Gay Men and Masculinity in Politics
By Rebecca Sales

On October 3, 2014 The Edge of Chaos showcased Jon Hoadley as a speaker for the Queer Lecture Series, which is a series addressing the stigma of gay men in politics. Hoadley is an openly gay man and politician who ran for the Representative of his district and won. Having been right in the middle of politics as a gay man he has firsthand knowledge of the stigmas surrounding masculinity in politics. From his experience he found that getting the 'ticket', or vote, for his district meant that he had to find the common ground between masculinity, queerness, and politics.

Despite being openly gay, many of his campaign pictures and coverage omitted his long-time partner Chris. They only put Chris in one newspaper coverage of his campaign, and only at the very end for the celebration of his victory. This is because despite knowing that many people said they would vote for him, Jon said that he knew that what one says and what one does in the ballot box are different. That in the ballot box with no outside influence they could be overtaken by the image of a traditional politician and vote against him. His partner could be a hinder on his masculinity in his political role and could cause voters to change their original decision.

This is one of the reasons that most LGBTQ members in politics find it hard to win. People have a seemingly ingrained idea of what people in politics should look like. They are usually seen as older white males reeking of masculinity. This is a problem for people identifying themselves as transgender, gay, or even women. They can have a harder time living up to those standards because of their lack of traditional masculinity. With transgender it's because people will see them as their biological gender not their chosen one. For example a transgender female will be judged as non-masculine for choosing a gender seen as non-masculine, female, while at the same time being judged as a biological male for wanting to be a female, which is seen as non-masculine. With women they are naturally seen as non-masculine based solely on the fact that they are not men. This can cause them both to have a hard time integrating into a role society had decided to view as masculine.

This idea of traditional politicians is so ingrained in the mindset of the common people that without even realizing it voters tend to vote for the more traditional runner. This is why people like Jon have to find a common ground between queerness, masculinity, and politics to get the "vote". When finding this common ground politicians have to stay true to their queerness but at the same time find a way to exclude enough masculinity.

Jon Hoadley finished his lecture off by saying that in order to help change this the idea of what is traditionally a politician needs to change. People need to hear more stories of gay men in politics along with LGBTQ members this way they can empathizes more with them as fellow human beings. Once this occurs he thinks that more of LGBTQ community will start showing up in politics because people will start viewing members on a more human level with as much competence in this field as any traditional politician. Just because homosexuals, transgender, no-genders are different does not mean they can't be just as competent and capable in such a traditionally masculine role. With this Jon Hoadley believes that politics will become more

integrated with the LGBTQ community because transgender, gays, etc. will no longer have to hide their less than traditional take on masculinity in politics.

Work Cited

Hoadley, Jon. "Gay Men and Masculinity in Politics". Queer Lecture Series. Edge Of Chaos.

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