Who Frames the Message?
Countermovements and Public Perception of Social Movements’ Legal Agendas

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Same-sex marriage is commonly perceived to be “the dominant issue”\(^1\) or the “central movement goal[\(]\)\(^2\) in the social movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights.\(^3\) Since *Baehr v. Lewin*,

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the case that “legalized” same-sex marriage in Hawai‘i, the movement’s leading legal organizations have indeed used impact litigation to achieve marriage equality in several states.\textsuperscript{4} However, there is evidence that the publicity that the marriage litigation strategy has received far outweighs the work that the movement has invested in achieving this goal. In an address at Yale Law School, the Legal Director of Lambda, the best-funded LGBT legal organization in the United States, stated that,

Although marriage has grabbed most of the headlines this year, Lambda Legal, like its sister organizations Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and the ACLU’s Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, has been busy... representing unmarried lesbian and gay survivors of those who died on 9/11, defending domestic partnership laws against legal attacks, challenging businesses and government programs that deny unmarried, same-sex couples benefits provided to married, different-sex pairs, and fighting for functional approaches to relationship and parenting rights.”\textsuperscript{5}
