran said he wondered when journalists would call about the new epidemic.¹²² By the end of the year, the CDC reported 152 cases of disease, then called the gay-related immune deficiency (GRID).¹²³

The wire services and newspapers' lack of personal connection to the story became obvious in early 1982.¹²⁴ By the end of 1982, there were about 800 AIDS cases; UPI had written 10 stories and the AP had filed 19.¹²⁵ AIDS was still considered a San Francisco and New York problem.¹²⁶ But if AIDS was considered a New York problem, why had The New York Times only written seven articles as of the end of 1982?

During the 1980s, there was an attempt to repress homosexuality, to push it back from the public sphere that it has never inhabited and to condemn it as unlawful and morally wrong by all public institutions, including journalism.¹²⁷ But Cook said that policy makers are more likely to respond to issues as their prominence in the media

¹²⁰ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 52.

¹²¹ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

¹²² Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 8.

¹²³ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

¹²⁴ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 52.

¹²⁵ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 55.

¹²⁶ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 55.

¹²⁷ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 80.

increases, even those that provoke considerable conflict.¹²⁸ Gay men became major advocates for AIDS, so politicians began listening to their grievances. But newspapers failed during this stage to interview gay men about the “gay plague.” Therefore, the politicization of the AIDS epidemic was established to gain credibility for the individuals and discredit false information about AIDS.

Hallett and Cannella cite the lack of AIDS coverage, at least from 1981-1985, was largely because the HIV-positive had no voice because they chose not to speak.¹²⁹ Statistics show that AIDS reporting since mid-1987 has slackened off, but it is routine and event-driven, mostly focusing on prescheduled occasions like the annual international AIDS conference.¹³⁰

Not only is the AIDS epidemic difficult to measure because many do not report the positive test results, but the medical community accuses media outlets of reporting facts and statistics in misleading ways.¹³¹ This may explain why many in the medical community say that the media have not conveyed the whole truth about AIDS.¹³² This is also a possible explanation of why in Kitzinger’s research, some participants were unclear about the distinction between HIV and AIDS.¹³³ In Kitzinger’s research, even when people were familiar with the term “HIV” many routinely used it interchangeably

¹²⁸ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

¹²⁹ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 126.

¹³⁰ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 223.

¹³¹ Schwartz, Joel, & Murray, David. (1996). AIDS and the media. *Public Interest*, 125, p. 57.

¹³² Schwartz, Joel, & Murray, David. (1996). AIDS and the media. *Public Interest*, 125, p. 57.

¹³³ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 332.

with “AIDS” and “AIDS virus.”¹³⁴ Physicians blame the lack of the public knowledge on the media, perhaps forgetting that there other sources of news besides newspapers. Kitzinger suggests that problem like these could be better understood if media outlets had more stories on AIDS. But the media cannot be expected to bear the brunt of educating the public by itself.

Hertog and Fan said AIDS is an excellent study of the impact of press coverage on public beliefs because prior to 1981, this disease was unknown in the United States.¹³⁵ The news editors directly affected the decision on which stories were covered most and best. The news editor often selects which stories from the wire services will run in the newspaper, as well as having an active role in deciding the play local stories on AIDS receive.¹³⁶ Baker said newspaper editors’ slanted reality through which topics they reported, the amount of coverage they received and how stories appealed to the interests of advertisers and readers.¹³⁷ The bottom line is, news editors determined the AIDS coverage agenda.

Dr. Lawrence K. Altman joined The New York Times in 1969, making it the only American newspaper at that time to have a science reporter with a medical degree.¹³⁸ Altman was the first at The New York Times to write an article about the epidemic, titled

¹³⁴ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1990). Audience understanding of AIDS media messages: A discussion of methods. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), p. 332

¹³⁵ Hertog, James K. & Fan, David P. (1995). The impact of press coverage on social beliefs: The case of HIV transmission. *Communication Research*, 22(5), p. 551.

¹³⁶ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 126.

¹³⁷ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, pp 180.

¹³⁸ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 62.

“Rare Cancer Seen In 41 Homosexuals,” published on July 3, 1981.¹³⁹ The article referred to the “cancer” as Kaposi’s Sarcoma. This article gave detailed background on the progress of what is now known as AIDS, such as how many had the disease – 41 gay men – and how many had died – eight gay men. When this article was published, it was unknown to scientists that it was not a “cancer,” nor that it was Kaposi’s Sarcoma, which in the past inflicted elderly men. Only two experts – not any of the 41 diagnosed men – were interviewed, although these two doctors became leading AIDS experts. Those interviewed were Dr. Alvin E. Friedman-Kien of the New York University Medical Center and Dr. James Curran, a spokesman from the CDC in Atlanta. The New York Times ran the column-length story buried in the back of the national section.

There were several issues to take into account during the “discovery era.” Science and medical reporters were interviewing CDC researchers about a new disease that puzzled them. Researchers were expecting the media to take more of an interest in AIDS; instead newspapers lacked coverage of the “new epidemic.” Newspaper reporters and editors lacked a personal connection to the people affected by AIDS; thus the voice of people with and affected by AIDS was not heard often during the first two years of reporting on AIDS. Society was, and still is to some extent, biased toward gay men, and conveniently avoid interviewing them. This occurred despite their involvement in newsworthy events, such as rallies and parades.

In the early years of AIDS coverage, stories were often written similar to medical journal articles.¹⁴⁰ Inconsistency in the number of media stories may have resulted in part

¹³⁹ Altman, Lawrence K. (1981, July 3). Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/health/03AIDS.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 40

from the contradictory messages about AIDS coming from the scientific community, including reversals of medical statements regarding routes of disease transmission, degree of threat, safety of blood supplies and the possibility of a vaccine or cure.¹⁴¹

On August 29, 1981, neither The New York Times, nor the citizens of the United States, knew much more about the disease that affected 53 people, 94 percent of whom were gay men.¹⁴² This brief offered little more information than earlier published articles and only interviewed one expert, Dr. Harold Jaffe, of the CDC. Both articles focused on AIDS statistics because neither the doctors nor the CDC researchers knew anything about the disease gay men were “catching” and dying rapidly from.

As other groups began contracting AIDS, the “discovery era” moved more toward a “scientific era” of growth in news coverage. A 1982 CDC publication suggested that the gay-related immune disease was an infectious disease that was spread among sexual partners.¹⁴³ In the summer of 1982, the CDC reported cases in hemophiliacs and Haitians immigrants, and thus changed the name to the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).¹⁴⁴

On May 11, 1982, Lawrence K. Altman wrote the article, “New Homosexual Disorder Worries Officials.”¹⁴⁵ This article refers to the disease as Kaposi’s Sarcoma, GRID and AIDS and included interviews from seven experts, including doctors from the National Cancer Institute, the CDC and several New York physicians. This article

¹⁴¹ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 1.

¹⁴² The Associated Press. 2 Fatal Diseases Focus of Inquiry. (1981, Aug. 29). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/082981sci-aids.html>.

¹⁴³ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

¹⁴⁴ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

¹⁴⁵ Altman, Lawrence K. (1982, May 11). New Homosexual Disorder Worries Officials. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/11/health/051182AIDS.html>.

relayed many details, such as how many people had AIDS, how many had died from AIDS and detailed definitions of GRID and Kaposi's Sarcoma, but little about the affected group of people. The article made reference to a then-recent Congressional hearing, in which Dr. Bruce A. Chabner of the National Cancer Institute said that AIDS was "of concern of all Americans,"¹⁴⁶ but made no attempt to inject political information into the article.

The second article written by medical reporter Lawrence K. Altman in 1982, "Clue Found on Homosexuals' Precancer Syndrome," quoted one person – a doctor.¹⁴⁷ The article published on June 18, 1982, did not refer to the disease as AIDS, but GRID, and stated that federal epidemiologists were still investigating the AIDS, but said that it was "not occurring as a random event among homosexual men."¹⁴⁸ At this time, epidemiologists were starting to interview those with AIDS, to find connections between people with AIDS. The media still failed to interview people with AIDS. Nevertheless, the media could not report on a subject that still baffled the Centers for Disease Control.

On Aug. 8, 1982, the Times printed an article, "A Disease's Spread Provokes Anxiety," which interviewed both experts and a person who was tested for the AIDS virus.¹⁴⁹ The article relayed the history of AIDS since 1981, including how many people had contracted AIDS and how many have died from AIDS. One noted quote by Dr. James Curran, of the federal Centers for Disease Control, explained the gay community's reaction to the growing number of AIDS cases. "There are many other groups that seem

¹⁴⁶ Altman, Lawrence K. (1982, May 11). New Homosexual Disorder Worries Officials. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/11/health/051182AIDS.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Altman, Lawrence K. (1982, June 18). Clue Found on Homosexuals' Precancer Syndrome. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/18/health/061882AIDS.html>.

¹⁴⁸ Altman, Lawrence K. (1982, June 18). Clue Found on Homosexuals' Precancer Syndrome. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/18/health/061882AIDS.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Herman, Robin. (1982, Aug. 8). A Disease's Spread Provokes Anxiety. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/08/health/080882AIDS.html>.

to be affected with similar illnesses, and the homosexual community does not want to be blamed for this problem,” Curran said.¹⁵⁰ The media tried too hard to classify the disease and this led to more biases toward gay men.

Gay men were considered inconsequential to journalists.¹⁵¹ “But if AIDS could strike even children, then at last this thing could be seen as a real threat to people editors and reporters knew, to their audiences.”¹⁵² On Dec. 10, 1982, The New York Times published that the CDC reported that an infant who had received a blood transfusion died of AIDS, a disease that “has principally afflicted homosexuals.”¹⁵³ In the article, “Infant Who Received Transfusion Dies of Immune Deficiency Illness,” it was mentioned that the blood donor was also inflicted with AIDS. The 12-paragraph article said those inflicted are gay men, heterosexual drug users and Haitian men. While the article reported that the CDC had 788 definite AIDS cases; less than a month later, the CDC reported 1,300 cases of AIDS.¹⁵⁴

By the end of 1982, gay men, Haitians, hemophiliacs and children were contracting AIDS. To the CDC, this meant that AIDS was being contracted in ways besides through intercourse; AIDS was being transmitted through blood. In newspaper articles, there was no report of this finding and it is unclear on whether the CDC was volunteering this information or not.

¹⁵⁰ Herman, Robin. (1982, Aug. 8). A Disease’s Spread Provokes Anxiety. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/08/health/080882AIDS.html>.

¹⁵¹ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 74.

¹⁵² Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 74.

¹⁵³ Schmeck, Jr., Harold M. (1982, Dec. 10). Infant Who Received Transfusion Dies of Immune Deficiency Illness. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/12/10/health/121082AIDS.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Rathus, Spencer A. & Boughn, Susan. (1993). *AIDS: What every student needs to know*. Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

The news media flocked to interview the Centers for Disease Control; it failed to interview members of the government. Several members of Congress from the state of California had become AIDS advocates in the early 1980s. For example, the media could have interviewed Congressman Henry Waxman, who was trying to address legislation to fight AIDS. Defeating the AIDS epidemic has been one of Congressman Henry Waxman's highest health priorities. As chairman of the Health and Environment Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee from 1979 through 1994, he was one of the foremost congressional advocates in favor of a national response to the AIDS epidemic.¹⁵⁵ Under his chairmanship, the subcommittee conducted more than 30 hearings on AIDS and since the early 1980s, Rep. Waxman has written and helped enact federal legislation that has helped fund the search for a cure and brought meaningful relief to people with AIDS.¹⁵⁶ In 1982, Rep. Waxman convened the first congressional hearing on AIDS.¹⁵⁷

The media cannot write about an epidemic which doctors report no new scientific knowledge. But the media failed to seek out those who were involved in fighting the AIDS crisis. There seemed to be no attempt by the media to get on the streets and interview those people with AIDS or people who were being tested for AIDS antibodies.

¹⁵⁵ Waxman, Harry. *Introduction*. Found on the World Wide Web on Jan. 26, 2003 at http://www.house.gov/waxman/issues/health/issues_health_HIV.htm.

¹⁵⁶ Waxman, Harry. *Introduction*. Found on the World Wide Web on Jan. 26, 2003 at http://www.house.gov/waxman/issues/health/issues_health_HIV.htm.

¹⁵⁷ Waxman, Harry. *Introduction*. Found on the World Wide Web on Jan. 26, 2003 at http://www.house.gov/waxman/issues/health/issues_health_HIV.htm.

The Ignored Disease: the scientific era

AIDS reporting is expected to highlight any good news about research advances. But Schwartz and Murray said that false optimism hasn't been a problem with AIDS coverage, instead articles focused on negative findings.¹⁵⁸

The second stage in AIDS coverage was the "scientific era." From January 1983 to July 1985, most of the reporting was scientific, or medical, in nature. Still, many of the interviews were being conducted with the Centers for Disease Control, but reporters began gaining insight from the blood banks and state health departments. Notably, most of these articles interviewed entities of the government, not directly with officials from Washington. Stories of the scientific nature never left the AIDS media agenda, but other topics became more prevalent after Rock Hudson's July 1985 announcement that he contracted AIDS.

There were several issues embedded in coverage during the "scientific era." Reporters, many who had not covered science news in the past, relied on doctors and medical researchers for information for their stories, because they knew little about the subject they were reporting on. The United States was also focused on the lifestyle issue, not the wellness issue, because government officials did not see that AIDS was a threat to the general population, and when AIDS was reported in newspapers coverage often caused alarm. Reporters were fixated on the Centers for Disease Control and similar governmental organizations as their main source, without considering interviewing people with AIDS. Even after AIDS became a human and political issue, the media's agenda and the medical researchers agenda came into conflict.

¹⁵⁸ Schwartz, Joel, & Murray, David. (1996). AIDS and the media. *Public Interest*, 125, p. 57.

Cook said journalists spent little time investigating AIDS; instead, they waited for medical authorities to hand them ideas and events that could become news stories. So despite the growing severity of AIDS and increasing attention by doctors and scientists, many reporters ignored the epidemic, even after mass media peers started covering the epidemic in 1983.¹⁵⁹

On Feb. 6, 1983, The New York Times magazine printed a feature article, "A New Disease's Deadly Odyssey."¹⁶⁰ The article quoted 16 sources, including experts and people affected by AIDS. This article was very complete; for example, it mentioned that AIDS was first seen in 1979 and said that cases were reported before June 1981. This was the first article that explained thoroughly and truthfully the facts of the AIDS virus. This article explains the science of AIDS, but uses lay terminology so as not to confuse or bore the reader.

The article also mentioned that the search for the AIDS agent was being coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control, explaining that this may have been the reason why the Associated Press concentrated on Atlanta for a majority of its AIDS-related stories.¹⁶¹

The doctors interviewed in the article seem more compassionate. Henig writes the article in a manner that the people with AIDS don't seem to just be a statistic; she conveys their plight. The article talks about people who are affected by AIDS and how they are mobilizing by helping the doctors studying AIDS and giving them contact

¹⁵⁹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222.

¹⁶⁰ Henig, Robin Marantz. (1983, Feb. 6). A New Disease's Deadly Odyssey. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/020683sci-aids-mag.html>

¹⁶¹ Henig, Robin Marantz. (1983, Feb. 6). A New Disease's Deadly Odyssey. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/020683sci-aids-mag.html>

information to find the other people with risk of AIDS.¹⁶² The article refers to the gay population as homosexuals and still refers to AIDS alternatively as the “gay plague.” The article gave a very comprehensive history of AIDS and without conveying bias, suggested that gay men should start altering their sexual lifestyles.

Watney argues that the reporting of AIDS was caught up in the political discourse of homosexuals vs. heterosexuals.¹⁶³ This has contributed to such widespread ignorance and misconceptions about AIDS, and put newspaper readers at real risk of ignorance, which is one of the more glaring ironies of AIDS journalism.¹⁶⁴

Dr. Frank Folk, professor of epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who directed an AIDS study said that the disease was staying in the original risk groups, meaning it was rarely hitting heterosexual men and women.¹⁶⁵ “With the exception of intravenous drug abusers, I don’t think AIDS is going to spread much into the heterosexual population because I don’t think men will acquire the infection from women sexually, except for rare occurrences,” Folk said.¹⁶⁶ This is an untrue statement and can lead to ignorant decisions by heterosexual men and women

¹⁶² Henig, Robin Marantz. (1983, Feb. 6). A New Disease’s Deadly Odyssey. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/020683sci-aids-mag.html>.

¹⁶³ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 82.

¹⁶⁴ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Jan. 14). AIDS in the Future: Experts Say Deaths Will Climb Sharply. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/011486sci-aids.html>.

¹⁶⁶ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Jan. 14). AIDS in the Future: Experts Say Deaths Will Climb Sharply. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/011486sci-aids.html>.

Government officials also said the AIDS epidemic was not expected to spread rapidly into the general population.¹⁶⁷ The major theme of the article was the uncertainty of AIDS – how many people had it and predicted how many heterosexual or homosexual would die from it. The article said the number of new cases of AIDS had leveled off, but stresses that the statistics were not always accurate because many people do not report that they have AIDS. These statements are true and help the general population become more informed about their decisions.

Especially in 1983 and 1987, coverage ranged from reassurance to alarm; many newspapers ran stories that said everybody was now at risk of contracting HIV.¹⁶⁸ AIDS advocates blamed science and medical news for these misconceptions and inaccuracies. Certain tendencies in journalistic style – especially the emphasis on conflict, controversy and sensationalism – presented obstacles to overcome when relating information from experts to the populace.¹⁶⁹

Lawrence K. Altman continued to report on the scientific or medical side of AIDS and rarely explored the emotion of people with AIDS. In the article, “New-Found Virus Shown to Cause AIDS-Like Illness In Lab Monkeys,” Altman continues to explore the new findings by researchers.¹⁷⁰ Altman mentions the handicap of studying AIDS, something rarely alluded to in previous articles. “One handicap in determining the cause of AIDS in humans is that ethical constraints prevent scientists from injecting humans

¹⁶⁷ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Jan. 14). AIDS in the Future: Experts Say Deaths Will Climb Sharply.

[Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/011486sci-aids.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222.

¹⁶⁹ Hertog, James K. & Fan, David P. (1995). The impact of press coverage on social beliefs: The case of HIV transmission. *Communication Research*, 22(5), p. 545

¹⁷⁰ Altman, Lawrence K. (1984, March 1). New-Found Virus Shown to Cause AIDS-Like Illness in Lab Monkeys. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/030184sci-aids.html>.

with suspected infectious agents to test various hypotheses.”¹⁷¹ This article conveyed the controversy science reporters relayed when reporting on disease, such as AIDS.

The reputation of the Centers for Disease Control and its “scientifically valid” procedures legitimized the news organization when it cited the CDC. This legitimacy allowed the news organization to validate the information as “responsible” journalism. Organizational citations, by such groups like the CDC and the National Institutes of Health, were viewed as more socially responsible and “safe” journalism for the news organization.¹⁷²

In March 1984, U.S. researchers announced they located a gay man who may have been a carrier of the AIDS virus, “spreading it across the country without knowing he had it.”¹⁷³ Researchers said the man, called Patient Zero, had sexual contact with eight other men with AIDS. This article seems to be written directly from a press release and failed to interview any doctors for their reaction to the news. This seemed to be a major discovery for the CDC but the Associated Press did not seem to do much additional research before filing the article.¹⁷⁴

In science, news conferences are rarely called to announce a failed experiment, and the better the news, the more likely it is that prominent experts will announce it.¹⁷⁵ With the government and the scientists dominating the coverage from mid-1983 to mid-

¹⁷¹ The Knight-Ridder Newspapers. (1984, March 1). Scientists Say Virus Likely Cause Of AIDS-Like Monkey Disease. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁷² Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 116.

¹⁷³ The Associated Press. (1984, March 27). U.S. Medical Study Singles Out a Man Who Carried AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/032784sci-aids.html>.

¹⁷⁴ The Associated Press. (1984, March 27). Homosexual Contacts Link 40 Cases of AIDS. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁷⁵ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222.

1985, reporting on AIDS went back from alarming to soothing, suggesting that government, medicine and science agencies were progressing toward managing the epidemic.¹⁷⁶

The New York Times added to their series “The Doctor’s World,” on April 23, 1985.¹⁷⁷ The newest installment, “AIDS Data Pour in as Studies Proliferate,” gave detailed information on the progress of AIDS, including: statistics, cost of treatment, hospital information and drug treatment information. Doctors interviewed in the article seemed optimistic about their progress in fighting AIDS. Dr. Martin S. Hirsch of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston said, “We have a long way to go before AIDS is preventable or treatable, but the first steps have been taken, and we are on our way.”¹⁷⁸ This article said little to cause alarm; instead it soothed the current situation.

What literature failed to acknowledge was that “prominent experts” also announced inaccurate findings. French scientists reported the discovery of the AIDS virus in African insects, but Dr. Harold Jaffe, A CDC epidemiologist, said the discovery was “puzzling” because scientists in laboratory experiments had not been able to infect any living animals with the AIDS virus except for in experiments.¹⁷⁹ In this article, scientists who did not want to be named said that nearly all the insect specimens from Zaire showed signs of AIDS infection and said there was a possibility that an error might have

¹⁷⁶ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 223.

¹⁷⁷ Altman, Lawrence K. (1985, April 23). The Doctor’s World: AIDS Data Pour in as Studies Proliferate. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042385sci-aids.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Altman, Lawrence K. (1985, April 23). The Doctor’s World: AIDS Data Pour in as Studies Proliferate. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042385sci-aids.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Eckholm, Erik. (1986, Aug. 27). French Scientists Report Discovery of AIDS Virus in African Insects. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/082786sci-aids.html>.

occurred.¹⁸⁰ Jaffe agreed and said that to his knowledge, no insects had been examined for AIDS infection.

As AIDS became more of a societal than scientific story, reporters with a lot less scientific knowledge were assigned, and much of the mainstream news media coverage that followed was inaccurate.¹⁸¹ The Omaha World-Herald printed a Boston Globe article that stated the AIDS virus was cloned.¹⁸² A paper talking about these results was submitted for publication to an unnamed “respected” journal. The reporter seemed skeptical about the finding of a cloned AIDS virus and discredited the company by saying it might have been a ploy to influence investors and consumers. But the reporter failed to explain why cloning the AIDS virus was a positive finding and also failed to interview people with AIDS about opinions about the discovery of a cloned virus.

The agenda of the media and the agenda of the researchers also tended to clash. On May 1, 1983, The New York Times medical reporter Lawrence K. Altman, reported that the human T-cell leukemia virus, or HTLV, was detected in the blood samples of 25 to 35 percent of people who died from AIDS.¹⁸³ The article said scientists were reluctant to discuss their AIDS research, because they wanted it first published in a scientific journal, not by a newspaper or television station. But two doctors interviewed in the article said they “would have released the data earlier if it would have saved anybody’s life.” These two statements make one wonder the magnitude and noteworthiness of their results.

¹⁸⁰ The New York Times. (1986, Dec. 17). Experiments Aim Toward Vaccine On AIDS Virus. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁸¹ Cotton, Paul. (1990). News media have “discovered” CDC. *JAMA*, 263(19), p. 2584.

¹⁸² The Boston Globe. (1984, Oct. 21). Scientists Waving Caution Flags At ‘Medicine by Press Conference.’ *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁸³ Altman, Lawrence K. (1983, May 1). Rare Virus May Have Link With Immunological Illness. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/050183sci-aids.html>.

On May 13, 1983, the Omaha World-Herald printed a wire story by the Knight-Ridder Newspapers, which gave very similar information to The New York Times article printed on May 1, 1983.¹⁸⁴ The newspaper interviewed researchers at the National Cancer Institute and focused on the discovery of the human T-cell leukemia-lymphoma virus. What is interesting in this article, which was printed the same day as a similar article in Science magazine, gave the same information that on May 1, 1983, that The New York Times said scientists studying AIDS did not want to leak to the press. Throughout the research, it was not uncommon to find that multiple science stories covered the same AIDS-related event.

In an article published on Nov. 23, 1986, federal health officials said they were no longer keeping major research findings secret until they were announced in a medical journal.¹⁸⁵ Journals were no longer able to keep up with the pace of medical research in the AIDS field.¹⁸⁶ The article said the news media had become a significant source to find current news on AIDS. In response, medical journals started speeding up the review process for key articles on AIDS and sometimes published articles within weeks of submission by researchers.

Don Berreth, CDC public affairs director in Atlanta, agreed. He said that turning to the news media “can be an incredibly rapid way to communicate information to the public.”¹⁸⁷ While finding up-to-the date scientific information about AIDS is no longer a problem, it took more than five years for the greater part of the medical community to

¹⁸⁴ The Knight-Ridder Newspapers. (1983, May 13). Researchers Link AIDS To Cancer-Causing Virus. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁸⁵ The Los Angeles Times. (1986, Nov. 23). Medical News Outpaces Journals. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁸⁶ The Los Angeles Times. (1986, Nov. 23). Medical News Outpaces Journals. *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁸⁷ Cotton, Paul. (1990). News media have “discovered” CDC. *JAMA*, 263(19), p. 2584.

realize that saving lives was more important than winning awards in their field.

The Ignored Disease: The wonder era

On July 25, 1985, the AIDS social movement¹⁸⁸ received a major victory.¹⁸⁹ “When Rock Hudson admitted he had AIDS, the gay community exploited the fact with near joy. At last they had a public figure, a hero who was one of them. The biggest name in AIDS. The reality has been that it has focused attention on AIDS and also on the causes of it. The gay parades are over. So too is public tolerance of a society that paraded its sexual deviance and demanded rights. The public is now demanding to live disease-free with the prime carriers in isolation.”¹⁹⁰

Contrary to literature, I suggest there was a third peak between July 1985 and October 1985. This stage is defined as the “wonder era” and lasted less than four months. This is due to Rock Hudson’s announcement that he had contracted AIDS. This announcement was defined as a major victory; an achievement that was unsurpassed until Magic Johnson announced he had AIDS in 1991. Celebrities started to mobilize to fight AIDS and President Ronald Reagan, Hudson’s longtime friend, took notice.

The Associated Press reported in The New York Times that actor Rock Hudson had been diagnosed with AIDS about a year before.¹⁹¹ It was announced in Paris by his spokeswoman, Yanou Collart, that Hudson “doesn’t have any idea now how he contracted AIDS. Nobody around him has AIDS.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ For more information on the AIDS social movement, please see Appendix D.

¹⁸⁹ The Associated Press. (1985, July 25). Spokesman Admits Hudson Has AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/072585sci-aids.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Watney, Simon. (1987). *AIDS and the press. Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 81.

¹⁹¹ The Associated Press. (1985, July 25). Spokesman Admits Hudson Has AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/072585sci-aids.html>.

¹⁹² The Associated Press. (1985, July 25). Spokesman Admits Hudson Has AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/072585sci-aids.html>.

With Hudson's illness vouching for AIDS' newsworthiness in 1985, different coverage methods arose – not only medical and science reporters, but also law reporters, political reporters and regional stringers brought new angles and spoke to new sources. The AIDS social movement gained elite allies through media coverage and celebrity “endorsement.” Despite increased coverage, now came the problem of fewer consensus about how to cover the epidemic.¹⁹³ Additional sources gained attention, and they were now in disagreement, unlike the pre-Hudson era when medical and political sources converged on a story line that led readers to believe that a cure was near.¹⁹⁴

Rock Hudson started people talking about AIDS, and this made him the most influential person to the movement.¹⁹⁵ Since Hudson announced he had AIDS, heterosexuals and homosexuals alike became worried about contracting AIDS. According to a Philadelphia Inquirer columnist, some people were worried that AIDS was punishment for “pestilence, plague, leprosy and retribution.”¹⁹⁶ But AIDS advocates believed the social movement won another victory because a member of America's highest social caste – the movie star – contracted AIDS.

On Oct. 2, 1985, actor Rock Hudson died.¹⁹⁷ The New York Times stated that Hudson was the “first major public figure to acknowledge openly that he was suffering

¹⁹³ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222; Williams, Kevin, & Miller, David. (1998). Producing AIDS news. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis* (p. 147-166). London: Sage, 1998, p. 147.

¹⁹⁴ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 223.

¹⁹⁵ Philadelphia Inquirer Columnist. (1985, Aug. 1). ‘Hudson Opens Our Ears to AIDS Talk.’ *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁹⁶ Philadelphia Inquirer Columnist. (1985, Aug. 1). ‘Hudson Opens Our Ears to AIDS Talk.’ *Omaha World-Herald*.

¹⁹⁷ Berger, Joseph. (1985, Oct. 2). Rock Hudson, Screen Idol, Dies at 59. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100385sci-aids.html>.

from AIDS.”¹⁹⁸ The article ended with a quote from Hudson, which continued to fuel the AIDS social movement. “I am not happy that I am sick. I am not happy that I have AIDS. But if that is helping others, I can at least know that my own misfortune that has some positive worth.”¹⁹⁹

Rock Hudson caused Hollywood to address AIDS.²⁰⁰ The Directors Guild of America decided they would have to take an official position after the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Screen Actors Guild created guidelines. Chris Uszler, then president of the Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Artists, told *The New York Times* that he called for the return of the motion picture industry’s 1930’s production code of ‘dry kissing.’

Celebrities started to contribute efforts to help combat the AIDS virus, with a “Commitment to Life” benefit on Sept. 19, 1985.²⁰¹ Their status in the United States is considered very close to the status of royalty – many of the American public valued their opinions and listened to their social priorities. Actress Elizabeth Taylor was quoted saying that “never has a disease left so many so helpless, leaving loved ones and families reaching out to frustration and fear.”²⁰² The Associated Press wire story, published in the *Omaha World-Herald*, made plain through quotes that celebrities were trying to become involved in the social movement before Rock Hudson announced he contracted AIDS.

¹⁹⁸ Berger, Joseph. (1985, Oct. 2). Rock Hudson, Screen Idol, Dies at 59. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100385sci-aids.html>.

¹⁹⁹ Berger, Joseph. (1985, Oct. 2). Rock Hudson, Screen Idol, Dies at 59. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100385sci-aids.html>.

²⁰⁰ Harnetz, Aljean. (1985, Nov. 7). Hollywood in Conflict Over AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/110785sci-aids.html>.

²⁰¹ The Associated Press. (1985, Aug. 1). Stars to Put AIDS Center Stage at Benefit Gala. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²⁰² The Associated Press. (1985, Aug. 1). Stars to Put AIDS Center Stage at Benefit Gala. *Omaha World-Herald*.

With the Hollywood “celebrity endorsement” the public (i.e. the media and the federal government) focused on the AIDS movement and added to its success. After the mass media agenda was set in mid-1985, when celebrities, such as Rock Hudson, began contracting AIDS, the U.S. media started paying attention to AIDS, and then continued to do so.²⁰³

Rogers, Dearing and Chang argue that for mass media decision-makers to consider an “old” issue newsworthy again, not only is new information about the issue required, but the new information must enable writers and editors to recast the issue in a new way.²⁰⁴ They also argue that problem resolution is not required for a news issue to become less important on the media agenda.²⁰⁵ Rogers, Dearing and Chang also found that national sample polls have consistently shown that Americans say they obtain most of their information about AIDS from the mass media, especially television, newspapers and news magazines.²⁰⁶

It was a major haiku for the AIDS social movement that a Hollywood celebrity announced that he had AIDS. Since Hollywood celebrities are considered the closest thing to royalty in the United States, this changed public opinion and set the agenda for reporting on AIDS for the next two eras. Reporters scrambled to find the “human side” of AIDS and to interview government officials about their plans to combat the epidemic.

²⁰³ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 40

²⁰⁴ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 3.

²⁰⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 42.

The Ignored Disease: The human-interest era

In the 1980s, reporters did not seek out people with AIDS because they did not think the story had heterosexual societal impact, thus not mainstream news interest.²⁰⁷ When funding was made available for AIDS research, it was limited to the Centers for Disease Control, so medical and science reporters had few sources. Rogers and Dearing said this is one explanation why media coverage of AIDS was initially slow and why the media depended on scientific and medical sources of information.²⁰⁸

Feature articles about people with AIDS were scarce in The New York Times during the first years of the epidemic.²⁰⁹ But there were numerous sources for human-interest stories. According to the article “A Case of AIDS and a Web of Anguish,” by Dec. 17, 1985, AIDS had become such a fact of life in New York that “it is rare to find a New Yorker who does not at least know of someone who has been stricken.”

Rock Hudson’s announcement that he contracted AIDS, I argue, spurred a fourth era, the “human-interest era.” AIDS stories were personalized; prior to this people with and affected by AIDS were rarely interviewed by the media. After October 1985, human-interest stories relating to AIDS became more prominent in the media.

Issues surrounding human-interest stories were not so much about the subjects as the media’s role in reporting. As more people besides gay men and drug users were contracting AIDS, the media had more groups to focus and vary coverage on. Reporters were worried about trust issues when interviewing subject. Often, when stories did not

²⁰⁷ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 126.

²⁰⁸ Rogers, Everett M., & Dearing, James W. (1989). The delayed reporting of the AIDS epidemic. *USA Today*, p. 65.

²⁰⁹ Kleiman, Dena. (1985, Dec. 17). A Case of AIDS and A Web of Anguish. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/121785sci-aids.html>.

affect the general readership, they were dropped. Reporters were also worried about diversity, objectivity and the social issues surrounding the articles they wrote.

The one of the first human-interest article written about people with AIDS was a July 1985 feature on children. Spokesmen from the Centers for Disease Control said, "For most infected children, the benefits of an unrestricted setting would outweigh ...the apparently non-existent risk of transmission."²¹⁰ Dr. Martha Rogers, a specialist with the CDC AIDS task force testified that keeping children out of school because they have AIDS hurts the healing process. "I don't see any need to keep them (children with AIDS) out. They have enough suffering without it being made more so by the rest of society," Rogers said.²¹¹

People with AIDS have been stigmatized and have been distanced by society because they are blamed and held personally responsible for being carriers of the "homosexual plague."²¹² For example, in an Associated Press article about three Florida brothers with AIDS who won the right to go back to school, it was mentioned that parents in the district responded to the court order by staging a boycott.²¹³

Kitzinger argued that media coverage is crucial because it can influence policy and campaign strategy and because of those living with the virus have voiced the impact

²¹⁰ The Associated Press. (1985, Aug. 30). Pupils with AIDS Belong In School, Agency Says. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²¹¹ The Associated Press. (1985, Aug. 30). Pupils with AIDS Belong In School, Agency Says. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²¹² Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 169; Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 190.

²¹³ The Associated Press. (1987, Aug. 18). Three With AIDS Virus Go to Class Peacefully. *Omaha World-Herald*.

of media reporting on the sense of self-worth, future hopes and health.²¹⁴ In the media's favor, Kitzinger said coverage has provided people with basic facts and statistics and familiarized them with AIDS-related terms and images.²¹⁵

Thirteen-year-old Ryan White became an AIDS spokesman when he was barred from his school after Kokomo, Ind., school officials found that he contracted AIDS.²¹⁶ At this time, the AIDS social movement had not fought many battles for the rights of children with AIDS to remain in school. School districts still believed that AIDS could be contracted through casual contact, and thus did not allow children to attend. Ryan White was one of the first children diagnosed with AIDS because of hemophilia.²¹⁷ The government paid a lot of attention to AIDS advocate Ryan White and numerous media outlets traveled to interview him.

Even the reporters who were willing to report on AIDS stories were concerned they would lose readers trust because they mistakenly altered facts. Reporter Fannie LeFlore said, "My challenge came from two important things. The first was in telling the truth about what research says about AIDS and the fact that no one has survived this insidious disease. The second thing – the human aspect – was as important and required that I display some compassion."²¹⁸ "I was the one who was making his life more real. I was putting it in print for everyone else to see."²¹⁹ "The experience has given me a

²¹⁴ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis*. (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998, p. 167.

²¹⁵ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis*. (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998, p. 167.

²¹⁶ The Associated Press. (1985, Aug. 1). School Bars Teen AIDS Victim. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²¹⁷ The Baltimore Sun. (1986, June 8). Ryan White Was Adamant About School. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²¹⁸ LeFlore, Fannie. (1988). AIDS: Providing the human dimension was challenging. *Quill & Scroll*, p. 6.

²¹⁹ LeFlore, Fannie. (1988). AIDS: Providing the human dimension was challenging. *Quill & Scroll*, p. 5.

chance to recognize my strengths as a journalist who believes it's important to let people tell their own stories without interjecting my own interpretation."²²⁰

Cook said AIDS stories that do not seem to affect the desired audience are avoided, euphemized or quickly dropped.²²¹ To cover AIDS adequately, Cook said, journalists must find a way to enliven and communicate statistics simply without reducing accounts either to facts or the same, boring story lines.²²² As opposed to most AIDS advocates, Cook said the human-interest approach should only be used if sensitivity to feelings are taken into account, chosen individuals are representative of the larger population and political and scientific problems are tackled.²²³

One New York Times article started with a personal story of a man who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion in 1981 and had recently died.²²⁴ The article explained the risk of contracting AIDS through blood transfusions, quoted a few doctors who were testing blood for the AIDS virus and a few people who received blood that could have been infected with AIDS. The article ended stating the average time between infection and AIDS onset was five years thus relating the kicker related the kicker back to the lead. The article related the facts by using a personal story to make the problem seem more real to audiences..

News organizations turn to social agencies or institutions for information and credibility – so much so that “news” production has become limited by “an over reliance

²²⁰ LeFlore, Fannie. (1988). AIDS: Providing the human dimension was challenging. *Quill & Scroll*, p. 5.

²²¹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 221.

²²² Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 232.

²²³ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 232.

²²⁴ Sullivan, Ronald. (1986, Nov. 3). Hunt to Begin for Recipients of AIDS Blood in the Region. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/110386sci-aids.html>.

on selected people as knowledge resources.”²²⁵ Relying on the same sources may be inevitable, but the media cannot stop searching for diversity in stories if they want to ensure an adequate understanding of AIDS.²²⁶

The Gay Men’s Health Crisis Center opened up a legal assistance program two years before The New York Times decided to profile their services on Jan. 3, 1986.²²⁷ The legal service helped gay men draft a will to insure that their possessions end up with whom they chose. The Gay Men’s Health Crisis Center had drafted more than 1,000 wills, with about 50 people asking for help with their wills each month. This accounted for 60 percent of their legal business. In 1986, there were 40 volunteer lawyers who undertook cases involving discrimination, specifically housing, medical and dental treatment, insurance payments and the workplace. Demographics were also changing clientele – now many mothers with AIDS arrange for the custody of their children after their deaths. The article states that AIDS was considered one of the three major civil-liberties crises of the 20th century. The principal person interviewed, director Mark Senak, wanted to make clear that AIDS was not transmitted through casual contact and he is not afraid of contracting AIDS from serving people with AIDS. Throughout the article, people with AIDS praised the efforts of the law service. Senak clearly said he was involved with the AIDS social movement and he called his job “the most satisfying thing I’ve ever done in my life.”²²⁸

²²⁵ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 115.

²²⁶ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 227.

²²⁷ Margolick, David. (1986, Jan. 3). Legal Help Tailored to Victims of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/010386sci-aids.html>.

²²⁸ Margolick, David. (1986, Jan. 3). Legal Help Tailored to Victims of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/010386sci-aids.html>.

Primarily concerned with gay men, portrayals of AIDS have focused on sociocultural qualities, by portraying that gay life seems to only to occur in isolated situations – in bathhouses, on Christopher Street in New York, in a San Francisco gay parade or in a prison.²²⁹ This has made gay behavior seem to have general differences, by being portrayed as experiencing a reign of terror justified by an exponentially increasing death toll and reporting rare difference.²³⁰

On Dec. 29, 1984, The New York Times published an article that discussed how AIDS affected the economy in San Francisco. The article, “Store Sales Lagging on Castro St. Merchants Cite Fear of AIDS,” stressed the lag minority business owners had found since the AIDS crisis.²³¹ Shops in the gay business district had to change their focus to stay afloat. Many business owners were interviewed, but no shoppers, either gay or straight, with or without AIDS, were interviewed about what they thought about the business changes. Economists were not interviewed to find out whether there was a slump in the San Francisco economy. This could have made the article more complete and balanced.

Richardson and Richardson said the media were not attempting to prejudice heterosexuals against gays, but hurried, short and unresearched articles leads reporters to

²²⁹ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 169.

²³⁰ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 171.

²³¹ Barmash, Isadore. (1984, Dec. 29). Store Sales Lagging on Castro St. Merchants Cite Fear of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/122984sci-aids.html>.

rely on stereotypes and atypical cases for story lines.²³² Media coverage appears to have helped the AIDS “awareness gap,” but other knowledge gaps still exist.²³³

Volunteers in cities such as New York City and San Francisco have begun services for people with AIDS.²³⁴ One volunteer flies people with AIDS home to visit their relatives before they die. Others deliver meals and help take care of pets for people with AIDS. This article helped fill the AIDS awareness gap, by letting readers know that people were actively involved in the social movement. The New York Times researched and interviewed many sources, so the article did not rely on stereotypes.

Miller and Williams blame sources knowledgeable about AIDS for attempting to use and manipulate the media to benefit their own needs and influence a wide variety of debates, agendas and audiences. The New York Times wrote a feature story in the question-and-answer format to address the issue of “Women and AIDS: Assessing the Risks.”²³⁵ The article gave a summary of information from interviews from federal, city and academic researchers. The article answered common questions about AIDS and gave useful facts and figures, intended to educate, not scare the reader, while the Omaha World-Herald published the results of a Glamour magazine survey that said that fear of sexually transmitted diseases such as genital herpes and AIDS was No. 1 concern of women that year.²³⁶

²³² Reardon, Kathleen K., & Richardson, Jean L. (1991). The important role of mass media in the diffusion of accurate information about AIDS. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 65.

²³³ Singer, Eleanor, Rogers, Theresa F. & Corcoran, Mary. (1987). The polls- a report: AIDS. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, p. 581.

²³⁴ Dullea, Georgia. (1987, Dec. 25). AIDS Crisis Galvanizes An Army of Volunteers. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/122587sci-aids.html>.

²³⁵ Eckholm, Erik. (1985, Oct. 28). Women and AIDS: Assessing the Risks. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/102885sci-aids.html>.

²³⁶ United Press International. (1985, Dec. 23). Sexual Diseases No. 1 Concern of U.S. Women. *Omaha World-Herald*.

As journalists have become aware that objectivity may be unattainable, recently journalists have begun to stress balanced, multiple source accounts.²³⁷ Cook said that “distinguished journalism” has emerged based on the struggle of individuals living with AIDS, particularly as their stories cast light on larger problems – the availability of treatments, discrimination and support from lovers, families and friends.²³⁸

The New York Times published a feature article on April 19, 1987, that interviewed Dr. Henry Frey, who had treated more than 200 people with AIDS.²³⁹ The article gave some background on AIDS and gave a snapshot of the Dr. Frey’s day. The article commented, “Dr. Frey never wears a mask and gown when visiting his AIDS patients, a practice that has now been adopted by other doctors.”²⁴⁰ This article reinforced the fact that AIDS could not be contracted through casual contact, through multiple sources.

It is the media’s job to convey the truth as accurately and unbiased as possible – the media’s job is not to scare people, not to stir controversy, but to relate information.²⁴¹ Until the 1980s, the trend in the traditional mass media was to separate local, regional or national content.²⁴² But how can they categorize AIDS news? Much of the infected American population live on the east and west coasts; about 1,000 Nebraskans are living with AIDS. Media coverage often reveals a selectivity of perspective when reporting on

²³⁷ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 228.

²³⁸ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 229.

²³⁹ Melvin, Tessa. (1987, April 19). A Doctor’s Perspective on Growing AIDS Caseload [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/041987sci-aids-2.html>.

²⁴⁰ Melvin, Tessa. (1987, April 19). A Doctor’s Perspective on Growing AIDS Caseload [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/041987sci-aids-2.html>.

²⁴¹ Schwartz, Joel, & Murray, David. (1996). AIDS and the media. *Public Interest*, 125, p. 67.

²⁴² Stricklin, Michael. (1995). *Chaos: Knowledge and the Death of a Cliché*. Unpublished paper.

AIDS – rarely are people with AIDS interviewed. For much of the population, who have no direct contact with people with AIDS, awareness is presented by the media.²⁴³

A speaker at the Creighton University conference, Rita Fahrner, an AIDS clinical nurse specialist at San Francisco General Hospital, talked about what it was like to work with people with AIDS.²⁴⁴ “These patients are our age. They often are professionals. They have been living full, exciting lives,” Fahrner said. “We recognize ourselves in them – and our own mortality.”²⁴⁵ Fahrner said the job was “very rewarding,” and felt that she was not at risk of contracting AIDS.²⁴⁶ “We are talking about following normal hygienic practices in caring for AIDS patients, nothing exotic,” Fahrner said.²⁴⁷ The Omaha World-Herald demonstrated in this article in that people were talking about AIDS in Omaha. AIDS wasn’t considered a problem in Nebraska because by 1985 there were only four cases reported in Nebraska, most of them in the Omaha area.

The bulk of AIDS media coverage is more reactive than reflective, much like the coverage of any major breaking story.²⁴⁸ Even in breaking news stories on AIDS, the human-interest angle is never far away. In the process, reporters tend to present a distorted picture of the epidemic and the political responses. Often “sick, lost or abandoned” children have been prime subjects of AIDS coverage, reinforcing the notion that “innocent victims” are more worthy of attention from the media than gay men and drug users.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Albert, E. (1986). Illness and deviance: The response of the press to AIDS. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 163-178). New York: Praeger, p. 163.

²⁴⁴ McGrath, Mary. (1987, Dec. 13). AIDS Hard on Health Professionals, Too. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²⁴⁵ McGrath, Mary. (1987, Dec. 13). AIDS Hard on Health Professionals, Too. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²⁴⁶ McGrath, Mary. (1987, Dec. 13). AIDS Hard on Health Professionals, Too. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²⁴⁷ McGrath, Mary. (1987, Dec. 13). AIDS Hard on Health Professionals, Too. *Omaha World-Herald*.

²⁴⁸ Kramer, Staci D. (1988). The media and AIDS. *Editor & Publisher*, p. 10.

²⁴⁹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 231.

But nevertheless, gays and intravenous drug users stories still made it into the newspapers. One such article about the effects of AIDS on heterosexuals explored confidentiality issues concerning informing partners of their AIDS status. Meryn Silverman, president of the American Foundation for AIDS research, said the benefits of contact tracing outweighed the risks. "You have an opportunity to control the disease's spread where individuals have no inkling that they're infected. We have people out there who are walking time bombs. We've got to do something about it."²⁵⁰

Yet there are downsides to the human-interest preoccupation. First, by focusing on individuals, the story may not provide a representative sample of persons living with AIDS or the population at risk. A story can be more vivid without being typical, and the conclusions drawn from one isolated case cannot be considered as anything more than suggestive.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ The Associated Press. (1987, March 8). AIDS News Stuns Heterosexuals. *Omaha World-Herald*; Sullivan, Ronald. (1987, Oct. 15). Warn AIDS Patients' Partners, Health Official Urges. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/101587sci-aids.html>.

²⁵¹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 230.

The Ignored Disease: The political era

The government's initial lack of attention to HIV/AIDS problems had an impact on how the media chose to cover it: "Without the government taking AIDS seriously, and without individual journalists being seized by the seriousness of the epidemic, the disease became a kind of curio."²⁵²

In the 1980s, President Reagan helped delay the rise of the AIDS epidemic on the media agenda simply by ignoring it. Federal expenditures for AIDS-related research, prevention and treatment posed a threat to President Reagan's attempts to cut the domestic budget.²⁵³ The White House saw AIDS as a budget threat, and so chose to ignore it as long as possible.²⁵⁴

The fifth and final era, the "political era," started in late August 1985 and continues today. The government announced in the August 1985 that they would screen all military recruits for AIDS. This is the first indication that the government was taking AIDS seriously and redirecting funding toward intervention.

Several issues plagued government reporting about AIDS. The government waited to announce intervention messages until August 1985. Shortly after the legal and civil rights issues of people with AIDS came into question in the court system. Then, the government had to respond to the problem of AIDS to its citizens, since it had put it off

²⁵² Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 112; Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 3

²⁵³ Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). *Real world indicators and the media agenda. Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 33.

²⁵⁴ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 41.

for about five years. Meanwhile, government officials were constantly worried about their political careers and campaign strategies.

The government addressed the AIDS epidemic in late August 1985 by announcing that it would screen all military recruits for the virus.²⁵⁵ The New York Times wrote that the AIDS social movement condemned this government step because gay groups believed this “could set a precedent for AIDS screening in the private sector.”²⁵⁶

The AIDS social movement continued to gain political opportunities in October 1985.²⁵⁷ On Oct. 1, 1985, the United States Public Health Service announced a “long-range plan to control the spread of AIDS and announced that no vaccine or cure was likely for at least five more years and that the disease would therefore continue to spread until the turn of the century.”²⁵⁸ According to The New York Times, this “is the first time the Federal Government has set target dates for countering the epidemic.”²⁵⁹ But one doctor said that the goal of stopping AIDS transmission by the year 2000 may have been too pessimistic. Dr. James O. Mason, Acting Assistant Secretary for Health, said “I’d like to get ahead of the year 2000 target. That’s too long to wait. But scientists want to be

²⁵⁵ Keller, Bill. (1985, Aug. 31). Pentagon to Test All New Recruits for Possible Signs of AIDS Virus. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/083185sci-aids.html>.

²⁵⁶ Keller, Bill. (1985, Aug. 31). Pentagon to Test All New Recruits for Possible Signs of AIDS Virus. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/083185sci-aids.html>.

²⁵⁷ Boffey, Philip M. (1985, Oct. 1). U.S. Offers Goal to End Spread of Deadly AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100185sci-aids.html>.

²⁵⁸ Boffey, Philip M. (1985, Oct. 1). U.S. Offers Goal to End Spread of Deadly AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100185sci-aids.html>.

²⁵⁹ Boffey, Philip M. (1985, Oct. 1). U.S. Offers Goal to End Spread of Deadly AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100185sci-aids.html>.

cautious in their statement.”²⁶⁰ It is now three years past the target, but no cure has been found yet.

The AIDS social movement’s advocates were often cautious about public outbursts because it served a group of people that in fear of losing their jobs and other benefits, desperately needed anonymity. But researchers needed facts, such as names to make their research credible, so newspapers and journals would print it. The movement needed people who “had nothing to lose” in order to fight for the rights of people with AIDS. Without constant credibility and leadership, the movement could not survive.

Federal Justice Department lawyers tentatively concluded that people with AIDS are “handicapped individuals” entitled to protection under the federal civil rights law.²⁶¹ According to a New York Times article, the law said that people with AIDS met the statutory definition because they have a physical impairment that substantially limits one or more “major life activities.”²⁶² The opinion also suggested that people with AIDS antibodies, but no symptoms of the disease, also may be protected by the law. The lawyer’s opinion said “because of public hysteria connected with the disease, persons with AIDS frequently become societal pariahs, irrationally ostracized by their communities because of medically baseless fears of contagion and people’s historical fear of both disease and the sick. This treatment of persons with AIDS, grounded in irrational public prejudices, is precisely one of the kinds of behaviors that led to the enactment of

²⁶⁰ Boffey, Philip M. (1985, Oct. 1). U.S. Offers Goal to End Spread of Deadly AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100185sci-aids.html>.

²⁶¹ Pear, Robert. (1986, June 8). AIDS Victims Gain in Fight on Rights. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/060886sci-aids.html>.

²⁶² Pear, Robert. (1986, June 8). AIDS Victims Gain in Fight on Rights. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/060886sci-aids.html>.

the Rehabilitation Act.”²⁶³ The AIDS social movement had defended the rights of gay men and successfully gained a declaration that the 1973 law covers people with AIDS.

Leaders of the AIDS social movement charged that time was lost from the first recognition of a new and deadly disease in June 1981 until April 1, 1987, when President Ronald Reagan delivered his first speech on the epidemic and thus legitimated its place as a permanent item on the U.S. political agenda.²⁶⁴ Only when President Reagan gave his first speech on the epidemic on April 1, 1987, and when Vice President George Bush, presented policy recommendations to the International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C., did AIDS become a permanently recurring part of the political agenda.²⁶⁵

The National Academy of Sciences charged on Oct. 29, 1986, that the Federal Government’s response to the AIDS epidemic “had been dangerously inadequate” and called for a “\$2 billion-a-year educational and research effort to avert a medical catastrophe.”²⁶⁶ Dr. David Baltimore of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said that AIDS was a “national health crisis of a magnitude that requires Presidential leadership to bring together all elements of society to deal with the problem.”²⁶⁷ The National Academy of Sciences expressed “major concern” over “lack of cohesiveness” in planning the attack on AIDS and complained that federal programs to educate the public

²⁶³ Pear, Robert. (1986, June 8). AIDS Victims Gain in Fight on Rights. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/060886sci-aids.html>

²⁶⁴ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

²⁶⁵ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 223.

²⁶⁶ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Oct. 30). Federal Efforts on AIDS Criticized as Gravely Weak. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/103086sci-aids-2.html>

²⁶⁷ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Oct. 30). Federal Efforts on AIDS Criticized as Gravely Weak. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/103086sci-aids-2.html>

about how to avoid AIDS had been “woefully inadequate.”²⁶⁸ The National Academy of Sciences proposed the United States government should spend \$2 billion a year to fight AIDS.

Politicians, too, are highly attentive to news coverage which often diverges from the specific choices or emphases they would prefer. Policymakers are more likely to respond to issues as their prominence in the media increases, even those that provoke considerable conflict, but largely in the context of the initial frame that the media have provided. The media’s construction of AIDS thus has influenced not merely how we as individuals will react, but also how we as a polity will respond.²⁶⁹ But in the case of publishing the lives of public figures, the U.S. Supreme Court suggests that the press can decide its own rules as it goes along: The selection of material for publication and the treatment of “public officials – whether fair or unfair – constitute the exercise of editorial control and judgment.”²⁷⁰

On July 24, 1987, President Ronald Reagan named the 12 members of a national commission on AIDS.²⁷¹ The commission had been directed to recommend measures that federal, state and local official could take to stop the spread of AIDS, assist in finding a cure and offer better care for those people with AIDS.

Hallett and Cannella found from research that the mainstream news media paid little attention to AIDS until fears of transmission to heterosexuals were reaffirmed by

²⁶⁸ Boffey, Philip M. (1986, Oct. 30). Federal Efforts on AIDS Criticized as Gravely Weak. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/103086sci-aids-2.html>.

²⁶⁹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 218.

²⁷⁰ Ruby, Michael. (1992, April 20). The private life of Arthur Ashe. *U.S. News & World Report*, p. 84.

²⁷¹ Boffey, Philip M. (1987, July 24). Reagan Names 12 to Panel on AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/072487sci-aids.html>.

medical testimony.²⁷² Until mid-1987, reporters did not ask any questions about AIDS at White House press conferences.²⁷³ Documenting the mainstream news media's homophobic bias in conjunction with its AIDS news coverage has been the dominant force of AIDS-media news coverage and AIDS-media research to this point.²⁷⁴ The complaints and counter-complaints of people with AIDS, their advocates, doctors, researchers and public officials reported by the media may have affected the timing of actions taken to remedy the lack of reporting problem.²⁷⁵ Unless the American media's traditional audience – the middle-class individuals – is perceived to be at risk, a disease like AIDS is not valued as a story with high news value.²⁷⁶

A Gallup poll conducted in the United States from Oct. 23-26, 1987, based on interviews by 1,569 adults in 300 cities, found that 40 percent of Americans polled feared they would contract AIDS.²⁷⁷ More than half of all Americans said they were taking precautions against contracting AIDS. This article related accurate information from the poll, but could have done a better job exploring why 40 percent of Americans polled feared they would contract AIDS.

²⁷² Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 112.

²⁷³ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 14.

²⁷⁴ Hallett, Michael A., & Cannella, David. (1994). Gatekeeping through media format: Strategies of voice for the HIV-positive via human interest news formats and organizations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(4), p. 112.

²⁷⁵ Baker, Andrea J. (1986). The portrayal of AIDS in the media: An analysis of articles in the New York Times. In D.A. Feldman & T.M. Johnson (Eds.), *The Social Dimensions of AIDS* (pp. 179-194). New York: Praeger, p. 181.

²⁷⁶ Rogers, Everett M., Dearing, James W., & Chang, Soonbum. (1991). AIDS in the 1980s: The agenda-setting process for a public issue. *Journalism Monographs*, 126, p. 13.

²⁷⁷ Stout, Hilary. (1987, Nov. 29). 40% of Americans Fear They Will Contract AIDS, a Poll Indicates. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/112987sci-aids-2.html>.

The New York Times reported on Nov. 29, 1987, that in January 1987, the State Department instituted a mandatory testing policy for the AIDS virus for all employees, making it the only such program in the civilian government.²⁷⁸ The policy was intended to avoid sending infected employees with AIDS to areas where medical treatment may be adequate or overseas, where treatment is expensive. The American Federation of Government Employees filed suit against the State Department in federal court and called the policy “irrational, arbitrary and capricious” and a violation of the constitutional rights of privacy. A Federal District Court Judge ruled in favor of the State Department in July 1987.

Lupton found that the focus of AIDS articles turned in early 1987 from an almost exclusive emphasis upon gay men and AIDS to a panic-stricken coverage of the threat posed by AIDS to sexually active heterosexuals.²⁷⁹ Lupton considers this period of AIDS reporting marked a turning point in the way the press reported AIDS with coverage closely supporting the agenda of the U.S. government in warning sexually active heterosexuals that AIDS could happen to them.²⁸⁰ I argue that the focus turned much earlier, closer to July 1985.

The New York Times wrote a feature story in late August that addressed the fear some women had about contracting AIDS.²⁸¹ In New York, ignorance fueled much of the fear: some people said that they were afraid to go to restaurants that employed gay men;

²⁷⁸ Sciolino, Elaine. (1987, Nov. 29). Fear of AIDS Prompts State Department to Act. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/112987sci-aids.html>.

²⁷⁹ Lupton, D. (1991). AIDS and the popular media: A new perspective at Florence. *AIDS Care*, 3(4), p. 448.

²⁸⁰ Lupton, D. (1991). AIDS and the popular media: A new perspective at Florence. *AIDS Care*, 3(4), p. 448.

²⁸¹ Rimer, Sara. (1985, Aug. 30). Fear of AIDS Grows Among Heterosexuals. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/083085sci-aids.html>.

trained medical professionals, such as ambulances corporations and nursing homes refused to take care of people with AIDS and funeral homes demand more money to handle bodies of people who died from AIDS complications. This article tries to dispel some of the myths associated with AIDS by repeating a message from a pamphlet handed out to 400,000 New York City employees that said, "AIDS is not highly contagious and it is not spread through everyday casual or nonsexual household contact. The virus is not spread through the air, in food or by casual contact at home, at work in school. Associating with people with AIDS, or with members of high-risk groups, does not pose any risk of contracting the disease."²⁸² The article finished by explaining reasons why the AIDS social movement was not always successful. Victor Botnick, then special assistant to the New York City mayor, said, "How can we expect lay people to accept what government officials are saying if you have doctors making statements which have no basis in fact?"²⁸³ Factual information was often misconstrued in articles, whether it be incorrect quotes by the newspaper, or interviewing people who were not familiar with the most current AIDS research.

Media coverage is crucial, especially in the AIDS movement, because it can influence policy and campaign strategy.²⁸⁴ The New York Times said that federal officials seemed embarrassed to approach the epidemic saying that the problem was a local issue, not a federal issue.²⁸⁵ Meanwhile, local authorities claimed they could do

²⁸² Rimer, Sara. (1985, Aug. 30). Fear of AIDS Grows Among Heterosexuals. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/083085sci-aids.html>.

²⁸³ Rimer, Sara. (1985, Aug. 30). Fear of AIDS Grows Among Heterosexuals. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/083085sci-aids.html>.

²⁸⁴ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis*. (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998. p. 167.

²⁸⁵ Cahill, Kevin M. (1983, April 22). Conquering AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042283sci-aids.html>.

little without national support and politicians were wary about discussing the AIDS epidemic.²⁸⁶ Almost without exception, public officials evaded the AIDS issue and tended to avoid even the usual expressions of compassion and concern.²⁸⁷ The many of the victims' homosexuality made involvement risky for politicians' careers, so they directed their energy elsewhere, while young men continued to die from AIDS.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Cahill, Kevin M. (1983, April 22). Conquering AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042283sci-aids.html>.

²⁸⁷ Cahill, Kevin M. (1983, April 22). Conquering AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042283sci-aids.html>.

²⁸⁸ Cahill, Kevin M. (1983, April 22). Conquering AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/042283sci-aids.html>.

Conclusion

The New York Times wrote an editorial on Dec. 30, 1987, that summarized the AIDS epidemic up to then.²⁸⁹ “AIDS: The End of the Beginning” criticized the federal government “half-hearted” attempts to educate people about AIDS.²⁹⁰ The New York Times summarized the first seven years of AIDS: “If the AIDS epidemic has been contained so far, that’s because of the nature of the virus, not because of conscientious leadership in Washington.”²⁹¹

What seems to be important to those interested in AIDS is when the government began to respond to AIDS, which seemed to occur after Rock Hudson’s death in October 1985. During the “discovery era,” from June 1981 to December 1982, no one knew much about AIDS. During the “scientific era,” from January 1983 to July 1985, most of the reporting was scientific, or medical, in nature. Reporters failed to interview government officials in their articles. Stories of the scientific nature never left the AIDS media agenda; other topics became more prevalent after Rock Hudson’s announcement in July 1985.

Rock Hudson’s announcement spurred a change in the attitude about AIDS. The “wonder era,” which lasted four months, focuses on Rock Hudson’s announcement that he had contracted AIDS. Celebrities started to mobilize to fight AIDS and President Ronald Reagan, Hudson’s longtime friend, took notice. Hudson’s announcement, I argue, spurred a fourth era, the “human-interest era,” and a fifth era, the “political era.” AIDS

²⁸⁹ Editorial: AIDS: The End of the Beginning. (Dec. 30, 1987). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/123087sci-aids.html>.

²⁹⁰ Editorial: AIDS: The End of the Beginning. (Dec. 30, 1987). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/123087sci-aids.html>.

²⁹¹ Editorial: AIDS: The End of the Beginning. (Dec. 30, 1987). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/123087sci-aids.html>.

stories were personalized; prior to this people with and affected by AIDS were rarely interviewed by the media. This is the first indication that the government was taking AIDS seriously and redirecting funding toward intervention.

The way the world reported on AIDS has changed significantly. News coverage continues to differ depending on changing editors and media agendas. San Francisco's newspapers were some of the first to cover AIDS, not only the facts and statistics, but also personal stories from AIDS patients. There were four major reasons San Francisco media put AIDS on their agenda. The first reason was that San Francisco had the highest rate of HIV infection of any North American city. The second reason was the strong commitment to the issue by several local journalists. The third reason was the network of gays and medical professionals who organized for self-help, such as by forming non-profit organizations for HIV/AIDS prevention. The fourth reason was the political importance and economic affluence of gays in San Francisco.

In San Francisco, the mayor and the city council provided major funding and support for AIDS prevention, research, testing and treatment.²⁹² The political controversy between conservative gays, who interpreted AIDS as a threat to their personal rights, and liberal gays, who interpreted AIDS as a public health crisis, added political conflict to a medical mystery – angles that the city's journalists found irresistible.²⁹³ As a result, San

²⁹² Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). Real world indicators and the media agenda. In J.W. Dearing & E.M. Rogers (Eds.), *Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting* (p. 28-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, page 31.

²⁹³ Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). Real world indicators and the media agenda. In J.W. Dearing & E.M. Rogers (Eds.), *Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting* (p. 28-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, page 31.

Francisco was the first city in the world where the problem of HIV transmission and AIDS got on the media agenda and became a public issue.²⁹⁴

In 1981, AIDS was a new topic. Due to a lack of media coverage by local outlets, in 1986, HIV/AIDS was still a new topic. Breecher noted that throughout the late 1980s, leading newspapers and newsweeklies continued to treat heterosexual AIDS as if it were serious news.²⁹⁵

The AIDS epidemic offered the media the opportunity to raise public awareness without creating public panic.²⁹⁶ This could have been a benefit of the news coverage, but instead the media chose to gradually raise the awareness of the American people as to what AIDS is and how it can and cannot be transmitted.²⁹⁷

“If there were a great risk of spread to the general public, it would have happened by now,” Dr. David J. Sencer, the New York City Health Commissioner said.²⁹⁸ On May 19, 1983, The New York Times reported that a “Sanitation Man From the Bronx Contracts AIDS.” Sencer cited three methods of contracting AIDS – through sexual or intimate contact, the use of contaminated syringes or blood transmission. There is also a fourth method of transmission – which he did not mention – breast milk. This article indicated that there was a new trend; medical doctors were realizing that one of the best

²⁹⁴ Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M. (1992). Real world indicators and the media agenda. In J.W. Dearing & E.M. Rogers (Eds.), *Communication concepts 6: Agenda-setting* (p. 28-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, page 31.

²⁹⁵ Brecher, Edward M. (1988). Straight sex, AIDS, and the mixed-up press. *Columbia Journalism Review*, p. 50.

²⁹⁶ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 221.

²⁹⁷ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 224.

²⁹⁸ Sullivan, Ronald. (1983, May 19). Sanitation Man From the Bronx Contracts AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/libravy/national/science/aids/051983sci-aids-2.html>

ways of educating the public was to publish accurate information about AIDS in newspapers.

“Science and journalism are both driven by the same force: the desire to uncover the hidden secrets, to get to the bottom of things.”²⁹⁹ A lot has been written about AIDS. But coverage seems to have had a vicious cycle. Without funding, no new research could really be done, so newspapers had no new findings to report. Hudson’s announcement changed AIDS funding.

The challenge of AIDS coverage for newspapers was to provide a representative understanding of the disease and its possible implications of medicine, science, education, politics and society to audiences.³⁰⁰ AIDS stories revealed the mass audience presumptions that make reporting about any minority difficult.³⁰¹ Journalists, who have less constant contact with their mass audiences than with their colleagues and sources, reinforce each other’s ideas about what is and isn’t news.³⁰² The presumption ignores the uses that the public could obtain from reporting from a variety of perspectives, from facts to human-interest stories.³⁰³ The major media outlets, such as The New York Times and the San Francisco Examiner, while slow to cover early reports of the disease, soon reported AIDS stories almost daily.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 121.

³⁰⁰ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 224.

³⁰¹ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 225.

³⁰² Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 225.

³⁰³ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 225.

³⁰⁴ Drushel, Bruce E. (1991). Sensationalism or sensitivity: Use of words in stories on acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) by Associated Press Videotext. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 50.

Reporting in print media increased by 270 percent between Hudson's diagnosis and the end of 1985.³⁰⁵ Not only that, articles gave more information besides statistics on how many people had AIDS. As the years progressed, more feature stories and columns were written about and by people who supported the AIDS movement. Drushel said it has been the quality, not the quantity, of AIDS press coverage that has been most on the minds of media critics.³⁰⁶

Fumento said that since 1986, the U.S. government has been misleading the public and leaving it uneducated about the extent of the AIDS disease.³⁰⁷ Media interest relating to the AIDS epidemic, whether from politicians, gay activists or health educators, is intact based on the belief that media has some influence with the public.³⁰⁸ Fumento said that the media's AIDS coverage has been successful – AIDS continues to receive about 20 times as many federal research and education dollars per death as cancer receives.³⁰⁹

As education increased, attitudes continued to change.³¹⁰ According to a 1985 polls, one-third of American adults said they were more tolerant toward gay men than in

³⁰⁵ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 144.

³⁰⁶ Drushel, Bruce E. (1991). Sensationalism or sensitivity: Use of words in stories on acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) by Associated Press Videotext. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), p. 50.

³⁰⁷ Fumento, Michael. (1993). Media, AIDS, and truth. *National Review*, 45(12), p. 45.

³⁰⁸ Kitzinger, Jenny. (1998). Media impact on public beliefs about AIDS. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The circuit of mass communication: Media strategies, representation and audience reception in the AIDS crisis*. (pp. 167-191). London: Sage, 1998. p. 167.

³⁰⁹ Fumento, Michael. (1993). Media, AIDS, and truth. *National Review*, 45(12), p. 47.

³¹⁰ 37% in Poll Say AIDS Altered Their Attitude to Homosexuals. (1985, Dec. 15). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/121585sci-aids.html>.

the past.”³¹¹ But six in 10 adults said the outbreak of AIDS had made no difference in their feelings about gay men.

Psychologist Stephen Jay Gould wrote an opinion article on “The Terrifying Normalcy of AIDS.”³¹² The article compared the AIDS virus to Walt Disney World. Gould summarized much of the ignored disease in a couple of sentences: “What a tragedy that our moral stupidity caused us to lose precious time, the greatest enemy in fighting an exponential spread, by downplaying the danger because we thought that AIDS was a disease of three irregular groups: minorities of lifestyle (needle users), of sexual preference (homosexuals) and of color (Haitians). If AIDS had first been imported from Africa into a Park Avenue apartment, we would not have dithered as the exponential march began.”³¹³ Gould stated that AIDS is not natural and that it is fueled by a mechanism – sex, drugs and blood. Gould stressed that the mechanism could be stopped – that AIDS could be stopped. Gould used strong, clear language to convey his point.

“A gay editor proposed a series on the social impact of AIDS – Rosenthal was not interested, so the story died.”³¹⁴ But, “not until Abe Rosenthal retired in November 1986, and was replaced by editorial page editor Max Frankel, did The New York Times begin to take a coordinated approach to covering the epidemic.”³¹⁵ The AIDS beat was established in 1987 after intense lobbying by AIDS activists and the departure of

³¹¹ 37% in Poll Say AIDS Altered Their Attitude to Homosexuals. (1985, Dec. 15). [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/121585sci-aids.html>.

³¹² Gould, Stephan Jay. (1987, April 19). The Terrifying Normalcy of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/041987sci-aids.html>.

³¹³ Gould, Stephan Jay. (1987, April 19). The Terrifying Normalcy of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/041987sci-aids.html>.

³¹⁴ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 79.

³¹⁵ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 81.

executive editor Abe Rosenthal.³¹⁶ The New York Times executive editor Abe Rosenthal declared in 1988, “AIDS is the story of the decade.”³¹⁷ Frankel wrote what is commonly referred to as the “AIDS memo” – “calling for increased reporting and recognition that the disease was one of the most important stories of the decade.”³¹⁸

The AIDS beat at The New York Times ended in October 1999. The beat allowed a reporter to cover the AIDS full-time. Bruce Lambert, the first to land the position, averaged a story a week for three years and called it “the most challenging thing I ever did or will do.”³¹⁹

John Landman, appointed The New York Times Metro editor in September 1999, said that the change was made because “as a general proposition, there are not beats devoted to diseases.”³²⁰ He said that, for a period of years, “AIDS was a rare exception. It was a terrifying, new disease with enormous impact on the cultural world, the gay community, health, hospitals.” Covering AIDS “was a full-time job.”³²¹

While panic about AIDS swept through the gay community in 1981 and 1982, The New York Times published five stories on the mysterious illness, setting the pace for media coverage across the nation. A review of The New York Times’ annual indexes shows that from 1983 to 1985 – when Rock Hudson’s death finally made AIDS a mainstream story – there were no more than 130 articles about AIDS. Coverage didn’t

³¹⁶ POZ. (2000, February). *The Times, they are a changin’*. Found on the World Wide Web on March 11, 2003 at <http://www.poz.com/archive/february2000/planet/media.html#times>.

³¹⁷ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 86.

³¹⁸ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 81.

³¹⁹ POZ. (2000, February). *The Times, they are a changin’*. Found on the World Wide Web on March 11, 2003 at <http://www.poz.com/archive/february2000/planet/media.html#times>.

³²⁰ POZ. (2000, February). *The Times, they are a changin’*. Found on the World Wide Web on March 11, 2003 at <http://www.poz.com/archive/february2000/planet/media.html#times>.

³²¹ POZ. (2000, February). *The Times, they are a changin’*. Found on the World Wide Web on March 11, 2003 at <http://www.poz.com/archive/february2000/planet/media.html#times>.

peak until 1987 with Frankel's promotion to executive editor.³²² Shortly thereafter, an editorial committee created a formal AIDS beat, and since 1993 coverage has held steady at about 325 articles per year.

"At first AIDS was a gay story," said a senior Times editor, "And then it became a scientific story. And finally, it was a story about government."³²³ This is true, but between the time it was a scientific story and a story about the government, newspapers covered AIDS stories about heterosexuals, children and the school system. When AIDS became a story about the U.S. government, the plight of people with AIDS internationally became an issue, besides the viewpoints of church leaders in the United States.

But to say it was a story about government seems too simple. It can be argued that the government started addressing AIDS after Rock Hudson announced that he had AIDS. But prior to that the government started learning about AIDS and addressing AIDS in the prison system. After that, the government received fundraising help from Hollywood celebrities. Soon after this, the Reagan administration took a stance on AIDS policies, largely because of Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's mission to curb the spread of AIDS myths. Shortly thereafter, the courts started addressing AIDS discrimination cases and the legislators began setting AIDS policies. Throughout this time, state governments began addressing the issue of allocating resources for people with AIDS.

³²² POZ. (2000, February). *The Times, they are a changin'*. Found on the World Wide Web on March 11, 2003 at <http://www.poz.com/archive/february2000/planet/media.html#times>.

³²³ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 85.

Journalists face moral ambiguity in every aspect of gathering AIDS news in the early 1980s. The presence of moral ambiguity denotes ethical uncertainty.³²⁴ Understanding decision-making in the face of moral ambiguity is crucial to understanding the state of ethics in journalism.³²⁵ As mentioned previously, neither reporters nor editors felt a connection to AIDS and perhaps they didn't think it was an issue readers were concerned with either. From the analysis of The New York Times and the Omaha World-Herald, it seemed the news about AIDS began appearing in newspaper as more people began contracting AIDS. More stories about AIDS started appearing in the Omaha World-Herald as more Nebraskan began contracting AIDS and as the government began talking about AIDS.

Testa, Kinder and Ironside found that there was a heterosexual bias and "gay and lesbian couples were perceived as being less satisfied with their relationships than heterosexual couples and that gay and lesbian couples were perceived as less in love than heterosexual couples."³²⁶ Although attitudes about gay men and women changed during the 1980s, a 1982 Gallup poll found that 39 percent of U.S. citizens surveyed felt that homosexual relations between consenting adults should not be legal and 51 percent of U.S. citizens surveyed did not feel that homosexuality should be considered an alternative lifestyle.³²⁷ Perhaps some of these views were shared by newspaper reporters and editors.

Throughout the 1980s, coverage had constant themes, specifically there was a lack of coverage, reporters focused their interviews with the CDC, there was a lack of a

³²⁴ Williams, Russell B. (1997). AIDS testing, Potter and TV news decisions. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 12(3), p. 148.

³²⁵ Williams, Russell B. (1997). AIDS testing, Potter and TV news decisions. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 12(3), p. 148.

³²⁶ Testa, Ronald J., Bill N. Kinder and Gail Ironside. (1987). Heterosexual bias in the perception of loving relationships of gay males and lesbians. *Journal of Sex Research*, 23(2), p. 163.

³²⁷ Testa, Ronald J., Bill N. Kinder and Gail Ironside. (1987). Heterosexual bias in the perception of loving relationships of gay males and lesbians. *Journal of Sex Research*, 23(2), p. 164.

personal connection with the subject and societal issues and biases were evident in reporter's judgment. But several things changed after Rock Hudson announced that he had AIDS: reporters had celebrities to interview, diversity of stories was more evident and objectivity was more often found in stories about AIDS. The government had to address the AIDS issue and the legal and civil rights of people with AIDS in the United States.

The bottom line is, although AIDS coverage is much more thorough than in the early 1980s, there are new diseases that demand media coverage. And these diseases will need media coverage; despite whatever biases members of the media and government have against those stricken with the disease. While scientific, human-interest and political components are evident in current AIDS coverage, they were not in the early 1980s. As Kinsella said,³²⁸ perhaps the most important lesson AIDS has taught us is that everyone, including members of the media and government, are more connected to the events they cover than they want to admit.

³²⁸ Kinsella, James. (1989). *Covering the plague: AIDS and the American media*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, p. 258.

Pneumocystis Pneumonia — Los Angeles

In the period October 1980-May 1981, 5 young men, all active homosexuals, were treated for biopsy-confirmed *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia at 3 different hospitals in Los Angeles, California. Two of the patients died. All 5 patients had laboratory-confirmed previous or current cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection and candidal mucosal infection. Case reports of these patients follow.

Patient 1: A previously healthy 33-year-old man developed *P. carinii* pneumonia and oral mucosal candidiasis in March 1981 after a 2-month history of fever associated with elevated liver enzymes, leukopenia, and CMV viruria. The serum complement-fixation CMV titer in October 1980 was 256; in May 1981 it was 32.* The patient's condition deteriorated despite courses of treatment with trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP/SMX), pentamidine, and acyclovir. He died May 3, and postmortem examination showed residual *P. carinii* and CMV pneumonia, but no evidence of neoplasia.

Patient 2: A previously healthy 30-year-old man developed *P. carinii* pneumonia in April 1981 after a 5-month history of fever each day and of elevated liver-function tests, CMV viruria, and documented seroconversion to CMV, i.e., an acute-phase titer of 16 and a convalescent-phase titer of 28* in anticomplement immunofluorescence tests. Other features of his illness included leukopenia and mucosal candidiasis. His pneumonia responded to a course of intravenous TMP/SMX, but, as of the latest reports, he continues to have a fever each day.

Patient 3: A 30-year-old man was well until January 1981 when he developed esophageal and oral candidiasis that responded to Amphotericin B treatment. He was hospitalized in February 1981 for *P. carinii* pneumonia that responded to oral TMP/SMX. His esophageal candidiasis recurred after the pneumonia was diagnosed, and he was again given Amphotericin B. The CMV complement-fixation titer in March 1981 was 8. Material from an esophageal biopsy was positive for CMV.

Patient 4: A 29-year-old man developed *P. carinii* pneumonia in February 1981. He had had Hodgkins disease 3 years earlier, but had been successfully treated with radiation therapy alone. He did not improve after being given intravenous TMP/SMX and corticosteroids and died in March. Postmortem examination showed no evidence of Hodgkins disease, but *P. carinii* and CMV were found in lung tissue.

Patient 5: A previously healthy 36-year-old man with a clinically diagnosed CMV infection in September 1980 was seen in April 1981 because of a 4-month history of fever, dyspnea, and cough. On admission he was found to have *P. carinii* pneumonia, oral candidiasis, and CMV retinitis. A complement-fixation CMV titer in April 1981 was 128. The patient has been treated with 2 short courses of TMP/SMX that have been limited because of a sulfa-induced neutropenia. He is being treated for candidiasis with topical nystatin.

The diagnosis of *Pneumocystis* pneumonia was confirmed for all 5 patients antemortem by closed or open lung biopsy. The patients did not know each other and had no known common contacts or knowledge of sexual partners who had had similar illnesses. The 5 did not have comparable histories of sexually transmitted disease. Four had serologic evidence of past hepatitis B infection but had no evidence of current hepatitis B surface antigen. Two of the 5 reported having frequent homosexual contacts with various partners. All 5 reported using inhalant drugs, and 1 reported parenteral drug abuse. Three patients had profoundly depressed numbers of thymus-dependent lymphocyte cells and profoundly depressed *in vitro* proliferative responses to mitogens and antigens. Lymphocyte studies were not performed on the other 2 patients.

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Editorial Note: *Pneumocystis* pneumonia in the United States is almost exclusively limited to severely immunosuppressed patients (1). The occurrence of pneumocystosis in these 5 previously healthy individuals without a clinically apparent underlying immunodeficiency is unusual. The fact that these patients were all homosexuals suggests an association between some aspect of a homosexual lifestyle or disease acquired through sexual contact and *Pneumocystis* pneumonia in this population. All 5 patients described in this report had laboratory-confirmed CMV disease or virus shedding within 5 months

*Paired specimens not run in parallel.

of the diagnosis of *Pneumocystis* pneumonia. CMV infection has been shown to induce transient abnormalities of *in vitro* cellular-immune function in otherwise healthy human hosts (2,3). Although all 3 patients tested had abnormal cellular-immune function, no definitive conclusion regarding the role of CMV infection in these 5 cases can be reached because of the lack of published data on cellular-immune function in healthy homosexual males with and without CMV antibody. In 1 report, 7 (3.6%) of 194 patients with pneumocystosis also had CMV infection; 40 (21%) of the same group had at least 1 other major concurrent infection (1). A high prevalence of CMV infections among homosexual males was recently reported: 179 (94%) of 190 males reported to be exclusively homosexual had serum antibody to CMV, and 14 (7.4%) had CMV viruria; rates for 101 controls of similar age who were reported to be exclusively heterosexual were 54% for seropositivity and zero for viruria (4). In another study of 64 males, 4 (6.3%) had positive tests for CMV in semen, but none had CMV recovered from urine. Two of the 4 reported recent homosexual contacts. These findings suggest not only that virus shedding may be more readily detected in seminal fluid than in urine, but also that seminal fluid may be an important vehicle of CMV transmission (5).

All the above observations suggest the possibility of a cellular-immune dysfunction related to a common exposure that predisposes individuals to opportunistic infections such as pneumocystosis and candidiasis. Although the role of CMV infection in the pathogenesis of pneumocystosis remains unknown, the possibility of *P. carinii* infection must be carefully considered in a differential diagnosis for previously healthy homosexual males with dyspnea and pneumonia.

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United Press International. (1987, Dec. 21). AIDS Measure Would Tighten Up Confidentiality. *Omaha World-Herald*.

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Appendix D: Defining AIDS as a social movement

“One hundred thousand dead from AIDS – where was George [Bush]?”

▪ Peter Staley, an AIDS activist from New York³²⁹

“If AIDS was a natural disease, it would have been around 1,000 years ago. I think it was made in order to kill undesirables. That would include homosexuals, intravenous drug users and blacks.”

▪ John Singleton, “Boyz ‘n’ the Hood” director, in a New York Times article³³⁰

AIDS is an example of a health event characterized by extreme uncertainty from risky behavior and possible first exposure to a positive AIDS test result.³³¹ The onset and the course of the AIDS epidemic can be explained in two ways: social behavior and social roles.³³² The roles and behaviors of those first affected, the gay population, resulted in the AIDS movement. The AIDS movement is mobilized by strong, vibrant activists and is assisted and showcased by the alternative media, including activist publications and the gay press.³³³ AIDS research is heavily politicized and through this activist movement and its growth in credibility, the participants learned the scientific and medical knowledge to affect change in the processes of biomedical research and patient care.³³⁴ The AIDS activists framed their own strategic goals within science and helped construct new social relationships, new identities, new institutions and new facts and beliefs in the

³²⁹ Treichler, Paula A. AIDS, Africa and cultural theory. *Transition*, 51, pp. 96.

³³⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3,(3), pp. 430.

³³¹ Prohaska, Thomas R., Albrecht, Gary, Levy, Judith A., Sugrue, Noreen, & Kim, Joung-Hwa. (1990). Determinants of self-perceived risk for AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 31, pp. 385.

³³² Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, pp. 140.

³³³ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 409.

³³⁴ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 410.

process.³³⁵ AIDS activists succeeded in changing the medical research community by improving AIDS research.³³⁶ The ultimate goal the movement is framed about is to find a cure for AIDS.

The AIDS movement was a sub-movement embedded in several other movements and benefited from “social movement spillover.”³³⁷ AIDS activism in the United States fed on health-related activism, which was originally formed by people with cancer.³³⁸ In the 1980s, as AIDS treatment activists focused attention on the injustices in medical research techniques, the claim that researchers and government officials were committing genocide against people with AIDS and their support community was a compelling issue and helped frame the movement.³³⁹ To combat this genocide, activists began learning medical jargon and working with the medical and government officials that they had a problem with in order to solve their grievances.³⁴⁰ The genocide frame did play a role in linking AIDS to a past history of oppression and resistance, which dates back to U.S. colonialism.³⁴¹

In 1990, the AIDS epidemic was not merely one single media issue, but more than 25 separate media sub-issues, including: genocide, gay politics, the pharmaceutical

³³⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 410.

³³⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 410.

³³⁷³³⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3, pp. 419.

³³⁸ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 410.

³³⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 416.

³⁴⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 416.

³⁴¹ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 431.

industry and legal policy.³⁴² There were several issues that needed to be solved, the activists argued. Politically, during the Reagan and the Bush administrations, the federal government's efforts to help the AIDS campaign were little. President George H.W. Bush would not even acknowledge the nonviolent "quasi-movement" of the NAMES Project when was on display in the Washington D.C. area.³⁴³ The health care delivery system lacks resources to treat all of the cases. The 1990 Congressional action to treat cities and states hard hit by AIDS as disaster areas and to appropriate funds was not even adequate to serve the needs of the infected.³⁴⁴

Sociologists have determined that social movements depend on the "active, ongoing construction of collective identity and that deciding who we are requires deciding who we are not."³⁴⁵ The AIDS movement was mobilized by people who were stigmatized and oppressed by the majority group in this case, heterosexuals. Gamson goes further to suggest that social movements and identity movements are in the business of exclusion.³⁴⁶ The AIDS movement was framed by identity, it reminded those who they were, and that they had rights too, despite their minority "status." The movement was mobilized by gay, white men were not so anxious to include ethnic minorities in their movement, thus condemning and oppressing them once again. White men felt threatened by ethnic minorities, and this was no different in the case of the AIDS movement.

³⁴² Treichler, Paula A. AIDS, Africa and cultural theory. *Transition*, 51, pp. 94.

³⁴³ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Spectrum*, 17(1), pp. 41.

³⁴⁴ Cook, Timothy. (1997). News coverage of AIDS. In P. Norris (Ed.), *Politics and the press: The news media and their influences* (p. 217-236). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 217.

³⁴⁵ Gamson, Joshua. (1997). Messages of exclusion: Gender, movements and symbolic boundaries. *Gender & Society*, 11(2), pp. 179.

³⁴⁶ Gamson, Joshua. (1997). Messages of exclusion: Gender, movements and symbolic boundaries. *Gender & Society*, 11(2), pp. 179.

Geography was another reason why ethnic minorities were not included; the movement was mobilized in San Francisco, which in the last 30 years gained a large gay population.

Sociologists explain movement emergence in three ways: framing, resource mobilization and the political process. The political process only works if the system is vulnerable or receptive to challenge.³⁴⁷ The U.S. government and the medical community listened to the grievances of people with AIDS and slowly began allowing them to serve on committees that would advance AIDS-related studies. Then in order for the movement to mobilize and gain resources, it needs money, networks of people and tactics.³⁴⁸ The movement originally was comprised of middle class, white men in San Francisco, many who had been closeted gays because they did not want their sexuality to damage their political or business prospects. Many already worked for the state or federal government. The framing of a new social movement (NSM) needs material contradictions that lead to mobilization around previously private issues.³⁴⁹ One predominant issue was framed about the concept that AIDS was a form of genocide inflicted by the government to destroy the gay population and other minority groups.

Each of these social movement theories is evident in the AIDS movement. Framing is the most evident of the three social movement theories. The movement already had resources and political opportunities from the U.S. government. The

³⁴⁷ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 7.

³⁴⁸ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 7.

³⁴⁹ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 7.

government was more likely to listen to him because he was white and middle class. Often, the government even employed him. As a race and gender, the gay, white man was not a minority. It was his sexuality that stigmatized him. The activists had cohorts within the Castro district and the San Francisco bathhouses. The activists had well paying jobs and had little to lose by activating – they did not have wives, children and few had mortgages. Most were young and remembered the civil rights movements that preceded the AIDS movement. Many were involved in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement. That movement was successful, rights were achieved and gay officials were elected. For a disease that has been recognized for less than 25 years, mobilization happened rather quickly, when compared to the civil rights movement, which took hundreds of years, to mobilize. But the issues were different from before. People were dying and the activists accused the government of genocide. The gay men had little experience with the health community and had no previous frame to draw upon. The AIDS movement's frame will be the focus of this paper.

Political opportunities in the AIDS movement

“The broad political environment in which the movement is embedded will continue to constitute a powerful set of constraints and opportunities affecting its development.”³⁵⁰ There are four dimensions of political opportunity: an open or closed system, elite stability, elite allies and state repression.

³⁵⁰ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 12.

The system was open to change because they stem was not as threatened by the group demanding change. McAdam, et al. noted that “besides helping to account for cross-national differences in the development of comparable movements, a focus on changes in the structure of political opportunities can contribute to our understanding of the shifting fortunes of a single movement.”³⁵¹ The movement was fortunate because the system was open to white men, despite their gay minority status. Thus, “the structure of political opportunities, as defined by both the enduring and volatile features of a given political system, can be expected to continue to play a major role in shaping the ongoing fortunes of the movement.”³⁵²

The movement gained elite allies through media coverage and celebrity “endorsement.” “When Rock Hudson admitted he had AIDS, the gay community exploited the fact with near joy. At last they had a public figure, a hero who was one of them. The biggest name in AIDS. The reality has been that it has focused attention on AIDS and also on the causes of it. The gay parades are over. So too is public tolerance of a society that paraded its sexual deviance and demanded rights. The public is now demanding to live disease-free with the prime carriers in isolation.”³⁵³ With the Hollywood “celebrity endorsement” the public (i.e. the media and the federal government) focused on the AIDS movement and added to its success.

³⁵¹ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 12.

³⁵² McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 13.

³⁵³ Watney, Simon. (1987). AIDS and the press. In S. Watney (Ed.), *Policing desire: Pornography, AIDS and the media* (p. 77-97). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 81.

Resource mobilization in the AIDS movement

The mass media is in the unique position to respond to the need for reliable information that will mobilize networks of homosexuals and heterosexuals to reduce their high-risk behaviors.³⁵⁴ The AIDS movement formed coalitions, sought sponsorship and appealed to a wider audience than just the gay community, thus increasing the movement's resources.³⁵⁵ The movement mobilized to meet the AIDS threat and was successful because its members were white, middle-class men with the ability to fund-raise because of their political clout.³⁵⁶ This was unique – rarely are white men considered a minority who need a movement to mobilize to attain better resources. Later, co-opting within the movement did occur and tension led to formal splits of AIDS organizations in several U.S. cities.³⁵⁷

“The relevant organizational question in regard to movement emergence is whether insurgents have available to them “mobilizing structures” of sufficient strength to get the movement off the ground.”³⁵⁸ The AIDS movement was built on the foundation of the gay movement and borrowed from its strengths and inclinations.³⁵⁹ “After the collective action is underway, it is no longer the simple availability of the mobilizing structures, but the organizational profile of those groups purporting to represent the

³⁵⁴ Reardon, Kathleen K., & Richardson, Jean L. (1991). The important role of mass media in the diffusion of accurate information about AIDS. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21(1/2), pp. 65.

³⁵⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 412.

³⁵⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

³⁵⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 423.

³⁵⁸ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 13.

³⁵⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

movement that becomes important.”³⁶⁰ The movement emerged from a new cultural middle class, in which the activists did not emphasize class rank.³⁶¹ They were more concerned with the struggle, and assuring that the resources were parceled to competing social classes, genders and ethnicities. For example, activists felt they needed to uphold membership boundaries – “in a cultural systems that devalue so many identities, a movement with clarity about who belongs can better provide its designated members with the strength and pride to revalue their identities.”³⁶² The movement was lead by people with AIDS who were “doubly stigmatized” because they were devalued by gays, who were another stigmatized group, for living with a fatal disease.³⁶³

People are more likely to join and stay part of a movement or organization if a friend or family member is involved. There are communities of memory, which look at the past and may come together because of past injustices, such as a memory of discrimination.³⁶⁴ Memories were more recent among activists in the AIDS movement has been different discrimination has been happening for less than 25 years. This was a movement which needed continuing new membership because current members were dying.

McCarthy defined mobilizing structures as “those agreed upon ways of engaging in collective action which include particular ‘tactical repertoires,’ particular ‘social

³⁶⁰ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 13.

³⁶¹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 412.

³⁶² Gamson, Joshua. (1997). Messages of exclusion: Gender, movements and symbolic boundaries. *Gender & Society*, 11(2), pp. 179.

³⁶³ Sandstrom, Kent L. (1990). Confronting deadly disease. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 19(3), pp. 276.

³⁶⁴ McCarthy, John D. (1996). Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.) *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 143.

movement organizational' forms and 'modular social movement repertoires'.³⁶⁵ The gay community was highly educated, due to their socio-economic status, and realized the need to possess "cultural capital."³⁶⁶ Cultural capital provided the AIDS movement to become educated, to contest medical experts and facilitated mediation and communication between themselves and the experts.³⁶⁷

Knowledge about disease prevalence according to group membership or the social proximity of knowing someone with AIDS is likely to translate into corresponding differences in self-perceived risk.³⁶⁸ This influenced membership. The movement influenced people to not only invest monetarily, but also emotionally in the fate of the movement.³⁶⁹ "People need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem."³⁷⁰ Risk behavior may also be increased when the group, as in drug-using or homosexual groups, views the behavior as a condition for acceptance. Risk behavior might also be increased if it reflects displaced anger at the group that rejects the subject.³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ McCarthy, John D. (1996). Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing, In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.) *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 141.

³⁶⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

³⁶⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

³⁶⁸ Prohaska, Thomas R., Albrecht, Gary, Levy, Judith A., Sugrue, Noreen, & Kim, Joung-Hwa. (1990). Determinants of self-perceived risk for AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 31, pp. 386.

³⁶⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 413.

³⁷⁰ McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 5.

³⁷¹ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, pp.146.

Framing in the AIDS movement

During any of these stages, the infected individual may decide to join the AIDS movement. Responses to stress affect those with the AIDS virus in different ways: crisis, transitional state, deficiency state and the preparation for death.³⁷² Nichols observed that during the initial life crisis, life-threatening illness might lead to acute denial.³⁷³ During the transitional state, changes in self-esteem, identity, values, estrangement from kin and other social groups and suicidal thoughts may occur.³⁷⁴ During the deficiency state, the person with AIDS establishes a new stable identity and accepts the limitations the disease imposes.³⁷⁵ During the final stage, the infected individuals prepares for death. AIDS and HIV have affected many in their twenties and thirties, which have historically been thought of as “a group for which there is little social expectation that they will passively await death.”³⁷⁶ Many people with AIDS have many years of “outwardly normal health” before symptoms begin greatly deteriorating their health.³⁷⁷ During the early stages of AIDS, activism is physically feasible, and may be necessary for coping from a political and psychological standpoint.³⁷⁸

³⁷² Nichols, Stuart E. (1985). Psychosocial reactions of persons with the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 103, pp. 765-767.

³⁷³ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, pp. 145.

³⁷⁴ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, pp. 145.

³⁷⁵ Kaplan, Howard B. & Johnson, Robert J. (1987). The sociological study of AIDS: A critical review of the literature and suggested research agenda. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 28, pp. 145.

³⁷⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 414.

³⁷⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 414.

³⁷⁸ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 414.

The new social movement did not assert identity, but redefined their identity by becoming active in the movement.³⁷⁹ The movement facilitated support groups with became the focus of identity work and repair for people with AIDS.³⁸⁰ The support groups also facilitated the formation of social ties and feelings of collective identification among people with AIDS.³⁸¹ Social movements seek to frame or assign meaning to relevant events and conditions in which they are intended to mobilize potential activists and demobilize antagonists.³⁸² This support and sense of group identification led the people with AIDS to mobilization in anguish of their shared injustice – dying.

Social identity is “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance of that membership.”³⁸³ The sensationalism that surrounds media accounts of the AIDS “crisis” may have encouraged the general public to overestimate their risk for the syndrome and has cause those people with AIDS to want to stay anonymous.³⁸⁴ The social movement was framed by altering the perceptions of gays by the medical community with the agenda of change and the “demedicalization” of gay identity.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20,(4), pp. 413.

³⁸⁰ Sandstrom, Kent L. (1990). Confronting deadly disease. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 19(3), pp. 282.

³⁸¹ Sandstrom, Kent L. (1990). Confronting deadly disease. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 19(3), pp. 282.

³⁸² Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 416.

³⁸³ Tajfel, H. (Ed.)(1978). *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press, pp. 63.

³⁸⁴ Prohaska, Thomas R., Albrecht, Gary, Levy, Judith A., Sugrue, Noreen, & Kim, Joung-Hwa. (1990). Determinants of self-perceived risk for AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 31, pp. 386.

³⁸⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

One of the first movement issues was framed around concerns about blood tests, which first arose because of a proposal to create an interstate registry of homosexuals whose tests were positive.³⁸⁶ Gay men were afraid that if positive test results appeared in medical files, homosexuals could lose employment opportunities and insurance coverage.³⁸⁷

In San Francisco, there was a boycott on businesses in the gay district. "We don't consider Castro Street an upward, gay area anymore," said Dennis Mitchell, owner of Buck's, one of the section's largest men's apparel stores. "Business isn't what it used to be because of AIDS, even though only about half of my customers are gays. Straight people don't want to try on clothes that gays have put on, and many straights just aren't coming here anymore. Stores are closing, and chain stores are taking over."³⁸⁸

People with AIDS later framed the movement by appealing to the medical community (among others) need to find a point of convergence between the needs of people with AIDS with the advancement of medical science.³⁸⁹ The agenda was consistent with pre-existing ideologies within clinical medicine, bioethics and biostatistics and because activists were able to convince allies from these groups, thus adding to their credibility.³⁹⁰ Thus activist won support in drug trial modifications, such

³⁸⁶ Howe, Marvin. (1984, June 25). For People With AIDS, Housing Is Hard to Find. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/062584sci-aids.html>.

³⁸⁷ Howe, Marvin. (1984, June 25). For People With AIDS, Housing Is Hard to Find. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/062584sci-aids.html>.

³⁸⁸ Barmash, Isadore. (1984, Dec. 29). Store Sales Lagging on Castro St. Merchants Cite Fear of AIDS. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/122984sci-aids.html>.

³⁸⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 422.

³⁹⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 422.

as broader entry criteria, more diverse ethnic groups as members and medication that would help patients in the short run.³⁹¹

“Movements are no less dependent on the shared understandings of their adherents during the later stages of insurgency that they were early on.”³⁹² Berkman notes that social support networks might facilitate access to better health care opportunities, health-promoting standards and reduce immune symptoms.³⁹³ Attempts to improve the quality of care for those infected is largely in the hands of health and social service providers, such as state health and human services departments and the AIDS project. AIDS treatment activism dated back to the mid-1980s, when activists wanted approval of experimental treatment and first demonstrations were targeted at the Food and Drug Administration.³⁹⁴ Later in the 1980s, activists’ attention shifted to drug development and shifted demonstration attention from the FDA to the National Institutes of Health and the AIDS Clinical Trials Group of the national Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease.³⁹⁵

Activists supported the goals of this research but also recognized that one primary motivation of the actual research subjects was access to otherwise unobtainable and potentially helpful therapies.³⁹⁶ People with AIDS activated because they saw a social injustice that in the name of clean data, people with lab test values or demographic

³⁹¹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 422.

³⁹² McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, Zald, Mayer N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes – toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements*. NY: Cambridge, pp. 14.

³⁹³ Berkman, Lisa F. (1985). The relationship of social networks and social support to morbidity and morality. In S. Cohen & S.L. Syme (Eds.) *Social Support and Health*, (pp. 241-62). New York: Academic Press.

³⁹⁴ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 415.

³⁹⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 420.

³⁹⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 420.

characteristics outside of a specified range, or those who were taking other medications currently or in the past were excluded from new clinical studies.³⁹⁷ As a result of this, some case trials were unable to recruit subjects that matched their criteria.³⁹⁸ Another result of this was that people were lying to get into trials or cheating or altering results as members of the trial.³⁹⁹

AIDS activists also framed their issues by appealing to the government and health officials.⁴⁰⁰ Said Larry Kramer, a ACT UP/New York founder when writing of Ronald Reagan and various government health officials: “[they are all] equal to Hitler and his Nazi doctors performing their murderous experiments in the camps – not because of similar intentions, but because of similar results.”⁴⁰¹ Genocide by neglect became a key frame employed by ACT UP in the early years of mobilization in the late 1980s. They employed the symbols worn by homosexuals during the Nazi concentration camps of the “Silence = Death” logo and the pink-triangle which then and now symbolizes gay liberation.⁴⁰²

Organizations adopt various strategies in order to conform to rational myths and other normative elements of the institutional environment. Although activists benefited from the medical and scientific community members joining the movement, the leaders

³⁹⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 422.

³⁹⁸ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 420.

³⁹⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 420.

⁴⁰⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 421.

⁴⁰¹ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 421.

⁴⁰² Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 421.

were still the medical novices who were white, gay, well-educated males.⁴⁰³ Rather than seeking tighter control over production activities, the organization separates the structures into decentralized units.⁴⁰⁴ This enables organizations to display normative conformity while preserving some autonomy, by giving production personnel and processes more leeway to adjust to environmental norms and specifications.⁴⁰⁵ Highly institutional environments are those where organizational success depends on legitimacy and stability achieved through conformity with institutional rules and normative structures.⁴⁰⁶

One example of this is the NAMES Project, which has continued as the movement reached many of its goals.⁴⁰⁷ The NAMES Project is not specifically part of the AIDS movement, it is not used to make political statements. The NAMES Project is a quilt that commemorates people who have died from AIDS. Cleve Jones, an AIDS activist said “we’re not a political organization. There’s no enemy here to blame. There’s no politics in a name.”⁴⁰⁸ Since NAMES is not a political organization, no political speeches, rallies or demonstrations may take place near the quilt during a display.⁴⁰⁹ It is a non-violent “item” that gains allies from celebrities, fashion designers and families to outwardly show the magnitude of how AIDS is affecting the United States. Cleve Jones explained that “We’re not lobbying or endorsing candidates. We

⁴⁰³ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 417.

⁴⁰⁴ Dill, Ann. (1994). Institutional environments and organizational responses to AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35, pp. 352.

⁴⁰⁵ Dill, Ann. (1994). Institutional environments and organizational responses to AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35, pp. 352.

⁴⁰⁶ Dill, Ann. (1994). Institutional environments and organizational responses to AIDS. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35, pp. 363.

⁴⁰⁷ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Specturm*, 17(1), pp. 37.

⁴⁰⁸ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Specturm*, 17(1), pp. 37.

⁴⁰⁹ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Specturm*, 17(1), pp. 37.

don't use the rhetoric of the gay liberation movement ... We don't allow ourselves to be defined in a way that will exclude anyone.”⁴¹⁰

Problems of the AIDS movement

The AIDS movement had problems much like other movements. There were quibbles over the definition of a gay organization and the political boundaries of the movement.⁴¹¹ One group that was “not [considered] a gay organization” was the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) and in the early 1990s, was expelled from the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). The NAMBLA's frame was different from the ILGA's movement issues. Gregory Kin of the Human Rights Campaign Fund was in support of the ouster. “NAMBLA is not a gay organization. They are not part of our community and we thoroughly reject their efforts to insinuate that pedophilia is an issue related to gay and lesbian civil rights.”⁴¹²

ACT UP/New York classed over a bitter dispute over the risks of co-optation.⁴¹³ Tension grew between the Treatment and Data Committee and the Women's Action Committee over sunned concerns.⁴¹⁴ Thus members of the Treatment and Data Committee seceded from ACT UP/New York and formed a new movement organization called Treatment action Group, so they could focus on specific treatment issues.

⁴¹⁰ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Spectrum*, 17(1), pp. 37.

⁴¹¹ Gamson, Joshua. (1997). Messages of exclusion: Gender, movements and symbolic boundaries. *Gender & Society*, 11(2), pp. 179.

⁴¹² Gamson, Joshua. (1997). Messages of exclusion: Gender, movements and symbolic boundaries. *Gender & Society*, 11(2), pp. 179.

⁴¹³ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the 'genocide' frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 425.

⁴¹⁴ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the 'genocide' frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 425.

Successes of the AIDS movement

The movement had some success stories. For example, AIDS treatment activists became full voting members of the committees of the National Institutes of Health that help oversee AIDS drug development.⁴¹⁵ Epstein said that “credibility is the backbone of the cognitive and moral order in modern scientific inquiry.”⁴¹⁶ Thus the credibility gap closed in AIDS research because activists became engaged in learning medical technology related to AIDS.⁴¹⁷ While the failure of medical experts to solve the AIDS problem quickly diminished the credibility of the movement, it cannot be said that the movement was a failure.⁴¹⁸

Epstein asserts that the AIDS movement is the first social movement in the United States to accomplish the conversion of AIDS “victims” into activists and experts.⁴¹⁹ Previous similar movements, such as the “homophile” movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, had limited successes.⁴²⁰

The movement was successful because it gained credibility in four ways. First, they learned the “language and culture” of medical science.⁴²¹ Second, the activists presented themselves as credible through becoming representatives, by forming coalitions

⁴¹⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 411.

⁴¹⁶ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 411.

⁴¹⁷ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 411.

⁴¹⁸ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 412.

⁴¹⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 413.

⁴²⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 414.

⁴²¹ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 417.

and being diverse in movement membership.⁴²² A third credibility tactic employed by treatment activists consisted of yoking together methodological arguments and moral arguments so as to monopolize different forms of credibility in different domains.⁴²³ For example, activists insisted that clinical drug trials population studies should represent people from all social and ethnic groups affected by AIDS. A final credibility technique is taking side in pre-existing debates over how clinical research should be performed.⁴²⁴

Another success of the movement is that the National Breast Cancer Coalition gained resources and opportunities from the AIDS movement. One San Francisco breast cancer patient and organizer said: "They showed us how to get through to the government. They took on an archaic system and turned it around while we were quietly dying."⁴²⁵

The NAMES Project provided a rallying point for the gay community by redefining gay subjectivity in a positive manner.⁴²⁶ It mobilized the gay community into other forms of activism and thus made the movement form feelings of pride, when before only shame and guilt was felt.⁴²⁷

William Beauchamp, who at the time was a faculty member at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, wrote that "leaders of the fundamentalist right, seizing on AIDS as a sign of divine wrath, have made the 'gay plague' the linchpin of their case

⁴²² Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 418.

⁴²³ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 419.

⁴²⁴ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 420.

⁴²⁵ Epstein, Steven. (1995). The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 20(4), pp. 425.

⁴²⁶ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Spectrum*, 17(1), pp. 42.

⁴²⁷ Krouse, Mary Beth. (1997). Constructions of immortality in the AIDS memorial quilt. *Sociological Spectrum*, 17(1), pp. 42.

against civil rights for homosexuals. Many ill-informed people, in all sectors of society, are listening. As a result, both the AIDS epidemic and the plague of bigotry continue to spread.”⁴²⁸

Klandermans has noted that “it is not just the grievances of the social movements that become transformed as movements evolve, but also their expectations of success.”⁴²⁹ As activists being developing working relationships with researchers and learning the trade of biomedical research, their sense of “victimization” lessened as well as their sense of entitlement.⁴³⁰ But the AIDS movement will continue. It will continue to have new issues to frame as long there is no found cure.

⁴²⁸ Beauchamp, William. (1983, Aug. 7). A 2d AIDS Epidemic. [Electronic Version]. *The New York Times on the Web*. <http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/080783sci-aids.html>.

⁴²⁹ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 428.

⁴³⁰ Epstein, Steven. (1997). AIDS activism and the retreat from the ‘genocide’ frame. *Social Identities*, 3(3), pp. 429.

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<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/100385sci-aids.html>.

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