CULTURAL CONTESTATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING AT LGBT PRIDE PARADES

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ABSTRACT

KATHERINE MCFARLAND: Cultural Contestation and Community Building at LGBT Pride Parades
(Under the direction of Dr. Andrew J. Perrin)

In 2009, over six million people attended an LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) Pride parade in 110 cities in the U.S. This dissertation is the first comprehensive sociological study of the Pride parade phenomenon. I draw together observations of six LGBT Pride parades across the country, interviews with parade participants, and content analysis of crowd photographs. I add to this an investigation of the first Pride events in New York City and Los Angeles in 1970. Integrating cultural sociology with the study of social movements, I describe Pride parades as cultural protest tactics that aim to achieve cultural, rather than legal/political, equality. I examine both external and internal dimensions of Pride parades. Externally, I analyze the cultural messages communicated through these events and the ways these messages contest wider culture. Internally, I analyze the ways that Pride parades are a site to build collective identity among LGBT people and their straight allies. I conclude by outlining a theoretical framework for the study of other cultural protest tactics and suggest multiple avenues for future research.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| LIST OF TABLES | xii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xiii |

## Chapters

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   - Definition of the Phenomenon ................................................. 2
   - Aims and Assumptions ................................................................. 4
   - Social Movements and Social Change ........................................... 5
   - Types of Equality ........................................................................... 7
   - How Culture Works .......................................................................... 12
   - Social Movements and Culture ...................................................... 17
   - Mass Demonstrations and Cultural Change ..................................... 23
   - Cultural Protest ............................................................................... 26
   - Outline of the Dissertation .......................................................... 29

2. **PRIDE BEGINNINGS**
   - Setting the Stage for Protest ......................................................... 37
   - The Meaning and Significance of Stonewall .................................... 40
   - Preparing to March ........................................................................... 46
   - The Big Gay March .......................................................................... 50
   - Themes of the NYC and LA Pride Events ........................................ 57
3. **The State of Gay America** .................................................. 69
   Defining the LGBT Community ........................................... 69
   Changes in Legal and Cultural Status of LGBT Community,
   1970-2010 ........................................................................... 73
   How the LGBT Community is Different than Other Groups ........ 94
   Conclusion ........................................................................... 112

4. **Studying Contemporary Pride Parades** ................................. 114
   Pride Parades Since 1970 .................................................... 114
   Methods ............................................................................. 121

5. **LGBT Pride Parades and Public Protest in the Cultural Sphere** ......................................................... 135
   Previous Research on Pride Parades ..................................... 137
   Public Contention at Pride .................................................. 139
   Variation by Personal Identity, Parade Size, and Cultural Climate... 159
   Conclusion ........................................................................... 163

6. **Internal Community Building at Pride** .................................. 170
   Barriers to Community and Collective Identity for LGBT People ... 174
   Community and Collective Identity at Pride ........................... 177
   Connection with External Aspects ........................................ 213
   Conclusion ........................................................................... 219

7. **Conclusion** ..................................................................... 220
   Definition of Cultural Protest Tactics ................................... 220
   Theoretical framework to Study Cultural Protest Tactics .......... 223
Avenues for Further Study .................................................. 227
Conclusion ........................................................................ 218
APPENDIX : DESCRIPTION OF CHAPTER 2 INTERVIEWEES .................. 233
REFERENCES ..................................................................... 235
# List of Tables

Table

1.1. Structural, Cultural, and Political/Legal Equality ........................  8

4.1. Parades by Region of Country .............................................  117

4.2. Parades Size by Population in Hosting MSA .............................  119

4.3. Regression of Independent Variables on Parade Size .....................  120

4.4. Parades Sites ........................................................................  123

4.5. Characteristics of Interview Respondents .................................  127

4.6. Parades Sites by Category ...................................................  131

5.1. Theme Variation by Individual, Internal, and External Variation .... 160

6.1. Same-Sex Partner Population at Each Parade MSA .....................  175

6.2. Spectator Demographics at Parade Sites .................................  179

6.3. Cross-Tabulations fro External and Internal Themes by Parade and Participant Characteristics .................................  217
LIST OF FIGURES

Figures

3.2. Tolerance Toward Gay College Teachers, 1973-2010 ................. 81
3.3. Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households
    by Zip Code Population............................................. 88
3.5. Distribution of Gay vs. Lesbian Couples
    by Zip Code Population............................................ 90
4.2. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 1980 ....................................... 116
4.5. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 2009 ....................................... 116
4.6. Growth of LGBT Pride Parades by MSA Size .......................... 118
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At the 2011 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Pride march in New York City, police officer Alissa Hernandez paused as she was marching with the Gay Officers Action League to get on her knee and propose to her girlfriend in front of cheering crowds (Agins 2011). One month later in San Diego, 250 active duty and retired military service men and women had a similarly warm reception as the first openly gay military contingent to march in an American LGBT Pride parade (Graham 2011). At any other parades, these scenes would stir the crowds but be otherwise unremarkable. But at these parades, the proposal and the military contingent were symbols of how far the LGBT community had come.

Forty-two years earlier near the spot of Hernandez's proposal, police carried out a routine raid on a gay bar. Instead of the public shaming of a few deviant homosexuals and a payoff from the bar's owners that they were expecting, the raid sparked a full blown riot. Patrons of the bar and local gay activists seized on the raid as an opportunity to fight back against years of police harassment and widespread cultural condemnation (Armstrong & Crage 2006; Carter 2004; Duberman 1993). A year later activists in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles held the first gay Pride marches to commemorate the riots and carry on the spirit of liberation and pride they set off (Armstrong & Crage 2006; Carter 2004).
In 2011 Alissa Hernandez proposed to her girlfriend two days after the New York state legislature passed a bill legalizing same-sex marriage and Governor Cuomo signed it into law. Active duty military marched in San Diego’s parade two months before the federal government officially ended the “Don' Ask, Don't Tell” policy that prohibited gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military. Despite these legal gains, same-sex marriage and gays in the military remain hotly contested political and cultural issues (the former much more than the latter). These two scenes illustrate much of what Pride is about. Externally, it is a public demonstration to contest the cultural marginalization of LGBT people. Through their acts, Hernandez, San Diego military, and the crowds that supported them took a stance for visibility and celebration of queer sexuality in contrast to cultural messages to silence and condemn it. Internally, Pride is a grand celebration for the LGBT community in which all who count themselves members or supporters gather to honor their achievements and support one another in difficult times.

This dissertation is an examination of the history and contemporary work of LGBT Pride parades in the United States. Through interviews with participants, archival evidence, crowd analysis, and field observations, I analyze the meaning of LGBT Pride parades and consider the ways they challenge literature in social movements and cultural sociology.

**Definition of the Phenomenon**

LGBT Pride parades are an established annual occurrence in many places around the world. Since 1970 Pride events have intended to carry on what activists understood

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1 Though the ban was technically still in effect when they marched, enforcement had nearly ceased and openly gay military members participated with little fear of discharge.
to be a new era of the gay and lesbian activism (Armstrong & Crage 2006; Carter 2004; Duberman 1993). Pride marches enacted what this new era was about: the joyous and unashamed public declaration of gay and lesbian identity instead of the apologetic stance of activists before Stonewall (Armstrong 2002; Armstrong & Crage 2006; Browne 2007; Carter 2004). According to Armstrong (2002), this new era also expanded the field of movement activity to include all members of the LGBT community, not just activists who regularly engaged in more traditional tactics. As a show of community spirit and unity, Pride parades are not exclusive to committed activists².

Six million total marchers and spectators participated in 110 Pride parades in 2009 (author data). The stated purpose of these parades is to promote the visibility and validate the existence of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people (Carter 2004; InterPride 2009). Pride events take the form of either marches or parades – a distinction that, according to parade organizers, is largely technical and determined by the civic permitting process (Trisha Clymore, personal communication May 12, 2009). In general, parades include motorized floats and marches do not. At most Pride events one will find contingents representing most facets of the LGBT community – marching bands, church groups, Gay-Straight Alliances from local high schools and colleges, plus the more distinctive “Dykes on Bikes” and “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” - organized groups of lesbian women riding motorcycles and drag queens dressed as nuns, respectively. Though often thought of as Mardi Gras-like spectacles of hypersexuality that lack serious

² Pride parades are frequently the site of boundary work within the LGBT community as organizers debate the inclusion of more extreme members of the community such as those involved with BDSM or polyamory. I discuss this further in chapter 6.
purpose, scholars in sociology, geography, and leisure studies have treated these events as
serious attempts to claim public space and challenge dominant attitudes towards
Kates & Belk 2001; Kenney 2001; Suganuma 2006)\(^3\).

**Aims and Assumptions**

This dissertation is an exploration of the Pride parade phenomena and a
consideration of their significance to social movements and cultural sociology. It is a
theoretical work in which I examine the case of Pride parades in order to consider social
movement theory on the role of culture in collective action. Pride parades seem to lie
somewhere in the middle of protest marches and festive parades as they mix a serious
purpose and plenty to outrage with frivolity and entertainment. In this dissertation I
describe the meaning and cultural work of Pride parades by investigating their beginnings
in 1970 and their contemporary external and internal dimensions.

A few assumptions ground this research. First, Pride is an important phenomenon
for the LGBT community, literature on social movements and cultural sociology, and
American political culture. I look at Pride as both an externally directed public display
and an internally directed community event. Second, Pride is part of the LGBT social
movement. Though it has received scant attention from scholars, it is a collective action
advocating for social change. I treat Pride as part of the larger LGBT movement rather
than a separate community event. I justify this assumption throughout this dissertation,

\(^3\) The notion of using the parade form for a contentious purpose is not unique to Pride events. Davis
(1986) documents the use of parades in nineteenth-century Philadelphia by both marginalized and
dominant groups to communicate power. See also Abdullah 2009, Nagle 2005, O’Reilly & Crutcher
2006 for similar treatments of power and space at popular parades.
but as a starting point I assume their significance for social movements.

Social Movements and Social Change

Social movements are collective attempts to change social conditions through primarily non-institutional means (Benford, Gongaware, & Valadez 2001; Snow, Soule, & Kriesi 2004; Tarrow 1998). As such, a central concern in the study of social movements is the ways that collective actions are influenced, or even determined, by social conditions. Spearheading research into this connection, scholars working within the political process/political opportunity model argue that the opportunity structures of local or national political systems allow for or discourage the success of movement activity (McAdam 1982; 1983; Meyer 2004). More specifically at the level of particular movement tactics, scholars working in contentious politics, multi-institutional politics, and new social movements theoretical models match the political and economic conditions of Western nation-states with the repertoire of tactics employed by social movements activists.

With their contentious politics model, Tilly and collaborators elaborated what they call the modern tactical repertoire (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978; 1986; 1995; 2008). This repertoire includes all collective tactics used by social movement groups, including institutional lobbying and petition drives and non-institutional collective marches and rallies. According to Tilly (1978; 1986; 1995; 2008), the modern repertoire was developed in response to changing political opportunities of the modern state such as centralized government and the right to assembly. While previous eras saw power diffused among local landowners and collective action directed at private citizens, in the modern state power coalesced in the hands of the government,
so social movements used collective tactics to make claims toward the state.

Critics of the contentious politics program argue that its scholars overemphasize tactics that target the state for political/legal change and thus neglect tactics oriented toward other targets. For Armstrong & Bernstein (2008), a broader “multi-institutional politics” approach means understanding that power exists across society's dominant institutions and thus advocacy is directed at both cultural and political targets (see also Taylor & Van Dyke 2004; Van Dyke, Soule, & Taylor 2004; Walker, Martin, & McCarthy 2008). For instance, Binder (2003) illustrated the ways that activists targeted the educational system by working through local school boards to include afrocentrism and creationism in public school curricula. Similarly, bishops organized during the Second Vatican Council to pass progressive reforms (Wilde 2004). In both instances, activists worked for cultural change through the official policies of powerful social institutions rather than seeking legal/political change. Like contentious politics advocates, these scholars match the tactics used by social movements with the diffusion of power across society. Activists are thought to target those institutions which have the power to act on their grievances.

In the now much maligned new social movements paradigm, theorists went one step further by arguing that identity movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s fought for change primarily in the cultural rather than political sphere (Melucci 1985; Offe 1985; Pichardo 1997). For these theorists, the West was in a postindustrial era in which people were subject to cultural domination rather economic or political inequality. Though critics pointed out that there was not necessarily anything “new” about movements of the 1960s and ‘70s, the emphasis on challenges to the cultural sphere may
be salvaged (Pichardo 1997: 427).

While theorists of multi-institutional politics and new social movements have sparked a great deal of theoretical debate about the targets of social action, most empirical research on collective action has continued to focus on actions that seek formal institutional change with clearly defined demands. The effect is to make it seem as though all collective actions target formal institutions, principally the state, and that the corresponding biggest barrier to change for marginalized groups or causes is the state. With no specific state or institutional target, Pride parades do not fit this model. Their target is more diffuse as participants proclaim their support for and celebration of LGBT identity against a culture with a long history of condemning this identity. This dissertation is an empirical investigation of a case in which the target of social movement actions is dominant culture. All three theories reviewed have in common the theoretical proposition that activists use collective tactics to meet the challenges of their social conditions. Thus, I investigate the social conditions faced by LGBT people and consider the ways in which Pride parades match these conditions.

**Types of Equality**

Social inequality exists when individuals in one group have greater access to social benefits such as physical and economic security, cultural respect, and public decision making. My argument in this dissertation rests on a distinction between three types of social equality: structural, cultural, and political/legal. Structural equality centers on individuals’ relative economic conditions, cultural equality on the respect afforded by other members in society, and political/legal equality on their citizenship
Table 1.1. Structural, Cultural, and Political/Legal Equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Equality</th>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Equality looks like</th>
<th>Role of the state</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Same economic resources; $ not necessary to access social benefits</td>
<td>Indirect: Set regulations for economic markets; redistribute wealth through tax policy and welfare</td>
<td>Labor movement – minimum wage, workplace protections, progressive tax policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Individuals treat one another with respect regardless of cultural difference</td>
<td>Indirect: Confer cultural legitimacy through official recognition, citizenship</td>
<td>Civil Rights movement – prohibit discrimination in private businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/Legal</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Individuals are treated the same under the law, have equal access to rights of citizenship</td>
<td>Direct: Grant voting and other citizenship rights</td>
<td>Women's suffrage – gain women the right to vote</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1.1 I delineate three features that distinguish types of equality. Each type of equality operates in a different arena with its own logic in terms of the goals for action and the rules for fair play (Bourdieu 1990[1980]). Equality in each arena is achieved when individuals are free of barriers and thus able to access social benefits through the same logic of action. Structural equality refers to the economic arena in which the goal of action is to acquire material goods for wants and needs. When individuals all have the same economic resources or when those resources do not determine their material condition we can say that there is structural equality. Cultural equality exists in the symbolic meaning systems that we label culture. Inequality is present when individuals are treated better or worse by others based on their membership in cultural groups such as race, gender, and so on. Thus, cultural equality is achieved when group difference is not a basis for poor treatment. Finally, legal/political equality belongs to the arena of the

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4 See Fraser (1995), Fraser & Honneth (2003) and Taylor (1992) for full theoretical discussions of this discussion.
state. While structural and cultural inequality may be present in societies without formal
government, legal/political inequality cannot. Centralized governments confer legal and
political rights on their citizens such as the right to vote and basic standards of treatment
under the law. Legal/political equality exists when all citizens have the same rights
regardless of their membership in different social groups (either cultural, such as race or
structural, such as class).

The ability of the state to affect each type of equality depends on the extent to
which it controls the mechanisms of inequality. Since legal/political equality is in the
arena of the state, it has total control and can directly affect equality. The movement for
women's suffrage, for example, sought and achieved direct legal equality in the form of
voting rights. However, since both structural and cultural equality operate arenas at least
partially outside government control, the state can play at most an indirect role in
effecting both types of equality. For structural equality, for instance, the state may play
an indirect role by regulating industry to mandate a minimum wage and workplace safety.
The state may also play no role at all as when labor unions strike for higher wages or
better working conditions. Unless the state has full control of the economic system it
cannot directly address structural inequality, but it can play a role to the extent that it has
the power to redistribute wealth and regulate the market.

Likewise, the state does not control culture and thus cannot directly ensure
cultural equality. Its role is confined to its ability to confer cultural legitimacy through
legal and political equality. Before the civil rights movement cultural inequality was
legally enforced through Jim Crow laws and poll taxes, among other ways. The passage
of the Civil Rights Act removed these forms of legal/political inequality and protected
Americans from some overt acts of cultural inequality by making it illegal to discriminate by race in the provision of public services by private businesses. Civil rights activists also made direct claims to cultural equality, such as the black protester who held the iconic sign declaring “I am a man” and therefore deserve respect. However, the state is limited in its ability to influence cultural inequality. In 2012 African-Americans have formal legal/political equality, but they still experience cultural inequality through prejudice and discrimination. The state can legally protect Americans from overt discrimination based on their membership in cultural groups, but it cannot eradicate the prejudice that motivates this discrimination.

Scholars have dubbed campaigns to achieve structural and cultural equality through political action the politics of redistribution and recognition, respectively (Fraser 1995; 2000; Taylor 1992; Zurn 2005). These labels summarize what social movements have asked for from the state: in the case of structural, class-based inequality they have demanded that the state use its economic power to redistribute wealth among its citizens; in the case of cultural, identity-based inequality, activists seek state recognition of difference. Redistribution and recognition are two ways that the state can act to redress injustices in arenas it does not fully control.

Structural, cultural, and legal/political equality are ideal types; social groups experience multiple types of inequality simultaneously and these types often intersect. As Fraser (1995: 73-73) articulated:

[F]ar from occupying two airtight separate spheres, economic injustice and cultural injustice are usually interimbricated so as to reinforce one another dialectically. Cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalized in the state and the economy; meanwhile, economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life. The result is often a vicious circle of
cultural and economic subordination.

For example, cultural bias that relegates women's “proper” role as in the home leads to structural wage inequality. Earning less money, women are more dependent on men and thus less able to challenge cultural bias. Feminist activists who seek protection against unequal pay are striving for both structural and cultural equality. When they seek this protection from the state, legal/political equality is the means through which activists challenge the other two types of equality.

The bulk of research in social movements addresses petitions to the state for remedies to structural or cultural inequalities. While movements engage in campaigns for expanded legal rights, in countries with universal suffrage and equal rights of citizenship there are few (if any) movements devoted solely to legal/political equality. Instead, movements seek legal/political equality as a means to the end of structural or cultural equality. Same-sex marriage, for example, is about much more than the legal rights of same-sex couples; both sides see this issue as one of the cultural legitimacy of same-sex unions and the state plays a role through official recognition (Hull 2006; McFarland 2011). The problem in social movement literature, I argue, is one of over-emphasis on actions that target the state. Theorists of multi-institutional politics and new social movements rightly point out that power is located in non-state institutions and in the culture, not solely in the state. The state plays a strong role in securing structural and cultural equality, but it does not directly control these arenas and thus does not have total power to guarantee equality. Therefore, it is possible that movements may engage in collective action directly aimed at structural or cultural inequality without petitioning the state.
The subject of this dissertation is achieving cultural equality for LGBT people in the U.S. Many have studied the ways LGBT activists have sought legal/political equality as a way to achieve ultimate cultural equality (e.g. Bernstein 1997; 2002; Fetner 2008; Ghaziani 2008; Rimmerman, Wald, & Wilcox 2000). Through the removal of sodomy laws and passage of non-discrimination statutes and relationship recognition for same-sex couples, activists have sought to have sexual orientation and gender identity recognized as positive axes of diversity that warrant legal protection and, by extension, cultural respect (Button, Rienzo, & Wald 2000; Bernstein 2002). Another way to promote cultural equality is by directly targeting cultural attitudes, norms, values, and codes. The state is a powerful cultural entity but is only one part of the entire culture. I look at one tactic, LGBT Pride parades, that does not target culture apart from the state.

**How Culture Works.**

The term culture refers to the set of interpretive schema through which individuals make sense of and act on the world (Becker 1982; Swidler 1986; 2001). Meaning is central to culture: bringing culture into analysis entails finding out how people interpret their own and others’ actions. Culture enables individuals to act collectively through a system of shared meanings, but also constrains individual behavior by these same meanings that define what is possible and desirable (Alexander 2003; Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992). The paradox of culture is that it is both ultimately knowable only subjectively but also is fundamentally collective (Ritzer 1981).

Culture is used to name a host of phenomena at multiple levels of social groupings. To parse this out there are three important distinctions within the concept: where culture resides, how it is measured, and the size of the social group that can be said
to have culture. Culture resides in the mind and in the world. In the mind culture resides as norms, values, attitudes, and views on the world (Bachrach 2011; Earl 2004; Wuthnow & Witten 1988). Each individual is socialized as a member of society and once she internalizes these interpretive schema she owns them. Culture in the mind means that an individual can choose in what ways to act on his norms, values, attitudes, and worldviews and can try to change them. In another sense, culture resides in the world explicit language, symbols, codes and rituals (Bachrach 2011; Earl 2004; Geertz 1972; Wuthnow & Witten 1988). This sense of culture is the property of a collective; an individual cannot change a symbol on her own. Culture in the mind and culture in the world interact with one another. Individuals internalize the collective meanings of symbols and they create new symbols to communicate their own understandings.

The second distinction is in how culture is measured. Culture can be either explicit in the form of directly observable and measurable products such as writings, works of art, or public rituals or implicit in the form of more impenetrable norms, values, and attitudes (Elias 1994[1934]; Smith 2001; Wuthnow & Witten 1988). Culture in the mind is always implicit and depends on one communicating individual meanings to others. Researchers attempt to indirectly measure culture in the mind by asking individuals their attitudes in surveys or observing behaviors that communicate norms (Wuthnow & Witten 1988). As a product of a collective, culture in the world is both explicit and implicit. A cultural product like a public ritual is can be directly observed and described in terms of actions taken, words uttered, and signs held – all explicit and objective features. It is also implicit in that the collective meanings of the ritual can only be known through indirect measures.
Crucial to the concept of implicit culture in the world is the idea of publicness. A public is more than an aggregation of individuals, and thus there are meanings that belong to a public that do not directly translate to individual meanings (Perrin & McFarland 2011; Swidler 1995). Cultural codes are collective meanings that are defined and enforced by dominant society (Swidler 1995). Individual members of a culture do not need to agree with a cultural code for it to affect their behavior. For example, in his study of Christmas gift giving in Middletown, Caplow (1982) found that middle class Americans did not buy in to the collective meanings of this act. As a cultural code, Americans give one another gifts at Christmas to communicate that a personal relationship is important. Though they criticized the commercialization of gift giving and grumbled over the burden of shopping for gifts, subjects in Caplow's study continued the tradition because of its collective meanings. This study is an example of how implicit culture exists on multiple levels – residing both in individual minds and in the collective world – making this analytical distinction important.

The third distinction regarding culture is the number of individuals involved in what we would call a culture. Culture in the world always involves more than one person as the meaning is intersubjective and thus agreed upon. But it matters how many people are involved. On the micro level, small groups create their own interpretive codes and norms of behavior that allow individuals to work together as a group (Eliasoph & Lichterman 2003; Perrin 2006). In a small group all individuals are known to one another and create both implicit and explicit forms of culture to facilitate interaction. On the meso level there can be many subcultures composed of large groups of individuals who occupy the same structural location or share an identity or personal interest.
Individuals within a subculture do not know everyone else in that subculture but the group develops both implicit cultural norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes and explicit symbols, language, and rituals to communicate these to one another (Macdonald 2001). On the most macro level, culture is a society’s distinctive way of life that is made up of language, symbols, and customs (Bennet 1995; Williams 1983). In this sense scholars talk, for instance, of U.S. political culture that has a strong “democratic code” that privileges individual liberty and rights claims (Alexander & Smith 1993). Differential structural power in society means that the subculture of a structurally dominant group (e.g. whites in terms of race, heterosexuals in terms of sexuality) can dominant to the extent that it is society-wide and thus macro level culture (Fantasia 1988; Gramsci 1971).

The implicit meanings and explicit uses of the term “family” illustrate these three distinctions. On the macro level of society-wide culture, the “family” is an explicit word to communicate the implicit meaning of a close group of individual united by a permanent bond. The most popular usage is to indicate bonds of blood, marriage, or adoption. On the meso level, the LGBT community as a subculture uses the term “family” to indicate fellow members of the community (Nardi 1999; Weston 1991). This implicit meaning is known only to subcultural members and communicated explicitly through merchandise like stickers with the word “family” in rainbow letters. LGBT individuals may call strangers “family” as shorthand to communicate mutual identification and trust. On the micro level, a small group of roommates, best friends, or blood relatives may use the word “family” to communicate the closeness of their bond to themselves and others. As an implicit group meaning, it is specific to the individuals involved; in its explicit use, it draws on macro-level cultural meaning. Finally, in each
individual's mind, “family” can mean anything; one may accept, reject, or modify the meanings of her small group, subculture, and macro culture to come up with a personal definition of family.

Most cultural sociologists treat cultural change as an adaption to altered structural conditions rather than a result of concerted effort (Eyerman & Jamison 1995). The most common version of cultural change holds that structural changes in economic production and political organization open up spaces for new kinds of individual action and group organization. With greater freedom to act in new ways, individuals create the symbolic meanings, rituals, and norms to provide subjective, meaning-based structure to their social groups (Elias 1994[1939]; Inglehart 1977; 1990; Wuthnow 1989). These new meanings may come in conflict with older cultural constructions that still dominate much of society, but the real conflict is between the structural locations of those groups. For example, the culture wars hypothesis proposes that there are two (or sometimes three, four, and more) distinct cultures in America: one is rural and conservative, holding to traditional notions of sexuality and gender roles; the other is urban and liberal and privileges tolerance and respect for diversity over set codes of sexual and gender norms (Dombrink, 2006; Mouw & Sobel, 2001). Proponents of the culture wars hypothesis generally argue that distinct cultures arose from changing structural organization of the country due to industrialization which brought people to the cities.

These three distinctions about culture – culture in the mind vs. culture in the world; implicit vs. explicit culture; and culture in the world on micro, meso, and macro levels – allow for more nuanced understanding of the ways that social movements use culture and act upon culture in pursuit of their goals. This dissertation is about the
collective use of an explicit cultural production – LGBT Pride parades – in order to challenge macro level implicit semiotic code about homosexuality and to build community by developing meso-level implicit and explicit culture.

**Social Movements and Culture**

According to cultural sociologists, structural changes in society open spaces for cultural change. These “free spaces” are opportunities for social movements to push for change (Polletta 1999; Rochon 1998). Free spaces are cultural and often geographically defined areas that removed from the direct control of dominant groups and thus allow for a degree of cultural autonomy within a meso-level marginalized group (Polletta 1999). These spaces generate social movement activity in two related ways. First, with cultural autonomy marginalized groups can develop the resources such as organizations, leadership, and explicit cultural tools that allow them to challenge their status. For instance, African-Americans' residential segregation allowed this meso-level social group to develop institutions such as the black church which then served as a source of cultural resources in the civil rights movement (Morris 1982; Morris & Staggenborg 2004).

Second, structural changes allow people to act in free spaces in ways that conflict with cultural codes embedded in institutions (Rochon 1998). In chapters 2 and 3, I explore the existence of free spaces for LGBT cultural development and activism and in chapter 6 I analyze the role of Pride parades as free spaces.

Johnston & Klandermans summarized the role of social movements in the process of cultural change:

> When established identities and social statuses no longer correspond to possibilities that are opened up by advances in knowledge and technology, there arise new movements that blend and meld the analytical distinctions between culture and movements, perhaps more so today than ever before.
Cultural sociologists tend to treat cultural change as a natural process; social movement researchers show the role of individuals and groups in bringing about specific changes. This section is a review of the ways that social movements create and use culture internally to foster group cohesiveness among activists and externally to challenge existing cultural attitudes and codes.

Studies with an internal (to movement) focus mainly concern implicit culture in the world at the meso- or even micro-level used to build solidarity and motivate participation among activists (Johnston & Klandermans 1995; Taylor & Van Dyke 2004). The main mechanism for these functions is collective identity, or a shared sense of self. Social movements both rely on and construct collective identities among activists. They rely on existing common identities, for example by race, gender, or social class, to define the constituency for movement activism and to motivate participation and commitment by politicizing these identities (Hunt & Benford 2004; Taylor & Whittier 1995). Social movements further construct collective identities as individuals work together in pursuit of movement goals (Hunt & Benford 2004; Johnston, Laraña, & Gusfield 1994; Melucci 1989).

Collective identity can work as an implicit subcultural element when individuals who do not know one another feel close by virtue of their identities as environmentalists, for example, or as feminists (Gamson 1998). It can also be explicit when collective identities become labels for a group to be used by both insiders and outsiders (Bernstein 2005). Individuals who share in a collective identity can find personal fulfillment both through bonds with others and because the experience clarifies their personal identity
Collective identity benefits social movements through members' increased commitment and motivation (Gamson 1998; Hunt & Benford 2004). Organizations can also recruit new activists who share the same sense of self by promoting activist collective identities and these identities can sustain movements at times when the political climate is less receptive to movement activity (Staggenborg 2001; Taylor 1989; Taylor & Whittier 1992). Melucci (1989) went further to argue that the construction of collective identities is central to new social (identity-based) movements since participants are not defined by a shared structural location.

Collective identities are developed through interaction, shared emotions, and the creation of boundaries. By bringing people together in a new way, social movements are a space for interpersonal interactions. Individuals develop implicit and explicit cultural tools such as group specific norms that facilitate interaction. They emphasize similarities and negotiate the explicit cultural representation of their group (Melucci 1989; Hunt & Benford 2004; Taylor & Whittier 1995). Social movements are also sites for shared emotional experiences – both positive and negative - through which individuals bond with one another and sustain their commitment to the cause (Eyerman 2005; Hunt & Benford 2004; Jasper 2011). In fact, Jasper (1998) argued that collective identity is primarily emotional as it is the feeling of being part of a group and close to others in that group (see also Blumer 1939; Melucci 1980). An important emotional aspect to collective identity is the sense that individuals are united in a common cause with a shared fate (Fantasia 1988; Hunt & Benford 2004). Finally, participants in social movements create boundaries by defining proponents and allies to their causes and identifying opponents. Activists build collective identity by defining “us” as united by common interests and
Another way social movements use culture is through externally focused persuasion. In their pursuit of social change, movement organizations produce explicit culture in the form of symbols, slogans, music, art, and collective action frames (Benford & Hunt 1992; Eyerman & Jamison 1995; Gamson 1995; Johnston & Klandermans 1995; Snow & Benford 1988; 1992; Williams 2004). These explicit cultural tools are produced at the micro- to meso- level of movement organizations and promoted out to the general public. Eyerman & Jamison, for example, showed how folk music of the 1960s by Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Phil Ochs, and others “functioned as another kind of social theory, translating the political radicalism that was expressed by relatively small coteries of critical intellectuals and political activists into a much different and far more accessible idiom” (1995: 464). The protest songs of these folk artists communicated the implicit cultural values of racial equality and world peace and connected them to left antiwar and civil rights movement activity. For these movements, folk music was an explicit cultural tool of persuasion that brought implicit cultural values first to the meso-level subculture of non-activist youth and hippies, then to wider macro-level society as they gained popularity.

The most studied cultural tool that social movements produce is collective action frames (Williams 2004). Research on collective action frames far eclipses that of other cultural tools, to the extent that these can seem the only form of explicit culture with which social movements engage. Frames are interpretive schema to articulate grievances and couple them with proposed solutions (Benford & Hunt 1992; McAdam 1996; Snow
& Benford 1988; 1992). Like music, activists use collective action frames to try to persuade others to join their cause, by challenging implicit cultural values or by motivating individuals to act based on values that align with those of activists (Gamson 1998; Snow et al. 1986). Frames are used in activists' communications with the mass media, slogans and speeches at demonstrations, and even through the dramatic situation created in tactical action (Benford & Snow 2000; Gamson 1998; McAdam 1996). When successful, frames diffuse from one movement group to subsequent “spinoff” groups, then out to the wider culture through mass media (movement-led campaigns and media-led coverage) (Gamson 1995; 1998; Meyer & Whittier 1994; Strang & Soule 1998). For instance, civil rights activists articulated a master frame that identified legal/political equality as the means through which to achieve cultural equality (McAdam 1994; Morris 1998; Snow & Benford 1992). Activists who invoke the civil rights frame couple the problem of cultural inequality in the form of discrimination and disrespect with the solution of equal citizenship rights and state protection from overt discrimination. Seeing the macro-level cultural resonance of this frame, feminists and LGBT activists have adopted this explicit cultural tool to articulate their movement strategy (Miceli 2005; Snow & Benford 1992).

The ultimate goal of changing implicit macro-level culture in the world is achieved either through a “bottom up” or “top down” model. With the “bottom up” model, activists try to persuade individuals to change their cultural attitudes (culture in

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5 This is not just a one way process, from movements to the public. Research shows that citizens use frames developed by movements and come up with their own to debate matters of public concern (Gamson 1992; McFarland 2011).
the mind), then if enough people adopt new attitudes macro-level semiotic codes will change as well (Swidler 1995). With the “top down” model, activists target macro-level codes; if these change, then individuals within a culture will act according to new social meanings (Swidler 1995). In both models, explicit cultural tools produced at the micro- to meso-level of movement organizations are vehicles of persuasion either down to the individual-level of implicit cultural attitudes or up to the macro-level of society wide implicit cultural codes.

Equivalence framing and political correctness illustrate “bottom up” vs. “top down” models of cultural change. Social movement groups use equivalence framing to promote one term over another, for example using the words “gay or lesbian” over “homosexual” (Druckman 2001; Druckman & Holmes 2004). The “bottom up” model theorizes that the more gay-friendly term “gay or lesbian” challenges individual implicit cultural attitudes by emphasizing gays and lesbians as a valued minority group while “homosexual” emphasizes non-normative sexuality and reinforces attitudes that condemn this behavior. By promoting “gay or lesbian”, social movement groups seek to change individual implicit cultural attitudes with an explicit cultural tool. When enough people adopt the new term as a reflection of changed individual attitudes, this will aggregate to a more gay-friendly macro-level implicit cultural code that values gays and lesbians as a legitimate group in society. Following the “top down” model, by contrast, the equivalence framing of “gay or lesbian” works to change culture by coding the term “homosexual” as culturally unacceptable at the macro-level. Rather than seeking individual-level change of cultural attitudes, the theory of the “outside in” model is that by promoting terminology that implicitly treats gays and lesbians as a valued minority,
individuals will be persuaded to change their behavior to reflect a changed cultural code. This will, it is hoped, trickle down to change in actual individual attitudes.

The internal implicit collective identities that develop from movement activism and the production and external dissemination of explicit cultural tools, principally collective action frames, are important means through which social movements bring about cultural change. Given the dominance of framing in social movement literature, it can seem as though the only way movements change culture is through the production and dissemination of these cultural tools (e.g. Earl 2004; Tarrow 1992). Some scholars argue that social movements have their most lasting impact through these mechanisms of cultural change (Isaac 2008; Jasper 1997). However, the research on which these insights are based concerns movement actions with legal/political equality as their primary goal. Though cultural change may be movements' most lasting impact, movement scholars pay little attention to direct efforts to effect this type of change. Scholars therefore understand implicit collective identities and explicit collective action frames as ways that movements use culture to achieve legal/political change rather than significant cultural changes in their own right (Williams 2004). Social movement research by and large has not considered the functions of implicit collective identities and explicit cultural tools in campaigns for direct cultural change. Through my study of Pride parades I consider how participants use culture internally and externally in the pursuit of cultural equality.

**Mass Demonstrations and Cultural Change**

Mass demonstrations – protest rallies and marches – are common tactics used by social movements to advocate for social change. Micro- to meso- level social groups (movement organizations and supporters) employ these explicit cultural tools to
communicate implicit meanings that challenge either individual cultural attitudes or macro-level cultural codes. As described above, the bulk of research on social movement tactics concerns those directed at the state in pursuit of political/legal change. The ultimate goal may be altered implicit cultural codes, but the state is treated as a mediator to change these codes. After reviewing the ways that social movements create and use culture in pursuit of social change, this section addresses the cultural meanings and implications of mass demonstrations.

According to Tilly (1995; 2008), mass demonstrations are WUNC displays: collective enactments to demonstrate worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. By showing these qualities, social movements claim the necessary political power to have their demands heard. Movement tactics are dramaturgical displays in which activists are protagonists and targets are antagonists in a struggle for power (Benford & Hunt 1992). In American political culture, the march on Washington is the epitome of a demonstration intended to claim political power by occupying space and to thereby compel legal change (Barber 2004; Ghaziani 2008). Political and cultural environment is important such that movement organizations stage mass demonstrations when they perceive the political opportunity for this tactic to be successful but are not able to employ institutional means such as directly lobbying politicians (Carmin & Balser 2002; McAdam 1996). In his study of four lesbian and gay marches on Washington, for instance, Ghaziani (2008) showed that each march was precipitated by changing political and cultural contexts that activists recognized as opportunities to present specific movement demands through mass demonstration.

Mass demonstrations affect culture externally through the explicit communication
of political power. Internally, mass demonstrations are sites at which to build collective identity among participants by providing a place for interpersonal interaction, invoking shared emotional experiences, and constructing symbolic boundaries. Mass demonstrations – as the name implies – bring many people together under a common purpose. Individuals coordinate their actions to march together at a space, and any time individual work together they create shared implicit and explicit culture to facilitate interaction (McPhail & Wohlstein 1983). They also negotiate the image they present of their group, thereby shaping their collective identity (Bernstein 1997; Ghaziani 2008).

Participants in mass demonstrations often experience the heightened emotions of collective effervescence as they chant slogans and march along public streets together (Jasper 1998). Mass demonstrations are collective rituals to communicate power and, as some argue, to express emotions such as enthusiasm, pride, anger, fear, and sorrow through patterned collective behavior (Taylor & Whittier 1995). Since Durkheim ([1912]1995), theorists have noted the power of ritual to produce solidarity through shared emotions (Collins 1975; Hobsbawn 1959; Kemper 1981; Turner 1969). By sharing emotions, even negative ones such as anger and fear, participants bond with one another and increase their commitment to movement action (Eyerman 2005; Jasper 2011). Moreover, individuals express pride in a shared identity through mass demonstration aimed at improving the social standing of a group to which they belong (Jasper 1997). Thus protest both creates and reflects emotions and collective identities. Finally, mass demonstrations facilitate the creation and maintenance of collective identity by literally constructing boundaries between participants and bystanders (Taylor & Whitter 1992). Participants assert their “we-ness” with slogans that carry an implicit
other, such as “Who's streets? Our streets!” and “We are the 99%”.

If we treat Pride parades as a mass demonstration like those most studied in social movement literature, then their symbolic meaning is that they are demonstrations of political power. With over one million people at New York's 2010 parade, this would make it the largest political demonstration for any cause of the year. But Pride parades generally are not treated as political demonstrations, for good reason. They include festive parade elements such as floats and marching bands and do not make explicit claims for political change. This leaves the researcher with the question of where to situate Pride parades within the repertoire of collective action. A few researchers have considered tactics used by movements to target culture, rather than the state, and these may provide insight into understanding Pride parades.

**Cultural Protest**

The social movement literature I have reviewed so far was developed from empirical research on state-directed tactics. There are two problems with this. First, focusing on state-directed tactics places the locus of power in the hands of the state. Researchers working within a contentious politics and/or political process/political opportunity model explicitly identify the state as the main power holder in modern democracies, but this model has been criticized for ignoring other sources of social power (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001; Melucci 1985; Offe 1985; Pichardo 1997; Tilly 1978; 1986; 1995; 2008). The second, related problem is that even with attention to cultural change, focusing on state-directed tactics implies a model wherein cultural equality must be preceded by political/legal equality. The theoretical insight of identity politics is that social movements can be based on the struggle for
cultural equality, not just structural equality. Fraser's (1995; 2000) redistribution/recognition distinction though is between cultural and structural inequality; political/legal equality is a means to achieve these but not the end goal. The question in this dissertation is whether the explicit cultural tool of mass demonstration carries a different external implicit message and affects internal movement culture differently when its purpose is to directly challenge implicit culture at the macro-level.

A few researchers have studied movement tactics that directly challenge dominant culture. With regard to their external messages, these studies suggest that such tactics may communicate richer symbolic meanings than state-targeted political protests. In his study of the AIDS activist group ACT UP, Gamson (1989) detailed how it used symbolic inversions to engage cultural conflict. The group's most prominent symbol was a pink triangle - a symbol used by Nazis to mark homosexuals - with the words “SILENCE=DEATH” written on it. ACT UP reclaimed this symbol of powerlessness to mean action; instead of silently accepting death, they called for others to fight back. More recently, Rupp & Taylor (2003; Taylor, Rupp, & Gamson 2004) argued that drag performers challenge the gender binary through their performances, while Bernstein & De La Cruz (2008) showed how Hapa movement activists challenge cultural insistence that each person has one race by asserting multiracial identities. Taylor et al. (2009) illustrated the cultural contestation in the same-sex marriages performed in February 2004 when San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom defied state law and issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The authors explained the cultural challenge:

Cultural rituals typically serve to affirm dominant relations of power. When used in the pursuit of change, however, cultural tactics imbue traditional symbols, identities, and practices with oppositional meaning and are often deployed in new ways that challenge and subvert the
dominant order (Taylor et al. 2004)…as sites of ritualized heterosexuality (Ingraham 2003), the weddings were an opportunity for same-sex couples to deploy identity publicly and strategically (Bernstein 1997) to gain visibility for their relationships, stake a claim to civil rights, contest discriminatory marriage laws, and challenge the institutionalization of heterosexuality. (Taylor et al. 2009: 876)

The San Francisco brides and grooms staged public weddings that challenged the dominant, macro-level semiotic code linking marriage to heterosexuality. While legal/political equality was a partial goal, it was neither the immediate nor dominant aim of this action. The mayor and his clerks engaged in civil disobedience by defying the law and legally marrying same-sex couples, but those who married engaged in cultural disobedience by defying the implicit cultural standard that only heterosexual couples get married, and only their unions are publicly celebrated.

In each of these studies, activists did not simply adopt state-directed tactics like protest marches and direct them at cultural targets. Like state-directed tactics, these culture-directed tactics are explicit cultural tools employed by a micro- or meso-level social group to communicate implicit meanings that challenge social power. The difference is that cultural equality is a direct goal and the state, through its role establishing legal/political equality, is only indirectly involved. With each of the studies reviewed, the culture-directed tactics carry rich symbolic meaning beyond the simple communication of political power of state-directed demonstrations. The tactics themselves are creative ways to challenge culture through enacting new meanings. They challenge macro-level implicit meanings directly, implying an “outside in” model of the effect of culture on individual behavior. In this dissertation I consider the ways that Pride parades direct their external message towards macro-level culture.

Evidence from these studies about the internal community building effects of
culture-directed tactics are mixed on their difference from state-directed tactics. Taylor et al. (2009) noted that participants in San Francisco same-sex marriages, like participants in political mass demonstrations, experienced collective effervescence through which they bonded with other participants. Rupp & Taylor (2003), however, found that drag performances expanded the scope of those who participated in or observed cultural protest. As entertainment, these drag performances appealed to broad audiences while still engaging in cultural critique. More research is needed to tie internal cultural effects with the external message and direction of protest along with the wider social conditions against which participants protest.

This research points to the promise of studying movement actions directed at targets other than the state, even when that target is the intangible dominant culture. However, more research is needed to match the tactics activists use to their particular social contexts. This dissertation is an attempt to meet this need through a study of LGBT Pride parades. I describe and analyze the external cultural message of Pride parades and their internal cultural work, then link these two sides to LGBT people's social/political status in American society.

Outline of the Dissertation

My examination of LGBT Pride parades starts with a description and analysis of the first Pride events held in New York City and Los Angeles in 1970. The marches were held simultaneously to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Stonewall riots and to promote a new era of gay and lesbian visibility. Though they differed in style – Los Angeles's event was more festive and parade-like than New York’s – the events had in common participants' open declaration and celebration of their gay identities. The theme
of “gays marching as gays” was part of a broad change in gay and lesbian movement strategy to achieve cultural equality through direct challenges to both oppressive laws and macro-level cultural codes.

Next I fill in the forty year gap since the first Parades in 1970 and describe the current political and cultural climate for LGBT people in the U.S. I describe changes in the political and cultural climate for LGBT people by reviewing key legal changes in state and federal sodomy laws, non-discrimination statutes, and same-sex relationship recognition, macro-level increases in the cultural visibility of LGBT people, and meso-level development of culture within the LGBT population. Next I compare the cultural landscape for LGBT people with that of two other identity groups, women and African Americans. I argue that the primary cultural challenge for the LGBT community is cultural legitimacy as a group, which differs from women and African-Americans' challenge of cultural respect. I tie the challenge for cultural legitimacy to the recent historical emergence of LGBT people as an identity group. I also compare the LGBT community's cultural resources with those of women and African-Americans. I show the unique challenge for LGBT people is to come together as a group to build collective identity other resources. These challenges stem from the relative lack of “free spaces” in which to develop these resources. In this chapter I set the stage for my study of contemporary LGBT Pride parades by defining those challenges and resources that are unique to the LGBT population and identifying those they have in common with other identity groups.

In the fourth chapter I trace the diffusion of Pride parades since 1970 and detail the methods of data collection and analysis for this study of contemporary parades.
Using data collected on all U.S. Pride parades, I summarize their current distribution by size and geography. Next, I describe my study of contemporary U.S. Pride parades using field observations, crowd data, and participant interviews. I systematically selected six parades to cover a range of variables include size, geographic region, demographics, and cultural climate towards LGBT people. During the summer and fall of 2010 I observed each parade, took detailed fieldnotes, talked informally with marchers and spectators, and recruited participants for semi-structured phone interviews. I conducted 50 of these interviews from the fall of 2010 to spring 2011, transcribed them, and analyzed them using the qualitative software MAXQDA. I compared parades on two dichotomous variables: number of participants (small/medium vs. large) and cultural climate (gay-friendly vs. non gay-friendly). Finally, I analyzed photographs of spectators at each parade in order to roughly estimate the makeup of crowds by race/ethnicity, gender, and gender presentation. I discuss methodological issues I encountered in this qualitative study of one-day events.

In the following two chapters I present data collected at six Pride parades. The first chapter focuses on externally-oriented dimensions of Pride parades. I argue that these parades attempt to change culture by contesting a dominant cultural code that regards homosexuality as a source of shame. At Pride parades participants flip the cultural code on its head through visibility, celebration, and support of LGBT people. I link this to the varying cultural climates in which parades are held by showing that participants in non gay-friendly climates emphasize support while those in gay-friendly climates emphasize celebration.

The second data chapter presents the internally-focused dimensions of Pride
parades. I argue that LGBT people face cultural, structural, and demographic barriers to coming together to develop collective identity and that Pride parades are a site for this development. I show that Pride parades facilitate the collective identity formation and maintenance by bring LGBT people physically together, fostering shared emotions, and constructing boundaries. I also analyze the trade-offs of collective identity development at Pride as those with more non-normative gender or sexual displays are sometimes marginalized in order be more welcoming to straight ally participants and to present a more palatable image of the community to the mainstream. In contrast to externally-oriented dimensions, internal dimensions vary in less patterned ways by parade size, cultural climate, and participants' sexual identities.

To conclude this dissertation, I summarize the ways Pride parades are thoroughly cultural protest tactics. Operating within the cultural arena, Pride parades are explicit cultural tools used to challenge macro-level cultural codes. I then discuss the ways my study can be used as a framework to research other cultural protest tactics. This framework integrates cultural sociology with social movement theory and research. Finally, I suggest future areas of research on cultural protest in other social movements and on the links between political and cultural sides to identity-based social movements.
CHAPTER 2
PRIDE BEGINNINGS

The first march was very much in keeping with how I saw myself politically. Something new and unique to my experience, the way I saw myself politically. It was unique because this was the first time in my life that I marched for myself. I marched for my freedom, I wasn’t marching as an advocate for someone else’s freedom, civil rights for instance, that was uniquely different. That I saw that my identity as a gay man was worthy of political formulation, worthy of a march in up an avenue in America in 1970 so that was unique and I saw progression in terms of my own development, in terms of how I saw human rights and the rights of people, so that was uniquely different.

- Stephen F. Dansky, marched in New York City Pride, 1970

The first Pride events were held on June 28, 1970 simultaneously in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago, and drew roughly 5,000 marchers and an equal number of spectators. In terms of sheer size, these were the largest public gatherings of gays and lesbians in human history. That alone makes the events historically significant, but I argue that even more than size these were significant adaptations of social movement tactics. Coming out of the 1960s/70s protest cycle, Pride participants “took to the streets” in a familiar way for a new cause: gay and lesbian cultural equality. This new and bold action signaled a change in the strategy of gay and lesbian activists, from the more

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1 While Chicago’s event continues as one of the nation’s largest parades today, I focus on the marches in NYC and LA because they were significantly bigger (~3,500 in NYC, ~1,200 in LA compared to ~200 in Chicago).
modest and accommodating tactics of the homophile phase to the unapologetic strategies of gay liberation and gay identity phases of LGBT activism.

In the last chapter I argued that Pride parades complicate the role of culture in social movement theory because, rather than the state, they target macro-level implicit cultural codes. In this chapter I examine the origins of Pride events to show their point of departure from state-directed mass demonstrations. I explain what was, in Stephen Dansky's words, “uniquely different” about the 1970 Pride events in New York City and Los Angeles as compared to both earlier gay and lesbian activism and tactics used by other movements. I connect these Pride events both to social movement literature on tactic diffusion and to the development of gay and lesbian activism in the last forty years.

With his concept of modularity, Tarrow (1998) formalized the notion that the modern repertoire of contention contains tactics that can be used for many situations, purposes, and towards different targets. In the language of cultural sociology, the modern tactical repertoire is a cultural toolkit from which activists draw to make contentious claims (Swidler 1986). A tactic such as a protest march or sit-in communicated culturally intelligible meanings that are modular, or adaptable to activists' specific purposes. Diffusion of social movement tactics are theorized to occur in a cycle in which a new tactic is slowly adopted by a few, then diffusion increases rapidly as many groups adopt the tactic, and finally the process tapers because all (or most) possible groups have adopted the tactic (Oliver & Meyers 2003; Soule 2004). Within this model, scholars identify the mechanisms by which tactics diffuse, showing that social movement groups hear about new tactics directly via social networks (either through formal organizational or informal social communication) and indirectly through media accounts (Andrews &
Biggs 2006; Oliver & Meyers 2003; Soule 1997, 2004). When diffusion is through indirect channels, shared collective identity is important so that those potential adopters that are more culturally and structurally similar are more likely to use the tactic (Connell & Cohn 1995; Soule 1997).

Protests are not held regularly across time but in cycles (Tarrow 1998). A cycle of protest (or contention) is a period of heightened conflict across a social system in which movements for many causes take collective action and there is diffusion of new tactical forms, identities, and frames (McAdam 1995; Snow & Benford 1992; Tarrow 1998). Movements do not exist as discrete units but as part of “movement families” that respond to similar political opportunities and jointly create and share resources such as tactics, identities, and frames (Koopmans 2004; McAdam 1995; Meyer & Whittier 1994; Tarrow 1998).

Scholars identify a protest cycle during the 1960s and 1970s when contentious actions surged for movements on the political left including those for civil rights, women, farm workers, and gays and lesbians (McAdam 1995; Minkoff 1997; Tarrow 1998). These movements had in common the idea that an oppressed group – their difference marked by race, ethnicity, gender, etc. - could challenge their cultural inequality through collective action (Morris 1999). They also had in common the use of disruptive mass demonstrations such as marches, rallies, boycotts, and sit-ins (Morris 1999). Activists in previous social movements had employed many of these tactics, but in the 60s/70s protest cycle they were used heavily and adapted by activists working for a host of causes. Mass numbers of people with little social power, such as African-Americans, students, and women, used nonviolent tactics to claim social power by disrupting the normal order of
society (McAdam 1983). Through sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and marches for equality along New York's 5th Ave. and in Washington, DC, activists demanded attention to their grievances by refusing to go along with their cultural and legal inequality. Movements that emerged later in the protest cycle drew from the innovative tactics used by activists in earlier movements (McAdam 1983; 1995; Morris 1999).

Many gays and lesbians participated in movements of the 60s/70s protest cycle, including civil rights, women's, and the New Left (Adam 1995; Valocchi 2001). Lesbians, in particular, were a strong segment of the women's movement though they were subject to homophobia from straight feminists (Adam 1995). In addition to direct participation, gay and lesbian activists drew inspiration and motivation from the successes of the civil rights, women's, and other movements of the 1960s and their use of visible disruptive tactics (Adam 1995; Bernstein 2002; D'Emilio 1998). Thus, the tactical innovations of other movements in the 60s/70s protest cycle were important influences for the Pride marches of 1970. My task in this chapter is to show what was new about these events. I argue that they were more than extensions of a familiar tactic to a new cause, but significantly modified the protest march tactic. These first Pride events gave birth to the Pride phenomena that today reaches over on hundred U.S. cities and as many locations abroad.

To construct this narrative, I use published research on the gay and lesbian movement, contemporary news reports and editorials from the gay periodical the *Advocate*, and first person accounts from ten participants in early Pride events. The *Advocate* was founded in 1967 and by 1970 had the largest circulation of all gay periodicals. Unlike other gay periodicals of the time, it established a news focus rather
than mixing news and fiction (Streitmatter 1993). While it was published in Los Angeles the paper maintained a national focus, signaled by its name change from the Los Angeles Advocate to simply the Advocate in the spring of 1970 (Streitmatter 1993). Though not a perfect source, the Advocate was the most wide-ranging, news-oriented, and largest circulating gay periodical of the time. The main source of new information in this chapter is through first person accounts with Pride participants. I interviewed five men and one woman who marched in New York’s first march, one man and one woman from LA, one man who marched in New York’s second march and organized Philadelphia’s first march in 1972, and I include a first person account from another woman who marched in Los Angeles’s first parade and organized subsequent events. I refer to Pride participants by name throughout the chapter, and provide brief biographical sketches of each in Appendix A.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide historical background to today’s Pride parades by showing how they came about, how they were organized, and what the experience was for participants. I explain how the marches in New York and Los Angeles were different than any actions taken by gay activists before. My historical overview sheds light on the meaning of the events in 1970 and places them in historical context. In a nutshell, I find that what was truly new about the first Pride events was that it was the first large-scale action in which gay men and lesbians publicly showed themselves as gay and lesbian, declaring it worthy of celebration and respect.

Setting the Stage for Stonewall

By June 1969, cultural and structural elements were present for a gay cultural uprising. There was a profound disconnect between gays' structural position and their
cultural and legal treatment. Structurally, the Industrial Revolution allowed people for the first time in history to organize their lives around sexual and romantic preferences. The Industrial Revolution introduced wage work so that an individual could economically sustain herself apart from her family. It brought people to cities for industrial jobs where they were able to congregate based on personal affinity. This made it possible for a person, whatever his sexual orientation, to meet and form a relationship with someone based on preference and still survive financially (Adam 1985; 1995; D'Emilio 1983; 1998). Chauncey (1994) documented a thriving gay male culture in New York City with neighborhood enclaves, publicized social events, and commercial establishments from 1890 to 1940. Other historians told the stories of predominantly gay male cultures in San Francisco, Portland (OR), Atlanta, and Boston (Boag 2003; Boyd 2003; Chenault 2008; The History Project 1998). World War II sped up this process in the U.S. Massive numbers of men and women were mobilized for the war effort, drawing them together in cities and in the service. This structural change meant that previously isolated gay men and women could meet each other and create community. They established gay bars in port cities like San Francisco, New York, and Seattle and networks of gay soldiers and industrial workers (Bérubé 1990, D'Emilio 1998). At the same time, the military paid more attention to homosexuality than any time in the past, screening recruits for perceived homosexual tendencies and dishonorably discharging service women and men if they were discovered to be gay (Bérubé 1990)

2 This does not mean that gays and lesbians were free from inequality based on other factors such as race, gender, and class. Nor were they free from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. It means only that it was possible for some gays and lesbians to organize their lives around their sexuality.
In the 1950s, gays began to organize for social change just as the federal and state governments increased policing of homosexual behavior. State-led anti-vice campaigns resulted in large increases in the number of sodomy arrests across the country, and while these laws technically could be applied to heterosexual acts, these campaigns targeted gay men's sexual behavior (Eskridge 2008). McCarthy era congressional investigations named gay and lesbian service members and federal employees as threats to national security (D'Emilio 1998). With this state pressure gay men and lesbians were increasingly at risk of arrest, losing their jobs, and cultural disregard. The first gay and lesbian activist organizations were founded in the midst of this legal and cultural repression. Harry Hay created the Mattachine Society for (mostly) gay men in Los Angeles and Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon founded the Daughters of Bilitis for lesbians in San Francisco (Adam 1995; D'Emilio 1998). Both groups had modest goals3: to provide social support to gays outside the bar scene and to educate professionals in the medical and psychological communities about gays and lesbians. They thought that if straight professionals tempered their rhetoric about gays' inherent sickness, then the mainstream would not see them as a threat to morality and social order. Scholars describe the homophile movement as “accommodationist” because they did not challenge mainstream negative policies and perceptions head on, but rather attempted to forge a safe compromise in which they could live unmolested. (Adam 1995; D'Emilio 1998; Rimmerman 2002)

During the 1960s, many gays and lesbians were active in civil rights, women's,

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3 Hay created the Mattachine Society originated with more radical aims, but more moderate activists took the group over within two years.
and students movements. As noted above, they gained both inspiration and practical
training in mobilization, movement organization, and protest tactics from these
experiences. By 1969 they had many resources with which to challenge their cultural
inequality. But while many gays and lesbians had the ability to support themselves
economically, commercial spaces in which to socialize, and cultural resources with which
to assert their social power, they faced intense harassment from police and cultural
disregard. Many lived happy and productive lives but were maligned by mainstream
society as criminals, sinners, and mentally ill (Carter 2004; Ghaziani 2008; Herrell 1996).

Though organizations had actively worked for social change for nearly twenty years, in
1969 gays and lesbians had no legal protections so could be (and often were) fired from
their jobs and denied housing for being gay. Laws made homosexual sex illegal in most
states and some ordinances made it effectively illegal to congregate in bars (Carter 2004;
Eskridge 2008). Since owners operating a gay bar could not get a liquor license, their
bars were frequently raided by police for liquor law violations (Carter 2004; Eskridge
2008). In New York City, the Mafia operated many gay bars (Carter 2004; Duberman
1993). After twenty years of homophile activism and during a time of broad social
change and more radical activism, urban gays had activist know-how and socialization.
They were economically and socially able to fight back against a larger cultural and legal
system that repressed them.

**The Meaning and Significance of Stonewall**

On June 27, 1969, police raided a gay bar called the Stonewall Inn. The official
reason was that it was serving alcohol without a license; the catch was that the New York
alcohol commission would not grant licenses to bars that served gays (Carter 2004;
Police raids were common on places where gays congregated – mostly bars and cruising areas – and were supported by laws that treated any gathering of gay people as sites of indecency (Adam 1995; Armstrong 2002; Armstrong & Crage 2006; Carter 2004; Eskridge 2008). Rather than scattering to avoid arrest when police raided the Stonewall Inn, patrons fought back. They managed to turn the tables on police by barricading them inside the bar. As police reinforcements arrived, so did other gays and lesbians in the area and the raid became a full-blown riot. Riots continued for three nights straight, ceasing during the daytime for everyone to regroup and starting again as night fell. (Carter 2004; Duberman 1993; Lietsch 1969)

As Armstrong & Crage (2006) showed, the Stonewall riots became known as a significant turning point in the gay rights movement through interpretive work of contemporary gay leaders. The event was not the first time that gay patrons fought back against a police raid, but because of existing activist infrastructure including relationships with mainstream media outlets and established gay periodicals, community leaders were able to get the word out early that the riots signified something big. In this chapter through analysis of articles from the Advocate and first person accounts from 1970 Pride participants in New York City (NYC) and Los Angeles (LA), I demonstrate how community members interpreted the Stonewall riots.

*Advocate* portrayals of police officers reveal a perception of them as representatives of broader cultural disregard, not merely as isolated bad actors. Writers described broad cultural struggle between gays and mainstream culture. When reporting or editorializing on specific police incidents they frequently switched between naming the police and general macro-level culture as perpetrators of what they regarded as anti-
gay oppression. In an article discussing the aftermath of Stonewall, for example, the
writer says that gays at the time had solidarity because, “[they] share a feeling of
persecution arising from injustices dealt out to them and their gay friends by the straight
establishment” (Jackson 1969: 11). In this view, which was dominant among Advocate
articles, the institutional power of the police was that of straight, mainstream society, and
this society actively oppressed gays.

Writers distinguished gays' social struggle from that of racial/ethnic minority
groups, principally African-Americans. They felt that gays occupied a different cultural
space because they were not recognized as a minority group but as damaged people who
could be fixed. Berbrier (2002) argued that the success of the civil rights movement
changed the American cultural landscape so that a group could benefit by being
recognized as a minority. He documented the efforts of three groups – deaf, gay, and
white supremacist activists – to establish themselves as culturally legitimate minorities in
order to establish a basis for their political recognition claims (Berbier 2002). Advocate
writers descriptions of the Stonewall riots fit this model of claims-making. One reporter
wrote that the police did not respect gay rioters enough to fight brutally (like they did
against African-Americans in civil rights protests) because they viewed gays as “sick”
(Leitsch 1969). In another piece, after discussing police harassment the author broadened
the discussion to explain the difference between mainstream views of African-Americans
and gays:

Straight people do not regard homosexuals as a minority group like
Negroes. The straights had moral conflicts and guilty feelings about their
treatment of the Negro minority, but they have no such qualms when it
comes to gays. Most Christian churches and the conservative straights
regard them as disgusting and abominably wicked, while the liberals
regard them as mentally ill. The Negroes had many friends in white
Jackson described a challenge that is mainly cultural, not political. By contrasting their struggle with that of African-Americans, Advocate writers emphasized that it was driven by ignorance and prejudice about what it means to be gay. African-Americans faced extreme prejudice from the white majority, but for these community leaders the important point was that they were never told not to be black. Advocate saw gays' cultural challenge as being recognized as whole individuals that could not and did not want to change their sexuality.

Advocate writers clearly interpreted the Stonewall riots as a turning point in gays’ approach to their place in the world. Armstrong & Crage (2006) noted that community leaders advanced this interpretation from the beginning. Advocate articles and first person accounts add richness to this argument by showing how they placed Stonewall as a turning point not just for activists within the social movement field, but for all gays and lesbians. The first mention of Stonewall in the Advocate was in September 1969 with two articles side by side. The first, “Police raid on N.Y. Club Sets Off First Gay Riot” (Leitsch 1969), was a detailed accounting of events. The second, “N.Y. Gays: Will the Spark Die?” (Lige & Jack 1969a) analyzed reactions and follow up strategies. Both articles emphasized Stonewall as an event that shifted gays’ stance from the homophile movement’s narrow and accommodationist goals to a broader, defiant challenge of gays’ cultural marginalization.

Writers detailed how the gay rioters stood up for themselves as gays, using camp

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4 Armstrong (2002) made the point that the gay identity movement ushered at this time expanded the field of gay social movement activism to include all who identified as gay, not just activists.
humor and sexual taunts to disarm police and shouting “Gay Power” and “We Want Freedom Now”. In one instance, a writer reported that as police were trying to arrest one rioter, “A high shrill voice called out ‘Save our sister!’ and there was a general pause, during which the ‘butch’-looking ‘numbers’ looked distracted” (Lietsch 1969: 11). In this report and subsequent articles, writers emphasized the bravery of more feminine gay men and drag queens who were marginalized both by mainstream and gay society. As one writer pointed out, “those usually put down as ‘sissies’ or ‘swishes’ showed the most courage and sense during the action. Their bravery and daring saved many people from being hurt, and their sense of humor and ‘camp’ helped keep the crowds from getting nasty or too violent” (Lietsch 1969: 11). In the homophile movement that characterized gay activism until the late ‘60s, activists promoted the most “respectable” image of gays they could – highlighting those gay men and women who followed cultural norms of gender presentation and were thus least threatening to this cultural order (Adam 1995; D'Emilio 1998; Rimmerman 2008). By emphasizing the actions of those who most deviated from social norms and thus were most marginalized, writers signaled that the spark of Stonewall was to stand up for gays’ difference from mainstream culture. By doing this, Stonewall rioters fought back as gays in that they did not compromise the expressions of identity.

Writers connected the celebration of less “respectable” gays and lesbians to greater pride for all in the community. As a result of the actions at Stonewall, the poet Allen Ginsburg is quoted as saying “They no longer have that wounded look” (Lige & Jack 1969a: 3). Writers coupled this new pride in gay identity with a motivation to act for social change (Jackson 1969; Kepner 1970; Lige & Jack 1969a; 1969b; Wells 1969).
Nikos Diaman, who participated in New York City march, also described a new optimism among gays in New York:

I was joyous about the change and attitudes on the street. The people that I met in [New York] when I first came back had a lot of guilt. But then men that I was meeting after the Stonewall, they started the liberation word, that’s more optimistic and freer about sexuality.

For Diaman, Stonewall sparked a personal change among gay men he met; for Tommi Mecca, the personal change resulted in a more militant attitude toward mainstream society:

I think it was that spirit, that spirit of rebelliousness, of defiance because you know, you’ve got to remember that in the early 70’s we had everything against us, nobody like queers, nobody except a few fringe Quakers and Unitarians. Basically, religious groups thought we were the devil, the same with government, just about everybody so what I saw in NY that first time I went to the Pride march, I saw the spirit of defiance, the spirit of fuck you, we don't care how you think about us, we don't care you want to lock us up in jail or some psych ward, you are wrong and we are right.

Both men described a changed attitude toward a hostile culture - the refusal to accept the message that gays and lesbians are mentally ill, sinners, or criminals and adoption of a view that being gay is a valid human difference that deserves cultural acceptance.

Along with this new motivation to challenge mainstream cultural codes, community leaders were concerned with using the new spark to focus on internal unity of the gay and lesbian community. These two foci, external and internal, went together as activist groups in NYC planned both political rallies and social gatherings immediately after the riots (Carter 2004; Lige & Jack 1969a; 1969b). Many participants I interviewed attended these events. Nikos Diaman traced his involvement in the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), an activist group that played a major part in the first march, to attending a dance sponsored by the group. Martha Shelley reported organizing smaller protest events,
activities for which she was mentioned in the *Advocate* (Lige & Jack 1969b). On the west coast, the *Advocate* reported that the Western Homophile Conference of 1969 centered on concerns of unity and change (“Western Regional” 1969).

**Preparing to March**

At Stonewall, gays of all types – women and men, drag queens, youths living on the streets, and adults with white collar jobs - fought back against harassment that they saw as personally directed at them and motivated by disapproval for who they were. They fought back as gays, with drag queens and feminine men at the front making sexually suggestive comments in response to police harassment and using camp humor to defuse tension. They showed that gays had power without compromising themselves, in stark contrast to the stance of the homophile movement.

Stonewall was essentially reactive; gays fought back when attacked. In the months after the attack community leaders debated what to do next. There was a spark in the community, a desire for more action, and many were concerned that this spark did not breed militancy. A commemorative march on the anniversary of Stonewall was first proposed at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) in November 1969 (Carter 2004). Since 1965, ERCHO had sponsored Annual Reminders on July 4th at Independence Hall in Philadelphia that were intended to bring attention to gay rights (Bernstein 2002; Carter 2004) Participants followed a strict dress code of jackets and ties for men and dresses for women and silently held signs declaring, “15 MILLION HOMOSEXUAL AMERICANS ASK FOR EQUALITY, OPPORTUNITY, DIGNITY” (Carter 2004; Rainbow History Project 2011). At the 1969 conference, Craig Rodwell, who had conceived of the Annual Reminders, offered a resolution to change this
That the Annual Reminder, in order to be more relevant, reach a greater number of people, and encompass the ideas and ideals of the larger struggle in which we are engaged – that of our fundamental human rights – be moved in time and location.

We propose that a demonstration be held annually on the last Saturday in June in New York City to commemorate the 1969 spontaneous demonstrations on Christopher Street and this demonstration be called CHRISTOPHER STREET LIBERATION DAY. No dress or age regulations shall be made for this demonstration.

We also propose that we contact Homophile organizations throughout the country and suggest that they hold parallel demonstrations on that day. We propose a nationwide show of support. (Carter 2004: 230)

The resolution was adopted, and planning began for the first Pride march on June 28, 1970.

It is unclear exactly when planning started in Los Angeles but there were three main leaders: Morris Kight, head of GLF, Troy Perry, who had founded the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in 1968 to serve gays and lesbians, and Bob Humphries. These three activists applied for a parade permit that included “decorated floats, marching bands, riders on horseback, and possibly a small elephant” (“Permit Hassle” 1970: 1). The application was met with resistance by the police commission, who wanted organizers to take out a bond for $1.5 million in the event that there was violent backlash to their parade and properties were damaged. Comments made by commissioners, reported by the Advocate, revealed that their view of gays and lesbians was exactly that which the parade meant to challenge. Police Chief Davis was quoted saying, “we would be ill-advised to discommode the people to have a burglars’ or robbers’ parade or a homosexuals’ parade” (“Permit Hassle” 1970: 1), and others similarly questioned the worth of a gay parade. Commissioners did not see gays and lesbians as a legitimate group
to hold a parade.

Despite the police commission’s refusal, organizers succeeded in getting a permit after filing suit against the commission. In his ruling, Judge Schauer compared gays’ right to demonstrate as equal to that of other minority groups, saying

> Whether it is a group of Negroes demonstrating in Jackson, Miss., for civil rights, or a group of homosexuals demonstrating for equal rights in Hollywood, wherever people are attempting to demonstrate peacefully to petition their government for redress of grievances, it is the duty of the police that are paid by the taxpayer – including the demonstrators – to protect them from intervention by hoodlums, and not attempt to keep them from exercising their constitutional rights (“Permit Hassle” 1970: 6).

The judge granted the permit on the basis that any group is allowed to demonstrate for their rights and receive police protection, equating gays and lesbians with African-American civil rights demonstrators. He ruled that commissioners’ opinion of the group did not matter for their constitutional right to demonstrate. Thus, the judge upheld gays and lesbians' legal/political equality under the law to hold a demonstration.

There was no similar hassle in New York as a coalition of groups there planned their march. NYC activists had better relationships with city officials, at least good enough to receive a permit (Armstrong & Crage 2006). Accounts from participants and the *Advocate* show a difference in make-up of the planning committees in each city. In New York, activist groups explicitly working for political and cultural change from New York, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and other major cities had been conferencing together and planning the Annual Reminders in Philadelphia since 1963 under the name East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO, later called ERCHO) (D'Emilio 1998). As the name suggests, the coalition was comprised of groups that had been working mainly with the pre-Stonewall homophile strategy of narrow goals and accommodationist tactics.
They were joined by newer groups with the more outspoken and uncompromising liberation approach such as the GLF. Tommi Mecca, who planned Philadelphia’s first Pride march in 1972 and participated in NYC’s in 1971, described the tension between older homophile and newer liberation groups:

There was always friction there between us and the homophile people because the homophile people weren’t as sold on this idea of coming out of the closet and really being out there and using your real name and all of this stuff and we were...I think they [homophile activists] saw the writing on the wall, saw that we were the future and that was really smart on their part because we were, we were very much a part of the present and the future.

Though different in strategy, nearly all groups involved in planning NYC Pride were social movement organizations with the primary goal of social change through political and cultural contestation (“N.Y. Groups Set Big Liberation Day March” 1970).

LA's march was organized more by strong community leaders who were prominent both for activism and social activities than by representatives from activist groups. One participant I talked to, Ruth Weiss, moved from New York to Los Angeles in May of 1970 and was familiar with both committees. Her impression was that LA’s committee was much more hierarchical, with a few individuals setting policies and delegating work. Pat Rocco corroborated this impression. Along with Kight, Perry, and Humphries, he identified himself as a main organizer of the parade. While Kight was prominent as an activist and founder of LA’s GLF chapter, Perry and Humphries were both ministers in addition to their activism and Rocco was prominent for his filmmaking and performance. According to Del Whan, who was active with the militant group GLF, Kight believed that in order to be successful the parade must include a broad community coalition. Thus those who planned LA’s parade represented more than the activist
segment of the gay and lesbian community, while NYC’s planning committee came wholly from it. NYC’s march was organized by a coalition of group representatives and LA’s by four strong leaders.

*Advocate* writers and Pride participants envisioned the first march in many ways. Central to all was the idea of celebrating the Stonewall riots and carrying on the new spirit of open, bold, and defiant declaration of sexuality. Organizer Morris Kight in Los Angeles was quoted in the *Advocate* describing the planned event as “a love-in…entirely peaceful and non-violent…which is the essence of love” (“Permit Hassle” 1970: 6). The official title of the event was “Christopher Street-West: A Freedom Revival in Lavender,” which speaks more of a celebratory event than a defiant protest. The newspaper also described NYC’s planned event as a “freedom march”, referring perhaps to Freedom Rides of the civil rights movement or to the expected feeling of liberation marchers would experience by marching openly on city streets. In contrast with the Annual Reminders, there was no dress code and everyone who wished was to be included. Many participants who had been active in other movements such as civil rights and the women’s movement said they initially saw the event much like other protest marches at the time, but it was unique because it was for gays and lesbians rather than another group.

**The Big Gay March**

On Sunday afternoon at 2pm, June 29, about 3,000 people marched in 75° weather through Manhattan (“Thousands March” 1970; Tucker 1970). Spanning over three miles, this first Pride march was longer than the 2010 parade by half a mile and went from Christopher Street in the heart of the gay neighborhood and the location of the now boarded up Stonewall Inn up 5th Ave. to Sheep’s Meadow in Central Park. In Los
Angeles, 1,200 marchers stepped off at 7pm to parade down Hollywood Blvd in front of a crowd four to five thousand (estimates vary widely, some claiming up to 15,000 spectators) (“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970; Houston 1970; “Thousands March” 1970).

Marchers were not sure what to expect because this was a new event. Police harassment was frequent and supported by laws that made it difficult for gays and lesbians to congregate without fear. Losing one’s job for being gay was a constant threat, heightened by a highly publicized 1969 incident in which San Francisco activist Gale Whittington was fired from his job at States Steamship Company after appearing with his lover in the gay periodical the Berkeley Barb (Armstrong 2002; Carter 2004). LA Pride’s permit was hard to come by and the difficulty in obtaining it evidences the degree of cultural resistance (“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970; “Permit Hassle” 1970). Pat Rocco and Ruth Weiss, in LA, and Martha Shelley in NYC described talking to many gays and lesbians who were afraid to march for fear of repercussions with their jobs and families. Nikos Diaman, in New York, said he was, “a little bit apprehensive because I didn't know what would happen. If there would be violence directed towards us, etc.”

Stephen F. Dansky, also in NYC, reflected more strongly on his fear that day:

In 1970 when we first march, we were illegal sexually, hospitalized mental illness as part of a diagnosis that was given by the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic manual which also is used for diagnoses. We could have been arrested for so called sodomy…. So when the first march occurred, we were not legitimate. We were legitimate for ourselves, but not legitimate for the world…The fear that I had on that very first march, I had no way of knowing whether we would make it, whether we would be attacked. There was a lot of violent protest against us. And we were victims of violence as we continue to be, but even more so in that era.

These fears of violence and other repercussions went beyond the actions of the state; they
were fears of treatment by mainstream society. The state was part of it, with the chance of arrest, but the bigger part was fear that the police would not or could not protect gay and lesbian marchers from economic or physical violence. Fortunately, the fears were unwarranted as marchers in both New York and LA stepped off to mostly supportive crowds. There were no reported incidents of violence or arrests.

The two Pride events were different. Both mixed elements of traditional protest marches and celebratory parades, but NYC was closer to a protest march and LA closer to a parade. In New York participants marched in formal and informal groups and held signs identifying their organizations. The parade elements included, as described by the Advocate,

> Colorful pennants of purple, red, green, and yellow…Day-Glo signs reading “Gay Pride” were present everywhere. Banners and picket signs, mounted on cardboard tubes rather than on wooden slats, in order to conform to New York practice, proclaimed cities of origin and were carried proudly.

> Attire of the marchers ranged from flamboyant costumes, with laces, burnooses, and capes, to torn shirts and jeans, with a sprinkling of suits. A few drags came in complete makeup and walked the entire three miles in high heels.

(Tucker 1970: 5)

While the NYC Pride march featured these festive parade elements, they did not include others like floats, music, or other entertainment. Instead marchers chanted slogans like “2, 4, 6, 8, Gay is just as good as straight!” and held signs to “smash imperialism”.

NYC marcher Perry Brass attended planning sessions and reported that organizers were concerned to keep the march from becoming a carnivalesque parade, thinking that would take away from the seriousness of the event. He described the discussions at planning meetings:
But there were other people who thought well if we do this, suppose the bars want to take it over and want to have floats and go-go boys. And we said, Martha [Shelley] and Bob and other people said no, this has got to be a political march, we have got to bring politics into this, it is going to be most of all a conscious raising event, which is what was so important to us at that period. ...And so we wanted this march to be a consciousness raising event, we didn't want it to be splashy, we didn't want floats, we didn't want disco music, we didn't want any of that kind of stuff, we wanted banners, if there was going to be music, we were going to provide it, none of the amplified pop crap, we would have whistles and drums of our own. This was going to be just the idealism of young people of that period.

For Brass and others, festive elements like amplified music and dancers would take away from the contentious message of the Pride march and thus make it less effective. But while they eschewed these elements in favor of features common to protest marches like chants and banners, their event still centered on contesting the cultural place of gays and lesbians in society. Their chants and signs of “Gay is Good” and “Lesbians are Lovable” spoke to cultural respect rather than legal equality. Martha Shelley, another marcher that I interviewed, described the cultural challenge:

The most important thing was to be out in public, to say that we were not going to take it anymore, to say that we were not going to let the police beat us up and cower in the closet. And a lot of people could get behind that, people who didn't have a political view...That it was gay people being out in public and refusing to cower in fear and refusing to buy the idea that we were inferior, mentally disordered, sinners, that we were as happy with ourselves or would be as happy with ourselves if we weren’t so beaten up by people as anybody else. That was something that any gay person could get behind.

By marching on public streets and declaring their sexuality, marchers did not just say that “gay is just as good as straight”, they demonstrated it as well.

Another element to the more protest march atmosphere was the groups involved. The Advocate reported that representatives from over 25 formal groups marched, many from NYC but others from nearby cities such as Philadelphia, Newark, DE, Washington,
DC, and New Brunswick, NJ (Tucker 1970). Like those who planned the parade, all groups listed are social movement organizations formed explicitly to enact political or cultural change.

In Los Angeles, by contrast, “Over 1000 homosexuals and their friends staged, not just a protest march, but a full-blown parade down world-famous Hollywood Boulevard” (“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970: 1). The Advocate piece continued its description:

Flags and banners floated in the chill sunlight of late afternoon; a bright red sound truck blared martial music; drummers strutted; a horse pranced; clowns cavorted; 'vice cops' chased screaming 'fairies' with paper wings; the Metropolitan Community Church choir sang 'Onward Christian Soldiers'; a bronzed and muscular male model flaunted a 7 ½ foot live python...Sensational Hollywood had never seen anything like it. (“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970: 1)

The Advocate reported that there were five floats, one with a confrontational display of a gay man “nailed” to a cross and another with an equally provocative large jar of vasoline.

While many of these elements may seem to reduce the event to a frivolous spectacle – indeed, NYC organizers chose to exclude them for that reason – I argue that they declared, as NYC marchers did when they chanted, that “Gay is as good as straight”. By parading down a prominent street, participants were communicating that the fun and creative parts of their lives were worthy of celebration instead of shame. According to Pat Rocco, who helped organized the parade,

The first parade was not much a threatening parade as it was, just being there and doing it was enough...The first parade was just, “We're here, we're queer, get over it”. We didn't have a theme or that, we were just, let's do it and see what happens. And it did to happen and it happened in a big way.

By Rocco's account there was not much planning about what to include or exclude from the parade. While NYC organizers debated the inclusion of amplified music or
entertainment from bars, I have not found evidence of such a debate in the planning stage in Los Angeles.

There were some though that did not think these elements were positive after the parade happened. Ruth Weiss, a participant that I interviewed, was disappointed that the more sensational images, like the jar of vaseline, were the ones that the media picked up, but she blamed the media rather than the participants. To her, the media chose to focus on those images that would be most offensive to mainstream readers, rather than giving an accurate representation of the parade as a whole. The Advocate printed a letter from a dissenter to the parade, in which he or she argued

> By showing us off as a group of silly freaks, those queens sure lowered our public image to the level public opinion has had it set for years. How can we make demands for equality, based on our rights as normal citizens, when our public image is constantly destroyed by flamboyancy and poor taste? (“Readers Knock, Praise” 1970)

This writer went further than Weiss by placing blame on gays and lesbians for their poor public image. Other writers, though, defended the parade, saying that rights are not based on one's conformity and that it was those most marginalized – drag queens and effeminate gay men – who fought hardest during the Stonewall riots (“Readers Knock, Praise” 1970; “N.Y. Figure: 5000” 1970; “Remember, the ‘Queens’ Had the Balls!” 1970). One writer asked, “Why do gays have to be blackmailed to suppress their own in catering to public prejudice?” and “Why reject our own, identify with our oppressors, discriminate against queens just because their life-styles are not our bag?” (“Remember, the ‘Queens’ Had the Balls!” 1970:18). For these writers, Pride was about challenging negative cultural attitudes even at the expense of more narrow political goals.

One reason for the more parade-like atmosphere in Los Angeles may be that a
wider array of individuals and groups were involved in the event. Rocco said the first parade was about making visible and showing the diversity of the gay community. This diversity is reflected in the groups involved. Social movement organizations such as GLF and Daughters of Bilitis marched alongside the public health group Stamp Out Syphilis, topless contestants riding in convertibles for the Advocate's Groovy Guy contest, the Grand Duchess (a drag queen) from San Francisco, and a contingent from Orange County marching with the banner, “Homosexuals for Ronald Reagan” (1200 Parade in Hollywood 1970). As discussed earlier, organizers in Los Angeles sought to include a broad coalition of community groups from the beginning which included social movement activists, public health groups, bars, and drag performers.

LA marchers also showed the diversity of the gay and lesbian community by presenting themselves in ways that defied stereotypes. The Advocate reported two contingents and the reactions they received. The first was a man who “drew delighted whoops all along the parade route” as he marched with two Alaskan Huskies and a sign that said “Not All of Us Walk Poodles” (1200 Parade in Hollywood 1970: 6). Another was a gay motorcycle group decked out in leather and riding Harley-Davidsons that “tended to shock straight spectators into silence”. The Advocate continued with a conversation among spectators:

“Don't tell me they're part of it,” a girl said in a small voice.

“They couldn't be,” her slender young male escort muttered, “They couldn't be.”


While many participants did present themselves stereotypically, others such as these two contingents tried to challenge stereotypes by showing that not all in the gay community
conform to them. What ties these together is that gay men and lesbians paraded through streets in celebration of their sexuality, however it manifested, and in defiance of a mainstream culture that condemned them as immoral, criminal, or mentally ill.

**Themes of the NYC and LA Pride Events**

Through first person accounts with participants and reports from the *Advocate*, I isolated four themes to the first Pride events in New York and Los Angeles. Just as rioters at Stonewall fought back without compromising their gay identities, the overarching theme of the first Pride march was gays marching as gays – not for a specific cause, not for another group, but declaring that their gay identity was legitimate and their stigmatization was to be publicly challenged. Instead of promoting the least objectionable image possible, as they had done at Annual Reminders, gays and lesbians were unapologetic in their divergence from mainstream norms of sexuality and gender expression. Ruth Weiss, who marched in the LA parade in 1970 and in NYC's Pride march in subsequent years, directly referenced this contrast with Annual Reminders:

> We were not like the homophile movement. We were out there and we were in your face. “We're here, we're queer, get used to it. If you don't like it get out of our way.” Part of the impetus was a counterpoint to the 4th of July marches by Mattachine which had a dress code. We were just going to get out there in whatever you wanted to wear and very festive and tie-dyed.

To Ruth, the dress code of ties, suit coats, and dresses served to mask participants’ true selves in order to make homosexuality less of a challenge to mainstream culture. Annual Reminders sought to present gays and lesbians as no different from straight people whereas Pride events were meant to highlight difference and bring visibility to the gay community. As Ruth said, Pride participants could wear what they wanted, meaning they were free to present their true gay selves.
Scholars of LGBT activism mark the Stonewall riots as a turning point in the movement (Adam 1995; Armstrong 2002; D'Emilio 1998; Rimmerman 2008).

Movement strategy switched from an interest group model in which activists sought narrow goals and emphasized gays' and lesbians' similarity to the heterosexual mainstream to an identity politics model seeking recognition of difference and inclusion. This more holistic model put the focus on ordinary people's gay identity, making each person's declaration of his or her homosexuality an act to further movement goals. The Pride events in New York and Los Angeles were collective actions to challenge macro-level cultural norms through participants' declaration and celebration of gay identity. Whereas Annual Reminders were collective actions that embodied the homophile movement's interest group strategy by presenting gays and lesbians as non-threatening, different in only one small aspect, gays and lesbians collectively showed difference that challenged macro-level culture at Pride events.

Though the look of the Pride events in New York and Los Angeles differed, they had in common the open display of gays and lesbians without regard to making the image palatable to mainstream society. In New York, that took the form of a protest march with festive elements to celebrate gay identity; in Los Angeles participants put on a parade to make this identity visible. Many participants that I interviewed understood Pride in relation to their activism with movements for civil rights and women. In the quote that opens this chapter, Steven F. Dansky said the connection with other movements made Pride special because it was the first time as an activist that he marched for his own identity and not that of someone else. He likened Pride to consciousness-raising events of the women's movement, saying that like those Pride was intended to raise awareness of
both participants and the public of the importance and legitimacy of an identity that is culturally maligned.

Another participant, Perry Brass, summed up the march more simply, saying, “We saw the march as being something that has never happened before. In the fact that it was going to be overtly, unshamlessly, unapologetically gay” - that is, without concessions to macro-level cultural pressure to hide markers of sexual difference. Most NYC organizers and marchers had strong activist backgrounds and marched with social movement groups, so their “unapologetically gay” event took the familiar form of a protest march with banners, signs, and chants. The participants in Los Angeles came from a broader base of the gay community – drag performers, church members, public health advocates, and social movement activists – and they put on a parade to showcase all these facets of their community.

Many aspects of the Pride events challenged mainstream culture. In Los Angeles in particular, contingents such as the Groovy Guy contest and the float with an oversized jar of vasoline were both overt celebrations of gay sexuality that contrasted sharply with homophile activists’ strategy to get along by minimizing the importance of gays’ and lesbians' sexual desires. NYC participants took a less theatrical but not less contentious approach by marching with signs and slogans to collectively declare their gay identity and assert their cultural worth. Perry Brass, the New York participant who described the march as “unapologetically gay”, explained this was culturally contentious:

There's an aspect to our march which also had a confrontational aspect to it. The fact that we were showing people in broad daylight that we existed, and this was something that never happened. My favorite quote from that period, a wonderful man named Jerry Hoose, he was shouting as we were walking up 6th avenue, “We're not in a dark bar anymore, we're out of the shadows and in the sunlight.” That’s what Jerry said and this was the
hallmark of the march, this was in broad daylight, we're not hiding anymore.

Before Stonewall, gays and lesbians – both as activists and in their everyday lives – by and large tried to get along by accommodating themselves to a hostile culture. It was not safe to publicly display their sexuality so they were open with each other only in a few limited spaces. One of the most prevalent spaces was bars, which were less than ideal because they were run by the Mafia in New York and frequently raided by police. The only way that most people could be gay, if at all, was to hide their sexuality in mainstream society and confine that part of their identity to dark bars. Pride flipped this on its head by bringing gays and lesbians “out of the shadows and into the sunlight”. It was not a political challenge because, as the Los Angeles judge affirmed in granting the permit for that parade, gays and lesbians had the constitutional right to assemble. It was instead a challenge to the macro-level cultural code prescribing how gays and lesbians were supposed to act.

I argue that the overarching theme of Pride events was gays and lesbians marching as themselves and this was a cultural challenge. A second theme was that marchers and Advocate writers were clear that Pride was something unique that had never been done before. Armstrong & Crage (2006) showed that participants in the Stonewall riots self-consciously interpreted the event as an important turning point in gay activism, and from my research this theme continued with the first Pride events in New York and Los Angeles. By their size alone these events were significant as the biggest gatherings of open gays and lesbians in history. The Advocate signaled the importance of Pride by devoting the first six pages of its July 22, 1970 to coverage of Pride events, including a full page of pictures. Coverage continued in subsequent issues as the periodical
published letters to the editor analyzing the events' impact and debating future steps for
the movement.

Participants interpreted Pride as more than a novel achievement, but as a new
concept entirely. Many marchers that I interviewed had been active with other social
movements so that the form of the events, in New York in particular, was not new to their
experience. What was new was that the Pride events were centered on gay identity and
not on another identity or cause. According to NYC participant Paul Guzzardo,

It was very exciting because it was a gay one. You know, lots of gay guys
and women that were marching together and that was what made it so
exciting. And after being oppressed for so many years, this was just so
liberating, I couldn't believe it. To walk down the street and say, “This is
who we are.” Just really great.

Guzzardo's quote reinforces the overarching theme of gays marching as gays, but he also
makes the point that this planned collective visibility was new to his and others'
experience.

Another theme was the strong emotional experience participants had in the march.
Jasper (2011) noted that protest marches often evoke a range of emotions from anger to
elation and this side of social movement experience is often overlooked by researchers.
Advocate writers and interviewees described fellow participants as “elated” and
“jubilant” because they were able to march openly with many others for the first time
(“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970; Tucker 1970). One participant compared the “high”
he felt to those brought on by drugs or alcohol. The Advocate described the upbeat mood:

Activities conducted by the various organizations during the week and the
obvious success of the event itself had combined to give protesters what
most described as a “real feeling of self-liberation.” Before, during, and
after the march Gays freely demonstrated affection by holding hands,
embracing, and kissing. (Tucker 1970: 5)
The Advocate attributed participants' excitement to both pride in putting on a successful event and the liberation of being able to publicly display their sexuality (“1200 Parade in Hollywood” 1970; Tucker 1970). LA participants Pat Rocco and Del Whan echoed these sentiments, saying they felt elated and noted that others both marching and in the crowd showed their excitement by cheering, smiling, and clapping. Rocco said that he and others were in “seventh heaven... We walked down the street so proudly and often so tearingly, just so amazed of the whole concept of that first parade ever. Our attitude and elation were boundless.” The atmosphere of Pride events was thus matched with the collective effervescence common to mass demonstrations (Jasper 2011). What made it different from other parades or marches was the reasons given for the emotions, highlighting the significance of the events as a cultural challenge that fit with gays and lesbians experiences.

Participants talked about their excitement at seeing so many people marching for gays and the thrill they felt from openly showing affection for same-sex partners along with many couples. NYC marcher Nikos Diaman, said that participating with others helped assuage his fears of backlash. Martha Shelley, also from NYC, said that the upbeat atmosphere and collection of people helped participants take the bold step to march openly. Once marching, participants emotions heightened through their collective experience. Perry Brass described how he felt comparing the experience to other protest marches in which he'd participated:

So my feeling was, oh this will just be another protest march like the anti-war protest march but then when I saw the thousands of gays and lesbians just out there and the energy we had with each other and it was a contact high, what you call a contact high, just touching each other, being with each other, everyone just smiling and laughing, and hugging and kissing and people who were my friends. At that point GLF probably had 100
active members and every single one of them was someone who meant something to me. By the time we got to Central Park, I was in this state of huge [unclear], I was just so happy.

For Brass the heightened emotions included the closeness he felt to other marchers. At this time gay community leaders were beginning to emphasize an individual's coming out as gay or lesbian as necessary for both personal liberation/integrity and for movement success (Armstrong 2002). In a heteronormative culture, an individual is assumed heterosexual until proven otherwise (Rich 1980, Sedgwick 1990, Warner 1993). On a personal level, coming out means an individual will avoid near daily obfuscations about her or his social life and relationship status. On a collective level, when many individuals come out gays and lesbians can become a culturally recognized group and sexual orientation a valid group identity. Recognition means cultural power as a minority group and may lead to political power as a voting block or a protected status in discrimination laws (Berbrier 2002; Fraser 1995). Moreover, this shared emotional experience serves to solidify a group’s collective identity (Eyerman 2005; Hunt & Benford 2004; Jasper 1998; 2011). As described by participants, the 1970 Pride events were a collective coming out; the first time in history that a large number of gays and lesbians expressed their sexuality openly in public. All participants were out prior to marching, but the experience of being out with many others resulted in what LA marcher Del Whan called “euphoria and pride”. In true Durkheimian fashion, the collective effervescence that participants felt served to bond group members to one another (Durkheim 1912[1995]).

Both Pride events were organized by a large coalition of community leaders and groups. In New York most participating groups had social activist goals, while in Los Angeles individuals and groups represented many facets of the gay community including
activists, performers, and public health advocates. In New York and Los Angeles community leaders interpreted the Stonewall riots as important to all members of the gay community and planned the commemorative Pride events as community-wide celebrations (see also Armstrong & Crage 2006). NYC organizers drew on the existing ECHO coalition to organize their Pride march (Carter 2004). With weaker city-wide coalitions and fewer social movement organizations, strong community leaders organized the LA Pride parade and used their existing social networks to mobilize participants (see also Armstrong & Crage 2006). According to LA organizer Pat Rocco, the success of Pride showed the effectiveness of community leaders' social networks for future organizing. After the first Pride parade, “If people got an idea that we needed to do something we would be the ones, the core group, we would be the ones to make the calls. We would make the decision and from there on it would happen”. Though others such as Ruth Weiss were critical of the hierarchical nature of this organizational model (particularly for marginalizing women), Rocco believed that it led to effective mobilization.

The coalitions of groups and individuals that organized and marched in the 1970 Pride events was one way that these events brought together a diverse spectrum of the gay community. The final theme of these events was inclusion, or as Armstrong (2002) characterized it, “unity in diversity”. Organizers of the Los Angeles event gathered a greater diversity of groups and individuals than those in New York, but both had in common the attempt to represent a wide swath of the gay and lesbian community. Participants also saw Pride as events to show the diversity of individual expressions within the gay community. In Los Angeles, participants such as the Grand Duchess of
San Francisco (a drag queen) and shirtless contestants in the *Advocate's* Groovy Guy competition portrayed themselves in stereotypical ways despite the cultural negativity toward them. Others like the gay motorcycle group defied stereotypes to show that gays and lesbians vary as much as straight people. Part of the overarching “gays as marching as gays” theme is that by not conforming to one dress image, participants chose how to represent themselves and displayed their diversity.

Pride events were also diverse by uniting gay men and lesbians and including people of color. The racism and sexism prevalent in mainstream American society has reflected in gay communities both in the form of overt prejudice and structural inequality (Armstrong 2002; Duberman 1993). With greater social capital, white gay men pre-Stonewall were the main patrons at gay bars and social movement organizational leaders (Valocchi 1999). This perpetuated as gay bars catered to white men and SMOs focused on their concerns such as police harassment and employment discrimination. For both economic and social reasons, lesbian bars have never flourished so police harassment was not a major issue. Instead, lesbians' concerns of wage inequality compared to men and uncertain parental rights were often routed in gender inequality and compounded by their lack of access to male privilege through opposite-sex partners (Adam 1995). Many lesbians were active in the women's groups but were discriminated against for their sexuality. NOW President Betty Friedan famously (but perhaps apocryphally) called lesbians a “lavender menace” that if welcomed in the organization threatened to make the whole group appear to be a “man-hating” “bunch of dykes” (qtd. in Jay 1999: 137).

All three women that I interviewed – Martha Shelley, Ruth Weiss, and Del Whan – mentioned feeling marginalized by activists in both the women's and gay movements
but said that there was better inclusion of women at all levels of planning and participation at Pride than any other movement action. Shelley reported that the planning committee decided to have one woman and one man speak following the Pride march and she was the female representative. Male marchers also noted that men and women worked more collaboratively on the two Pride events than they had in the past. Still, Pride organization and participation was dominated by men; it was not an easy fix to gender problems. Additionally, self-identified bisexuals and transgender people were not included in the first events. The concepts of bisexuality and changing gender identity were still early in formulation so there simply were not many people who identified as such in 1970 (Valentine 2007). Participants and Advocate writers did note greater freedom for non-normative gender expression and prominent inclusion of drag queens in both events.

I have not been able to get as much information about racial/ethnic diversity within the gay community and at Pride events. This is most likely due to the marginalization of people of color that then affects their inclusion even in writing history. Structural inequality and overt discrimination were barriers to participation in the gay community for people of color, but the few examples I drew from marchers were positive. For NYC marcher Roberto Camp, inclusion and diversity were the main themes of Pride. He described a “very close brotherly, sisterly kind of interaction” among gay men and lesbians from many ethnic backgrounds. He cited the participation of Puerto Ricans and African-Americans in the march (he himself is Mexican-American) as evidence of inclusion. Other interviewees said that while participants supported racial and ethnic diversity, there were strong society-wide divides between white people and
people of color.

Conclusion

A common empirical debate among social movement scholars is whether a particular tactic is truly new or an adaptation of an older form. Usually the answer lies somewhere in between. In this chapter I have described what was new about the 1970 Pride events in New York and Los Angeles: namely, they were the first mass demonstrations in which gays and lesbians marched as themselves and for themselves without compromise. I argue that marchers in organizers were influenced both by the disruptive tactics they had seen and participated in with other social movements of the 1960s/70s protest cycle and by the modest, accomodationist stance of the 1950s/60s homophile movement.

Drawing from these influences, organizers and marchers created a cultural protest tactic that was qualitatively different from the politically focused marches of their predecessors. Pride events were not traditional state-directed protest marches with narrow goals. They were bigger in size. They drew in a wider group of people, not just seasoned activists. They drew an audience. They were celebratory and elicited joyous emotions. They featured broad cultural statements rather than narrow political goals. Most importantly, in the cultural context of mainstream society, the very fact that gays collectively marched down public streets in broad daylight and showed themselves to be gay inverted the macro-level cultural code of invisibility.

Likewise, in contrast to earlier homophile activism, Pride events were bolder and less concerned with public image. Before the 1970 Pride marches gay and lesbian activists marched yearly for civil rights in Philadelphia, calling the events Annual
Reminders. Organizers enforced a strict dress code meant to further the homophile era’s strategy of presenting gays and lesbians as respectable citizens who differed from the mainstream in only one aspect. Pride events invited all to participate in whichever clothes and through whichever theatrical displays they chose. Through overt sexuality and non-normative gender displays, the LA parade in particular featured contingents that played on, rather than reduced, mainstream negative stereotypes of gays and lesbians. These elements proved to be controversial within the gay and lesbian community, but most supported the celebration of all aspects of gay identity. Pride events ushered in a new era of gay and lesbian activism in which the open declaration and celebration of gay identity played a central role (Armstrong 2002).

Current literature on social movements does not have a place for the events I have described because researchers have not studied cultural contestation to the extent that they have studied contestation in the political realm. In 1970 members of the gay community created a new social movement tactic - an explicit cultural tool - that combined political protest, cultural critique, and community celebration. The result was a powerful cultural challenge and a unifying emotional experience. The Pride events in New York and Los Angeles were different from one another but both exhibited central themes of gays marching as gays, a new event, collective effervescence, and inclusion for all in the gay community.
CHAPTER 3
THE STATE OF GAY AMERICA

Forty years have passed since the first Pride events in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. Those three cities still host Pride parades, and they are joined by over one hundred more Pride marches and parades across the country and over 100 internationally (GayCityUsa 2011). The spread of Pride parades has been accompanied by improvements in the legal status of LGBT people, their cultural visibility, and the development of LGBT meso-level culture, including the addition of bisexual and transgender individuals to the gay and lesbian community. Despite these gains the LGBT community, like other marginalized groups, still faces cultural opposition to full equality but has cultural resources with which they challenge this opposition. I argue that due to their recent historical emergence and current demographics, the cultural opposition and resources of the LGBT population differ in key ways from those of other marginalized groups, particularly the two most studied, African-Americans and women. These differences outline a cultural struggle for equality centered on establishing the legitimacy of LGBT people as an identity group.

Defining the LGBT Community – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population is generally referred to by the initialism LGBT, but a little explanation is needed about the components of this
moniker. Lesbian and gay are preferred terms for women and men, respectively, who identify their primary romantic and sexual attractions as oriented to the same sex. In the time period addressed in the previous chapter, bisexual and transgender were not yet common forms of identification, thus I refer there only to the “lesbian and gay community” (Adam 1995; Armstrong 2002). Bisexuals are partly but not exclusively attracted to the same sex. Bisexuals may form romantic and sexual relationships individuals of either sex and interpret their attraction to both sexes as an important part of their personal identities. In the late 1980s, bisexuals began to be regularly included in lesbian and gay politics and community, a changed signaled most clearly with their official inclusion in the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation in 1993 (Armstrong 2002; Ghaziani 2008).

Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals deviate from the implicit macro-level norm of heterosexuality by virtue of their sexual orientation. Transgender people, by contrast, deviate from this norm according to their gender identity – their psychological sense of gender. Those who identify as transgender feel that their biological sex is incongruous with their social gender. They communicate their preferred social gender through gender presentation – clothing, voice, mannerisms, and so on. Many transgender individuals will also undergo medical and surgical procedures to alter their biological sex characteristics. These procedures range from transgender men (biologically female) taking testosterone to lower their voices and change muscle and fat distribution to transgender women (biologically male) surgically altering their penises into vaginas. Not all individuals who identify as transgender alter their physical bodies, nor do all identify completely with one gender. The important point is that while identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual concerns
one’s sexual orientation, identifying as transgender is about one’s gender identity.

Though transgender as defined above has only recently been regularly included in culturally and politically as a category in the LGBT collective formation, gender identity and sexual orientation have long been entwined and often confused for one another (Adam 1995; Chauncey 1994; Freud 1962; Minton 1987; Valocchi 1999). In the first theoretical work on modern homosexuality, the German lawyer Karl Ulrichs, who identified as gay, wrote that gay men are biological males who have a female spirit. Likewise, he understood lesbians as biologically female with male spirits (Adam 1995; Levay 1997). The idea of congruence between the object of one’s affections and one’s masculinity or femininity has persisted both from within the LGBT community and outside. In urban gay subcultures before WWII, particularly among those who were working-class

most men were labeled [homosexual or queer] only if they displayed a much broader inversion of their ascribed gender status by assuming the sexual and other cultural roles ascribed to women. The abnormality (or “queerness”) of the “fairy,” that is, was defined as much by his “woman-like” character or “effeminacy” as his solicitation of male sexual partners. (Chauncey 1994: 13)

Conversely, men with masculine gender expressions would be considered “normal” instead of “queer” despite their sexual behavior with other men (Chauncey 1985; 1994; Valocchi 1999). From a social constructionist perspective, gender identity and sexual orientation are intertwined because heterosexuality is a constitutive element in the construction of gender (Connell 1992; Lorber 1994; Rich 1980). Thus by virtue of their same-sex attraction, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals break gender norms.

Drag – men dressing as women for performance – has a long history in the gay community and is another way that sexual orientation and gender identity are intertwined.
While dressed in drag, performers conventionally use feminine names and pronouns (Bunzi 2000; Rupp & Taylor 2003). Their performances can be a form of gender critique as they assert both their male bodies and feminine expressions (Rupp & Taylor 2003). Drag queens mix the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity because of their strong connection to the gay community and most drag queen's self-identification as gay men. Due to persistent cultural beliefs that women are not sexual beings, outside formulations rarely addressed lesbian sexuality. Within lesbian community, though, there is a tradition of butch/femme dichotomy, where relationships included one masculine (butch) woman and one feminine (femme) partner (D'Emilio 1998; Gibson & Meem 2002; Kennedy 1993). While transgender as a separate category is a relatively recent phenomenon, therefore, gender transgression in the form of drag and non-normative gender expression has long been part of gay and lesbian communities.

In some ways it is a triumph of LGBT cultural activism that the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity have been decoupled to the extent that a same-sex couple is not predicated on the pseudo-heterosexuality of a masculine and a feminine partner (Valentine 2000). Transgender individuals have suffered though as they face greater explicit discrimination and violence and implicit scorn, disrespect, and ignorance. Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, while somewhat more insulated from charges of gender transgression, are also then policed for normative gender presentations both by fellow LGBs and by dominant culture (Loftin 2007).

A final identity term often used in the LGBT community is “queer”. The term has a history as a derogatory slur aimed at gay men in particular, but has been reclaimed by some as a positive identification. It is an umbrella term to describe all in the LGBT
community and sometimes is used to include other sexual affinity groups such as BDSM or to include straight allies (Gamson 1995). The term includes non-normative gender identity as well as sexual orientation and thus is preferred by some who want to indicate difference without being specific or by those who break dominant norms of both gender and sexuality (e.g. a transgender woman who identifies as lesbian). It is also used as a cultural critique of the rigidity of gender and sexual categories, in effect a label used to eschew labels (Gamson 1995; Stein & Plummer 1994). As a political term, proponents of queer politics advocate more radical challenges to institutional order than those pursued through mainstream LGBT identity politics. In particular they critique the push for legalized same-sex marriage as a strategy to assimilate LGBT people into heteronormative society when instead they believe queer people should run from marriage as a fundamentally oppressive institution (Warner 1999). For clarity, I use the term “queer” to indicate gender and sexual difference and the term “gay” when speaking only about sexuality. I use the initialism LGBT to refer to the community of people who identify outside the norm by virtue of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Changes in Legal and Cultural Status of LGBT Community, 1970-2010

It is far beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a complete account of the LGBT community's ups and downs during the forty year history of Pride parades. In this section I briefly cover major changes in federal and state laws, cultural visibility, and LGBT subculture.

Legal Change

In 1970 LGBT people were at risk for criminal prosecution for their sexual behavior, enjoyed no legal protections against public or private discrimination, and had
no recognition of their same-sex relationships at any level of government. All states save Illinois had statutes criminalizing sodomy. These statutes varied and prohibited a range of non-procreative sexual acts between consenting adults. While many technically applied to both heterosexual and homosexual sex, in practice gays and lesbians were arrested far more than straight people (Eskridge 2008). From 1970 to 2003, most states repealed these laws but the final thirteen were struck down by the Supreme Court in the Lawrence vs. Texas (Eskridge 2008). This decision reversed an earlier 1986 decision in Bowers vs. Hardwick that had affirmed the constitutionality of sodomy laws. The Lawrence vs. Texas case was viewed as a major victory by LGBT activists and community leaders since they had increasingly interpreted these laws as official government sanctions against not just homosexual behavior but against LGBT identity (Bernstein 2002; Eskridge 2008).

Gains have also been made to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in anti-discrimination laws. In 1970 not one city, county, or state protected LGBT people from discrimination – either in the public or private sector - based on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 2000). The first such laws were enacted in 1972 in East Lansing and Ann Arbor, MI, followed by liberal university town such as Berkley, CA and Boulder, CO and major cities with large, organized gay populations like Detroit, San Francisco, and Washington, DC (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 2000; Eskridge 1999). These early laws were passed in relatively gay-friendly cities with little organized resistance (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 2000). From the late-70s on LGBT activists have battled against conservative Christian activists wishing to preserve their right to refuse service and employment in the private
sector to those they view as sinners and against libertarian groups who view nondiscrimination laws as government overreach (Green 2000).

Despite this opposition, laws have been passed to protect people from public and private discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity in sixteen states and the District of Columbia (NGLTF 2012). Five states have laws preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation but not gender identity, thus making it illegal to fire someone for being gay, lesbian, or bisexual but legal to fire someone for being transgender (NGLTF 2012). However, transgender people may be protected from discrimination through a more recent interpretation of Title VII, which prohibits sex discrimination. In three recent cases, federal judges have ruled that firing someone for being transgender constitutes sex discrimination – in other words, is legally the same as firing someone for being a man – and is thus illegal according to Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act (Glenn vs. Brumby et al. 2011; Schroer vs. Billington 2007; Smith vs. City of Salem 2004). These are positive signs for transgender people, but this legal interpretation of Title VII is not yet fully settled in the courts. Additionally, Executive Order 13087, signed by President Clinton in 1998, prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation of federal civilian employees (OPM n.d.). Despite legislative gains, there exists no federal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation in the private sector, nor is there legislation in a majority of states to explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBT people. This leaves 56% of Americans without explicit legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (NGLTF 2011).

Evidence of discrimination against LGBT people shows the cultural inequality of
this population. In review of workplace discrimination studies since the mid-1990s, Badgett et al. (2007) found that at least 15% and as many as 43% of LGBT people report experiencing some form of employment discrimination. Moreover, based data from the nationally representative 2008 General Social Survey, Sears & Mallory (2011) found that 9.2% of those who were out as lesbian, gay, or bisexual to their employers reported losing a job due to discrimination. Transgender people fare even worse. In separate surveys, between 67% and 78% of transgender individuals reported some form of discrimination based on their gender identity. In one survey 47% of transgender respondents said they were discriminated in hiring, promotion, or retention (Sears & Mallory 2011). For those working towards legal equality, this evidence of discrimination points to the need to add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in non-discrimination laws. I argue that beyond this legal/political issue, the fact that so many people will mistreat LGBT employees by harassing, denying promotions, and even firing them points to the cultural inequality of LGBT people.

The final major area of legal change for LGBT people is recognition of same-sex relationships. Legal recognition in the form of marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships not only did not exist in 1970 but was virtually unthinkable for most gays and straights alike. Until the early 1990s, individual couples made scattered attempts to have their relationships legally recognized but LGBT activists did not make a concerted effort to change relationship recognition laws (Chauncey 2005). Same-sex marriage

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1 Hate crimes legislation, adoption policy, LGBTs in the military, legal gender identification (the ability to change ones legal gender), and insurance coverage for gender transition-related care are also significant LGBT rights issues, but I chose to focus only on three areas.
exploded as a national issue when conservative activists mainly from the Christian Right took up the cause (Chauncey 2005; Fetner 2008). In 1993 the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in 1993 that the state's law limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples was presumed unconstitutional and sent the case to lower courts to decide what, if any, compelling interest the state had to deny marriage to same-sex couples. This case was then dropped when the state amended its constitution to give the legislature the power to define marriage – which it did, defining it as one woman and one man. Conservative activists responded to the perceived threat of legalized same-sex marriage by promoting the Defense of Marriage Act in the U.S. Congress. Signed into law in 1996, this act prohibits federal recognition of same-sex marriages and exempts states from recognizing those performed where it is legal.

The issue heated up to a new level in 1999 when the Vermont Supreme Court that denying same-sex couples the benefits and protections afforded to opposite-sex couples violated its state's constitution. Conservative activists then worked to pass state constitutional amendments through legislation and popular referenda and restricting marriage and often other forms of relationship recognition, such as civil unions or domestic partnerships, to heterosexual couples. Since Alaska passed the first such amendment in 1999, 29 states total have amended their constitutions to limit marriage to heterosexual couples. Meanwhile, since 2004 eight states and the District of Columbia

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2 Civil unions and domestic partnerships are new forms created specifically to extend benefits and protections to same-sex couples without extending marriage itself. Civil unions tend to offer all legal benefits of marriage while domestic partnerships can be more limited. Civil unions are generally reserved for same-sex couples (as a legal alternative to marriage), while some some state and local governments that offer domestic partnerships do so both to same-sex and opposite-sex partners.
have changed their laws either through legislation or court order to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. An additional 13 states grant civil unions or domestic partnerships to same-sex partners which offer most of the benefits and protections of marriage.

Legally things are much better for the LGBT population as a whole in 2010 than they were in 1970. As a result of the Supreme Court’s 2003 decision in *Lawrence vs. Texas* there is nowhere in the country where one can be prosecuted for consensual homosexual (or heterosexual) sex. Americans are protected from discrimination in public and private employment based on their sexual orientation in 21 states. Laws in sixteen states explicitly protect them from discrimination based on their gender identity. However, without a federal non-discrimination statute, citizens in 29 states - 56% of the population – are vulnerable to such discrimination (NGTLF 2011). Evidence shows this discrimination does occur and is most acute for those who are transgender.

Finally, same-sex couples can be legally recognized through marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships in nineteen states and the District of Columbia. In eleven of these states fewer legal benefits and protections are afforded to married same-sex couples than to opposite-sex couples because these states do not recognize same-sex marriage. Though same-sex couples from any state can legally marry in eight states, DOMA provisions mean that their unions are not recognized either in their home state or by the federal government for taxes, immigration, social security benefits, and a host of

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3 From a legal standpoint non-discrimination laws protect both those who identify as LGBT and those who are perceived as LGBT. Moreover, though actual instances are exceedingly rare, these laws also protect citizens from discrimination based on their heterosexuality or gender normativity. Thus, non-discrimination laws protect all citizens regardless of their sexual and gender identification.
other benefits and protections. In sum, though all Americans are now protected from prosecution of consensual sex acts, citizens of 29 states are still subject to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and have no legal recognition for their same-sex partnerships. The legal status of LGBT people has improved since 1970 but mainly for those in certain states.

**Implicit Cultural Attitudes**

Americans have changed their cultural attitudes about homosexuality since 1970. The General Social Survey (GSS) has asked respondents for their opinions on the morality of sex between two people of the same sex since 1973. As shown in Figure 2.1, their attitudes have changed from overwhelming disapproval to an even split between total disapproval and total acceptance.

Figure 3.1. Morality of Homosexual Behavior, 1973-2010, General Social Survey

The first time the GSS asked respondents their opinions on the morality of homosexual behavior, 72.5% said that it was “always wrong” while only 11.2% said it was “not wrong at all”. These numbers were fairly steady for twenty years. Between 1991 and
In 1993, the percentage of those who said homosexual behavior was “always wrong” dropped 11 points, from 77.4% to 66.1%. There was a corresponding increase of seven points in those saying that this behavior was “not wrong at all”, with figures going from 14.9% in 1991 to 21.9% in 1993. Subsequent years showed a continued shift toward increased moral acceptance for homosexual behavior until the proportions of those believing each extreme converged in 2010. In that year, 45.7% of respondents said that this behavior is “always wrong” and 42.7% said it is “not wrong at all”. Throughout this time the percentage of those choosing middle options - “sometimes wrong” or “almost always wrong” - has remained relatively steady at 10-15%. (Smith et al. 2011)

These data are supported by analyses of polling trends on acceptance of homosexuality by Yang (1997), Schafer & Shaw (2009), and Anderson & Fetner (2008). Moral acceptability and tolerance are distinct concepts; morality is what one personally regards as right or wrong while tolerance is one's willingness to peacefully coexist with someone that one does not necessarily agree with. One may tolerate LGBT people without believing that their sexual behavior is morally acceptable. In addition to fewer Americans saying that homosexuality is morally wrong, over the last four decades more are showing tolerance towards having gay or lesbian neighbors and teachers (Yang 1997; Schafer & Shaw 2009). As shown in Figure 2.2, Americans' tolerance towards having gay college teachers has increased since 1973 even more than their belief in the moral acceptability of homosexual behavior.
As a proxy for tolerance towards gays and lesbians, I used the GSS item asking respondents whether an openly gay man should be allowed to teach in college. The percentage of GSS respondents who said he should be allowed rose from 50.1% in 1973 to 85.4% in 2010, a total of 35.3 percentage points. By comparison, those who said that homosexual behavior is always wrong decreased by 26.8 percentage points. Whereas the moral acceptability of homosexuality remained fairly constant from 1973 to 1991 and then steadily dropped until 2010, tolerance for gay college teachers steadily increased during the entire 37 year time span. There was also strong association between respondents' beliefs of the moral acceptability of homosexuality and their tolerance for gay college teachers. Chi-square tests showed statistically significant correlation each year measured and gamma values ranged from -0.83 to -0.70. There was no trend in the strength of association between the two variables, as measured by gamma values. Thus, while both belief in the moral acceptability of homosexual behavior and tolerance for gay
people has increased substantially since 1973, the relationship between these two cultural attitudes have not changed. A person who believed homosexual behavior was wrong in 2010 was no more likely to tolerate gay people in positions of influence than a person with this belief in 1973.

Unfortunately there is little information on cultural attitudes towards bisexual and transgender people. In a nationally represented survey sponsored by the LGBT rights advocacy group Human Rights Campaign (2011), a plurality of respondents (36%) indicated cool, unfavorable feelings towards transgender people. Roughly equal numbers indicated warm and indifferent feelings (26% and 28%, respectively), while the remaining tenth of respondents did not rate their feelings towards transgender individuals. More survey respondents (35%) had warm feelings toward bisexuals. By contrast, 40% of respondents indicated warm, favorable feelings towards gays and lesbians and 25% had cool, unfavorable feelings towards them. As with legal protections and evidence of discrimination, this poll suggests that cultural attitudes are similarly less favorable towards transgender people than toward gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Overall these data show considerable improvement in Americans cultural attitudes regarding homosexuality. Despite this improvement, nearly one half of Americans still believe that homosexual behavior is always wrong. LGBT people continue to face negative implicit cultural attitudes from a great number of individuals.

**Cultural Visibility**

Gays and lesbians in 1970 had very little visibility and bisexuals and transgender individuals had basically none. Due to intense social stigma and oppressive laws, many found it dangerous to openly declare their sexuality. There were few images of gays and
lesbians in popular or political culture, and those they did see were negative (Ghaziani 2008; Gross 2001). Since then the cultural visibility of LGBT people has increased, both in terms of their visibility as individuals and in public images.

Data do not exist to quantify how many more people openly identified as LGBT in 2010 than in 1970. Since Kinsey’s (1948; 1953) reports on sexual behavior, social science researchers have shown that as many as 25% of people acknowledge at least some same-sex attraction (Dickson, Paul, & Herbison 2003; Gates 2011; Savin-Williams & Ream 2007). With only about 3.8% of Americans openly identifying as LGBT, this leaves many who have same-sex attraction but do not identify as gay or bisexual. Without data over time, these measures cannot determine changes in the rates of those with same-sex attraction who openly identify as gay or bisexual. The one measure that can serve as a proxy for LGBT visibility as individuals is the percentage of survey respondents who say they know someone who is LGBT. In just eight years during the 1990s, the percentage of those who said in polls that they had a gay friend or acquaintance rose from 22% in 1992 to 56% in 2000 (Brewer 2008). Knowing someone who is gay correlates strongly with one’s attitudes towards homosexuality, and this increase may partially explain the greater acceptance of homosexuality evidenced in polls (Becker & Scheufele 2011; Brewer 2008). As with other public opinion research, data do not address visibility of bisexuals or transgender people.

A second indication of LGBT visibility is their presence and representation in the media. The AIDS crisis in the 1980s brought national attention to the gay community but a good deal was negatively focused on the health risks of gay sexuality and even gays and lesbians as dangerous individuals (Gross 2001). During the 1990s, there was an upswing
in gay and lesbian visibility in popular culture (Gross 2001; Walters 2001). The most
notable examples are Ellen DeGeneres's public coming out (both as a character on her
television show and in real life), Olympic diver Greg Louganis, and the popular
television show *Will & Grace* which featured two gay main characters. In the first
decade of the 21st century gay visibility in popular culture increased even more.

According to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), during the
2009-2010 television season 3% of all scripted series, broadcast network regular
characters were LGBT. This is the highest number of LGBT characters (17 total) since
the group began researching LGBT representation in 1996 (GLAAD 2010). These and
other media showed gays and lesbians as responsible, productive members of society
who are irreducible to a set of stereotypes but also undeniably, openly, and proudly gay.

Images were not entirely positive nor did they represent the diversity of the LGBT
community. In the absence of other types of visibility, prominent gay and lesbian
celebrities can give the impression that LGBT people are more affluent than the general
public. Media images of gays and lesbians are overwhelmingly white, which also
obscures the diversity of the LGBT community (GLAAD 2010). Though there were two
transgender characters on primetime broadcast networks during the 2007-2008 season,
there were none during the 2009-2010 season (GLAAD 2010). Finally, while these
images normalized LGB people, some criticize them for doing this, likening it to the
accommodationist strategy of the pre-Stonewall homophile movement. They argue that
representations suggest that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals could only be accepted if they
present normative gender expressions, work white collar jobs, and pursue conventional
relationships, and transgender people could not be accepted at all (Avila-Saavedra 2009;
Shugart 2003). This runs counter to the message of the first Pride parades, when gays and lesbians were visible as themselves, be that as drag queens in full make-up and high heels or young hippies in bell bottoms.

A major change in macro-level explicit culture since 1970 is that gays and lesbians themselves have entered this culture, sometimes even on their own terms. In 1970, fewer LGBT people openly acknowledged their sexuality for fear of cultural, economic, and legal consequences. In the eight years for which we have data, 1992 to 2000 the percentage of Americans who said they had a friend or acquaintance who is gay by 33 points. In terms of media representation, before the 1980s LGBT people appeared rarely and were portrayed negatively. During the 1980s the AIDS crisis hit the gay community and they became more visible but again not in a positive light. From the 1990s on, things have turned around as a few prominent gay and lesbian celebrities put a face to the community and television and movies include gay characters in a variety of ways. Though not wholly positive, this visibility represents a definite change in American culture.

**LGBT Culture**

The final area of change is within the meso-level LGBT community. One theme of the 1970 Pride events was bringing gays and lesbians together. At the time there were divisions by both gender and race, few LGBT periodicals for communication within the community, and a dearth of spaces for LGBT people to gather. The AIDS crisis in the 1980s was a catalyst for community building across gender divisions as lesbians, who were largely unaffected, cared for the countless gay men who suffered from the disease. To fight the disease gays and lesbians established public health service and outreach
organizations. As AIDS was labeled a “gay cancer” in macro-level culture and help from outside was slow to materialize, the gay community came together to support one another through a traumatic period in its history. (Armstrong 2002; Gross 2001; Shilts 1987)

The demographics of the LGBT population has always been a challenge to developing LGBT culture. Like racial and ethnic minority groups, LGBT people represent a fraction of the total population, but one major difference is the LGBT population's relative lack of residential clusters.

LGBT people comprise only a small percentage of the population. According to the best estimates available, 3.8% of the U.S. population identifies as LGBT (Gates 2011), one percentage point less than the Asian-American population. While there certainly are a few well-known LGBT neighborhoods, such as the Castro in San Francisco and West Hollywood near Los Angeles, the population density of LGBT people in these neighborhoods is less than that of Asian-Americans in the Sunset District of San Francisco, for instance, or African-Americans in the Crenshaw neighborhood of Los Angeles. Using five year estimates from the American Community Survey (2005-2009), I review the geographic distribution of the LGBT population in the U.S. To put this population in perspective, I compare its distribution to that of African-Americans in the U.S. using 2010 Census data.

In the absence of census reporting of individual LGBT identity, this population is measured by household type. Those same-sex couples who report their domestic relationship as either “spouses” or “unmarried partners” are counted as same-sex couple households. The census recodes all such households and reports them as unmarried same-sex partners. Straight couples are measured similarly but reported as either married
couples or unmarried opposite-sex partners. This measure is imperfect because it determines only counts of those who live together as partners, thus leaving out single LGBT people and those who identify as bisexual or transgender but have opposite-sex partners. Those in unpartnered households are single with or without children and may identify as straight or LGBT.

I analyzed the populations of 32,803 zip codes – every zip code in the U.S. reporting at least one household. Of these 118,000,000 households nationwide, there were 4,038,584 households with same-sex couples, comprising 0.8% of all households. Roughly half of all zip codes (15,764) have populations of fewer than 1,000 households and 17 of these report at least 10% of households with same-sex couples – all but one include only one same-sex couple households but with low overall populations such that the percentage is skewed. In addition to their skewed numbers, I omit zip codes with fewer than 1,000 households because the purpose of this section is to describe population density as a cultural resource for marginalized people, making the presence of ten or fewer same-sex couple households insignificant. Figure 2.3 shows the proportion of same-sex households by total household population for the remaining 17,039 zip codes with populations over 1,000 households. For comparison, Figure 2.4 shows the proportion of African-American individuals by total population for these same zip codes.
Figure 3.3. Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households by Zip Code Population

Figure 3.4. Distribution of African-Americans by Zip Code Population
There is not a great deal of variation in LGBT population density by zip code. Same-sex couple households range from 0 to 14.7% of households in the 17,033 zip codes with populations over 1,000 households. By contrast, the percentage of African-Americans ranges from 0 to 98.1% of the populations of these zip codes. The population density of LGBT people in zip codes with the highest percentage comes nowhere close to that of African-Americans in well-populated zip codes. There are only three zip codes with over 1,000 households in which more than 10% of households are comprised of same-sex couples. These zip codes are well-known LGBT enclaves: the Castro district of San Francisco, Provincetown, MA, and Palm Springs, CA. While these enclaves may be sites for LGBT community building, they are the exception rather than the rule for LGBT population distribution.

On the whole LGBT people have very low residential segregation as compared to racial and ethnic minority groups such as African Americans. The standard deviation for the percentage of same-sex couple households in zip codes over 1,000 households is 0.45 percentage points, compared to 17.28 percentage points for African-Americans. The vast majority of same-sex couples have few LGBT neighbors. In fact, 56% of same-sex couples live in zip codes with fewer than 100 other gay couples. By comparison only 1.4% of African-Americans live in zip codes with fewer than 200 other African-Americans. LGBT people are more geographically isolated from one another and thus do not have the same ability to turn the demographic resource of residential clustering into a cultural resource by building collective identity through sharing space.

Breaking down same-sex couples by gender show different patterns for lesbian versus gay male couples. Figure 2.5 shows the percentage of gay male and lesbian couple
As shown in Figure 2.5, there are fewer zip codes with high concentrations of lesbians couples than with many gay male couples. The two zip codes that stand out as having a high percentage of lesbian couples – 02657 (Provincetown, MA) and 01060 (Northampton, MA) – have low overall populations. Zip code 01060 in Northampton, Massachusetts includes 4,617 households, 183 of which are headed by lesbian couples. There are 14 zip codes that have more total households and higher percentages of gay male couple households. While there are actually 52,202 more lesbian couples households than gay male couples households, the latter are more likely to live among
other gay men. Moreover, in many areas lesbian couples outnumber gay male couples or vice versa. Of those zip codes with over 1,000 households, 18% have twice as many lesbian couples as gay male couples and 5% have twice as many gay male couples. As I discuss below, this has implications for the ability of LGBT women and men to form collective identity across gender lines.

Census data do not break same-sex couples down by race/ethnicity or income. Like gender, sexual orientation is distributed throughout the population such that there is the same racial/ethnic and class diversity among lesbians and gays as the population as a whole (Gates 2010; Gates, Lau, & Sears 2006). The same barriers to racial/ethnic integration that exist in the broad population – residential segregation, separate cultural traditions, and overt and covert racism – exist among LGBT people. Gay communities have a history racism and sexism and major activist organizations have been overwhelmingly run by white men (Armstrong 2002; Duberman 1993). LGBT people experience divides in social class because most spaces for socializing are commercial and located in cities, creating a barrier for the participation of LGBT people with lower incomes. As I discuss further below, gender, racial/ethnic, and class divides are cultural barriers to building LGBT community.

LGBT people have used periodicals and the internet to communicate with one another across physical distances and have created social spaces to come together. LGBT periodicals have proliferated since the 1970s. These periodicals played an important role

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4 According to the 2008 GSS, bisexuals are slightly more likely to be non-white, and data are too scarce to estimate the racial/ethnic distribution of transgender people. LGBT people are negatively impacted by economic policies that favor heterosexual married couples but otherwise do not vary from the general population by class.
in drawing the LGBT community together both for mutual support and political mobilization, but their circulation was low and concentrated in major cities (Streitmatter 1995). LGBT newspapers and magazines now proliferate along with myriad websites, blogs, and email lists that disseminate all manner of news and information to connect LGBT individuals. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter expanded this even more as people are able to share information about local events and issues with their social networks.

The growth in LGBT advocacy organizations, film festivals, and sports leagues has allowed for more ways for LGBT people to connect and socialize. As LGBT rights have grown as a political issue, social movement organizations working to further the legal/political status of LGBT people have established all over the country. LGBT people and their straight allies work together to try to pass non-discrimination laws and to fight restrictions on relationship recognition. Since gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals are all in the same boat when it comes to legal/political equality, they work together across gender divisions. However, gender identity is not consistently included in laws addressing equality by sexual orientation, so political activism can also be a source of division between LGB and transgender people.

LGBT film festivals and sports leagues are two types of social events that bring LGBT people together across gender and race divisions. There are over 50 LGBT film festivals held in the U.S. (Pritchard 2012). The majority of these cater to all LGBT-identified people but some are more specialized, such as the New England Transgender Film Festival in Provincetown, MA, the Queer Women of Color Film Festival in San Francisco, and the Fears for Queers LGBT Horror Film Festival in Austin, TX. Film
festivals bring people together physically for a shared experience centered on LGBT identity while constructing a narrative about this identity through the films shown (Gamson 1996). Likewise, a number of gay and lesbian sports leagues across the country bring LGBT identified women and men together. Some leagues separate women and men while others field integrated teams. With commercial bars still main sites for LGBT socialization, gay and lesbian sports leagues are important spaces for LGBT women and men to socialize regularly outside bars.

All in all the United States was a kinder place for LGBT people in 2010 than it was in 1970. They are no longer criminalized for intimacy between partners through sodomy laws. In over one third of states they are protected from public and private discrimination and have their relationships with others of the same-sex recognized through marriage, civil unions, or more restricted domestic partnerships. However this leaves LGBT Americans in 60% of states vulnerable to discrimination and without legal benefits or protections afforded to heterosexual couples. Without federal recognition of same-sex relationships, even legally married couples are subject to higher taxes, denied social security partner benefits, and, may even see one spouse deported if she is not an American citizen, risk deportation when visas expire.

LGBT people have made cultural gains in terms of individual level implicit attitudes, macro-level visibility, and meso-level development of LGBT community. Implicit individual attitudes (culture in the mind) have become more tolerant towards homosexuality, though there is still a ways to go. Though the percentage of Americans who believe homosexual behavior is “always wrong” dropped 27 points between 1972 and 2010, nearly half of Americans (46.7%) continue to say that homosexuality violates
their moral code. Though information is scarce, bisexuals and transgender individuals lag behind in cultural acceptance as measured by individual attitudes. The growing acceptance of LGBT people is helped by the fact that more have come out to family, friends, and acquaintances (Brewer 2008). Gays and lesbians are also visible in explicit macro-level culture through prominent gay celebrities and gay characters in television and movies. This visibility has raised questions and criticisms of the “mainstreaming” of LGBT people most representations are of white, affluent, gender normative gays and lesbians in conventional relationships (or without sex lives at all), thereby obscuring the racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and sexual diversity of the LGBT community. Finally, LGBT people have developed meso-level community and collective identity through a proliferation of online and print LGBT periodicals, virtual communities, and social spaces that draw together LGBT individuals across gender and racial/ethnic divisions.

**How the LGBT Community is Different than Other Groups**

I argued in the introductory chapter that attention to state-targeted tactics dominates social movements research and that insights into the role of culture in social movements derive from empirical research on these tactics. Social movement theory from contentious politics to new social movements postulates that movements direct their collective actions at the source of social power. In the politics of recognition, movements seek legal/political equality through the state as a way to achieve cultural equality. According to the contentious politics approach to social movements, they do so because the state is the locus of social power (McCarthy, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001). Approaches such as multi-institutional politics and new social movements hold that social power in Western industrialized countries extends beyond the state to non-governmental
institutions and macro-level culture. The question for researchers is then where to locate the source of social power that perpetuates a group's cultural inequality.

According to this research mass demonstrations are explicit cultural tools used by a meso- or micro-level social group to communicate political power. Internally, mass demonstrations foster the development of collective identity among participants by bringing individuals physically, facilitating shared emotions, and establishing boundaries between participants and outsiders. Not all tactics target the state, and research on those directed at macro-level dominant culture show they convey rich symbolic messages that challenge macro-level implicit meanings. These messages are specific to the meanings challenged, as when the AIDS activist group contested shame and silence about homosexuality by reappropriating a macro-level symbol of gay oppression, the pink triangle, as a meso-level symbol of gay power (Gamson 1989). In order to understand the use of culture as an external challenge to macro-level dominant culture, the researcher must also understand the qualitative nature of a group's cultural inequality.

In the previous section I showed the ways LGBT people in the U.S. have made gains toward cultural inequality over the past 40 years but continue to face challenges in areas of legal protection, implicit cultural attitudes of fellow citizens, and cultural visibility. In order to understand the role of Pride parades in the struggle for LGBT cultural equality, then, there are two questions about the nature of their inequality: 1) What is the source of social power that perpetuates LGBT cultural inequality? and 2) What is the qualitative nature of LGBT cultural inequality? Recognizing the role of meso-level culture in the formation of collective identity as an internal movement resource, I add a third question: 3) What cultural resources do LGBT people have with
which to collectively challenge their inequality? In this section I analyze LGBT cultural inequality to offer answers these three questions. To highlight what is distinct about LGBT cultural inequality, I compare the cultural challenges and resources of LGBT people to those of two other groups, African-Americans and women, that have collectively challenge their cultural inequality during the 20th century.

Source of Social Power, or, Why the State Has Less Control Over LGBT Cultural Equality

In the introductory chapter I argued that the ability of the state to effect each type of equality depends on the extent and manner in which it controls the mechanisms of inequality. The state can have direct control over cultural equality via the symbolic power of citizenship, indirect control via official recognition and regulation of citizens' treatment of one another in the private sector, and have no control via macro-level implicit cultural codes and individual implicit attitudes. I argue that the state exercises less control over LGBT cultural equality and I attribute that to the group's recent historical emergence.

The first mechanism of inequality is legal/political in the form of state guarantees of civil rights and equal participation in government. The state directly controls legal/political equality and this has cultural effects. The right to vote in a democratic

5 A couple disclaimers. First, making comparisons between social groups is tricky business loaded with political landmines. I offer up these comparisons in order to claim that LGBT cultural inequality is qualitatively distinct from that of African-Americans and women, not to claim a hierarchy of oppression. Second, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully answer my three questions about LGBT cultural inequality; instead my focus is to justify my claim that LGBT people's cultural challenges are distinct from those of other groups.
state, for instance, is a cultural symbol that conveys a measure of equality to all who possess it. By this measure the state is not a source of social power to perpetuate inequality of LGBT people as it has been for African-Americans and women. Both groups were denied suffrage when the country was founded and only won it through sustained action. African-American men were technically granted voting rights by the 14th and 15th amendments but many were denied the ability to exercise that right through poll taxes and other means. Collective action of the civil rights movements resulted in passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to guarantee African-Americans' right to vote. Likewise, women were denied suffrage until passage of the 19th amendment after sustained and coordinated collective action. By another measure, the state has denied gays and lesbians formal legal/political equality by inhibiting their right to free assembly. As discussed in the previous chapter, from the anti-vice campaigns of the 1950s through the time of the Stonewall riots, laws often treated gatherings of gay people as illegal sites of indecency (Adam 1995; Armstrong 2002; Armstrong & Crage 2006; Carter 2004; Eskridge 2008).

A second mechanism of inequality is unequal treatment under the law. All three groups have suffered unequal treatment either through explicit laws through the differential application of laws. Examples include Jim Crow laws which legally enforced separation between Southern blacks and whites and laws denying women the ability to own their own property. Laws are differentially applied in instances like racial profiling in criminal justice and sexual assault/intimate partner abuse prosecution. LGBT advocates argue that the lack of legal recognition for same-sex marriage, with all attendant benefits and protections, constitute unequal laws for LGBT people (Hull 2006;
McFarland 2011). Sodomy laws were instances of differential application of laws since though many did not specify homosexual sex specifically, they were disproportionately used to prosecute gay men. Through these first two mechanisms, the state has direct control to ensure legal/political equality and indirect control over cultural inequality in the sense of cultural effects of legal policies.

The state plays a final indirect role in cultural equality through a third mechanism: guaranteeing equal treatment of all in the private sector. All three groups have experienced discrimination in employment and public accommodations and have worked to pass non-discrimination statutes to protect against it. Titles II and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act protect against discrimination by race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. While Title VII has successfully been used to protect against employment discrimination of transgender people, sexual orientation remains an unprotected class in federal law covering private sector employment.

Through each of these mechanisms, the state has deployed its power in a different manner towards LGBT people than towards African-Americans and women. The state has interacted with African-Americans and women as culturally distinct groups subject to differential direct and indirect legal/political treatment. Towards LGBT people, by contrast, state power has undermined cultural group status either through their formal absence in the law or through informal application of the law to criminalize sexual behavior. Through sodomy laws, the state effectively outlawed a fundamental aspect of gay identity, applying its power to undermine rather than reinforce cultural recognition as a distinct identity group. I argue that this makes the state, if not less a source of power, than a qualitatively different source of power that underpins LGBT cultural inequality.
LGBT people have only recently emerged as a distinct cultural group. To be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender in the modern sense is to define one's sexual orientation or gender identity as a primary and relatively fixed feature of one's personal identity and to be able to live one's life according to this identity (Adam 1985; 1995). As discussed in chapter 1, while same-sex desire and behavior have been documented at every time and place that social scientists are able to measure, only through wage labor and urbanization brought on by Industrial Revolution have individuals with same-sex desire been able to form lasting relationships with others of their own gender to the exclusion of opposite-sex pairing. Likewise, though many cultures have had institutionalized means for people to live socially as a gender that does not correspond to their biological sex these cultural forms are distinct from how transgender as understood in the modern West (Towle & Morgan 2002). The Western form typically defines transgender people as those whose biological sex is incongruous with his or her internal sense of gender, necessitating a social transition from one gender to another. Like with the emergence of modern homosexuality, the Industrial Revolution, through urbanization and wage labor, enabled those who feel transgender to live independently of social control from tight-knit families and communities, allowing for greater freedom to live according to one's internal sense of self.

African-Americans and women, by contrast, have existed as distinct cultural groups through the nation's history (and for women, much much before). Since its founding federal laws have treated Americans differently according to their race and sex. In fact laws enforcing slavery played a role in the cultural construction of African-Americans as a group (Omi & Winant 1986). Legal recognition of LGBT people, either
positively or negatively, is much more recent. Sodomy laws existed since the nation's founding, but they outlawed sexual acts rather than a group of people. It was not until after WWII that these laws were used to target gay people (Eskridge 2008). Likewise until the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” policy of the U.S. military was enacted in 1994, the institution's code of conduct prohibited homosexual acts but not gay identity. It was not until the first non-discrimination ordinances were passed in 1973 that a local, state, or federal law treated LGBT people as a distinct class rather than as individuals committing deviant acts.

I argue that the role of the state as a source of power over LGBT cultural equality is a key difference between this group and African Americans and women. While legal/political inequality has served to solidify the latter groups' statuses as separate, marginalized cultural groups, when state power has been directed at LGBT people it has most often denied their status as an identity group. Compared to African-Americans and women, the state has a different role, for a shorter amount of time, in perpetuating LGBT inequality. LGBT people did not begin to seek state recognition until Stonewall and the first Pride parades ushered in the gay identity movement (Armstrong 2002). Prior to Stonewall, state policies like sodomy laws and restrictions on commercial gay spaces encouraged gays and lesbians to remain “in the closet”, not publicly identifying as gay. This served to perpetuate LGBT cultural invisibility, so that gays and lesbians were invisible both to one another and in the macro-level dominant culture.

By contrast, state policies towards African-Americans and women served to create and reinforce visible cultural distinction. Through identity politics, LGBT activists post Stonewall have actually pursued visibility as a culturally defined minority group
deserving of state recognition and protection from discrimination (Berbrier 2002; Gamson 1995). Moreover, they choose to emphasize a collective identity as a distinct meso-level cultural group in some political campaigns while downplaying distinction in others (Bernstein 1997). This makes the nature of LGBT cultural inequality qualitatively distinct from that of other minority groups, as I argue below, while it also changes the relationship of state power over LGBT cultural equality. In the U.S. the state is comparatively silent regarding LGBT people, and in their short history as a social group what few policies applied to LGBT people served to reinforce cultural invisibility. For LGBT activists, this means that macro-level culture may serve as an important target for social movement action.

**The Nature of LGBT Cultural Inequality**

Social movement activists use explicit cultural tools – collective action frames, music, theatrical displays, and mass demonstrations - to persuade and challenge macro-level culture. These tools apply cultural meanings in a new way, whether through symbolic inversion in the case of ACT UP (Gamson 1989) or appropriating symbols for a new purpose in the case of public same-sex weddings (Taylor et al. 2009). To make sense of Pride as an explicit cultural tool, it is important to understand the macro-level implicit cultural meanings associated with LGBT people. I argue that these cultural meanings deny the legitimacy of LGBT people as a cultural group and that this contrasts with meanings associated with African-Americans and women. These groups struggle for cultural respect, which is qualitatively different than the LGBT struggle for cultural legitimacy.

Many scholars have noted that in the post-Stonewall era of the LGBT social
movement activists have pursued an identity politics strategy in which they liken gay identity to ethnic identity (Epstein 1987; Gamson 1995). Berbrier (2002) added to this insight by claiming that activists rhetorically framed the LGBT community as a minority group rather than as a group of social deviants. He argued that culturally “minority” is a different categorical status than “deviant” and that this status carries higher cultural value since African-Americans achieved greater legal/political and cultural equality. They did this during the civil rights movement by demanding equality while also asserting group difference. I argue that the higher cultural value of minority status is the recognition of group identity as a legitimate, and therefore culturally allowed, category of being. For the category “woman” to be culturally legitimate, therefore, means that women are not socially sanctioned to change their identity and cease to be women.

Berbrier's (2002) study concerned the ways activists' rhetoric positioned their groups in the culturally legitimate category “minority” by distancing themselves from the illegitimate “deviant” category. My focus is on how macro-level American culture positions LGBT people, and I argue that historically this positioning has been as a group of deviant individuals rather than a minority group. Moreover, minority status conveys cultural legitimacy while deviance does not. Minority status designates group difference that, while often coupled with cultural disrespect, is held as legitimate and undeniable. Deviance, by contrast, is not a culturally legitimate group status because it conveys an individual's failure to meet social norms and is not held as the basis for shared culture. In

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6 Culturally legitimate minority status may or may not include recognition that the identity in question is a matter of individual choice. One does not choose one's racial signifiers, for example, but one does choose religion. Both race and religion are culturally legitimate forms of group identity difference.
other words, a deviant individual is socially sanctioned to remove the source of their deviance – for LGBT people, this to stop behaving and identifying as queer – and this social sanction constitutes cultural illegitimacy.

Historically LGBT people have been marked as culturally deviant in three ways: as sinners, criminals, and mentally ill (Carter 2004; Ghaziani 2008; Herrell 1996). Two of these ways, as criminals and mentally ill, have all but disappeared since gains made by LGBT activists removed their institutional support. Legal change, particularly the elimination of sodomy laws, diminished the cultural strength of the charge that LGBT people are criminals. Similarly the medical community no longer designates homosexuality as mentally illness and treats attempts to change patients' sexual orientation as unethical (APA 2011). Gender Identity Disorder, however is still an official, but controversial, diagnosis applied to transgender individuals who experience psychological distress due to the mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity (APA 1994). The strongest remaining way LGBT people are marked as deviant is based on the belief that homosexual behavior is immoral. While this belief is less popular than in 1970, it is still held by half of all Americans. The rhetoric used in debates over LGBT legal/political rights illustrates this construction.

Opposition to LGBT legal/political rights has come primarily from the Christian right (Fetner 2008; Green 2000; Herman 1996). Since its inception, the Christian right has made cultural claims based on their belief that homosexuality and gender nonconformity are sins that will cause social harm if not kept in check by legal and cultural sanctions. Studies of debates over LGBT rights have consistently found that concerns for traditional morality undergird arguments to oppose expansion of these rights.
One prevalent argument used to oppose same-sex marriage, for instance, is that heterosexual marriage is good for society and same-sex marriage threatens the institution (McFarland 2011). By labeling these unions as threats, this argument denies their cultural right to exist as legitimate and respected social relationships.

The explicit cultural frame that homosexuality is immoral is a belief held implicitly by 46.7% of Americans, making it far from a fringe position. Even arguments not directly referencing morality play on the belief that sexuality is a choice, and thus deviant rather than an immutable feature of one's identity7. For instance, the argument that non-discrimination laws or relationship recognition for same-sex couples constitute “special rights” denies that being LGBT is a legitimate identity that is worthy of state protection. Those using this argument may even justify their claim by contrasting the illegitimacy of gays’ “lifestyle choice” with the legitimacy of African-Americans' claims for equal rights (Herman 1996).

My argument is that the cultural opposition to LGBT equality is qualitatively different than cultural opposition to other groups, such as African-Americans and women. Debates over LGBT legal rights illustrate that the macro-level cultural code constructs homosexuality and gender transgression as deviant and therefore an individual property that can and should be changed. By contrast, cultural opposition to legal/political equality for African-Americans and women has been grounded in their cultural

7 Religion is also a choice, but perhaps due to America's cultural history valuing religious choice as an individual right, this choice has not led to culturally illegitimate or deviant status for religious minorities.

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inequality. Rather than denying their existence as a cultural group, opponents of racial and gender equality take the reverse position by asserting human's natural difference (based on biology, divine order, or some combination of the two) by race, ethnicity, and gender (Frenier 1984). Legal/political equality, they argue, would disrupt social order by going against natural cultural difference. For instance, the separate sphere ideology was (and in some cases may still be) a popular cultural argument against women's legal/political equality (Kerber 1988). According to this ideology, women and men inhabit separate yet equally important spheres of social life. The public sphere, and thus legal/political equality, is the province of men and the state should not invite women into this sphere through the extension of legal/political rights. Feminists argue that this ideology enforces not just women's cultural difference but their cultural inequality (Ferree 1990; Kerber 1988). My point is that the construction of women's cultural difference from men legitimizes their existence as a distinct cultural group in contrast to the ways that queerness is constructed.

In a nutshell, the cultural code that underpins LGBT people's continued inequality constructs them as deviant individuals and thus not a legitimate cultural group. The cultural codes supporting African-Americans' and women's inequality, by contrast, construct them as legitimate minority groups that are nonetheless distinct and in some ways inferior to dominant white men. Both cultural codes have considerably weakened through a combination of structural change and sustained, coordinated collective action to challenge them, yet they remain important barriers to full legal/political and cultural equality. Neither form of opposition is more conducive to social movement action, but activists will use different cultural meanings to challenge these distinct codes. In this
dissertation I am concerned with how Pride parade participants challenge the cultural
code that constructs them as deviant and thus not a legitimate cultural group.

Once again I locate the roots of this distinction between LGBT people and
African-Americans and women in their relatively recent historical emergence as a
cultural group. Until the Industrial Revolution, homosexuality and gender transgression
were structurally possible only as deviant acts (Adam 1995; D'Emilio 1998).
Homosexual behavior was culturally confined at the macro-level to relatively isolated
acts outside the family structure. There was no meso-level cultural group of individuals
who defined their primary attractions and identities as queer. Without such a group there
was no cultural challenge to the morality model which defined acts of homosexuality and
gender transgression as sinful. It was not until the Industrial Revolution brought about
wage labor and urbanization that allowed men, and later women, to organize their lives
around their queer desires.

Macro-level culture is meant for stability and thus resists change. Cultural change
happens through conflict between a group's structural possibilities and their cultural
position. I contend that in 2010 there was cultural lag between LGBT people's structural
ability to be a cultural minority group and their continued macro-level cultural
construction as deviant individuals. Evidence of increased cultural visibility and
decreased proportion of Americans who believe homosexuality is morally wrong indicate
this macro-level construction is changing. However, the persistence of cultural attitudes
treating queerness as deviance and cultural arguments against LGBT equality speak to the
continued strength of macro-level construction of LGBT people as deviant individuals.
African-Americans and women likewise continue to challenge macro-level constructions
of them as culturally different and inferior to white men, but this challenge is one of the
cultural worth and place of them as minority groups rather than as deviant individuals.

LGBT people's recent historical emergence as a collective identity group means
that their cultural challenge is distinct from than that of other identity groups, specifically
African-Americans and women. While these groups struggle for cultural respect, LGBT
people struggle for cultural legitimacy.

**Cultural Resources with Which LGBT Challenge Inequality**

In order to mount either a legal/political or cultural challenge to one's unequal
status a marginalized group draws from the resources in their meso-level culture. The
stronger the culture in terms of collective identity, the better individuals in a similar
structural and cultural position may band together as a group to challenge their inequality.
Demographic and cultural isolation worked both to construct and reinforce African-
Americans' cultural inequality but also allowed for the development of cultural resources
for the civil rights movement. Because they were segregated in poor neighborhoods
African-Americans developed social institutions, primarily the black church, and
community leaders (Morris 1984). African-Americans developed collective identity
through years of shared physical space with one another as well as marginalized
structural/cultural status. Demographic and culturally isolated neighborhoods became
“free spaces” in which African-Americans developed cultural resources to challenge their
cultural inequality (Polletta 1999; Polletta & Jasper 2001). Likewise, cultural institutions
such as community centers and feminist bookstores were important to sustaining the
women's movement in times of decreased collective action (Taylor 1989). Just as LGBT
people face unique cultural opposition centered on the struggle for legitimacy as an
identity group, there are distinct demographic, structural, and cultural barriers to developing cultural resources, primarily collective identity, with which to challenge macro-level cultural codes.

Structural. All LGBT people face the same structural challenge: sexual orientation and gender identity are not a heritable characteristics in the same sense that race and ethnicity are and thus no one is born into LGBT community. Racial/ethnic minority children adopted into white families may have a similar experience such that interracial adoption can be a controversial issue. However, they are a very small proportion of the population and may turn to established racial/ethnic minority communities for culture and community. Women, too, are not born into gender-specific enclaves, but as 50% of the population they grow up in families with other women and have no trouble encountering other women in their daily lives. All LGBT people, by contrast, must seek out community when they come out as teens and adults. This process is hampered by demographic and cultural factors.

Demographic. LGBT people comprise a small and geographically disperse segment of the population. Put simply, there are few places in the U.S. where the LGBT population reaches the critical mass needed to support cultural institutions. Even in these places, like the Castro district of San Francisco, LGBT people live among a significant heterosexual population which may inhibit the extent to which these neighborhoods can act as free spaces. A trip to the Castro, with its nearly omnipresent rainbow flags

8 While there is evidence of a genetic component to sexual orientation and gender identity, the link is complex and not fully understood.

9 A very small number of LGBT people may actually be born to LGBT parents, but even they will most likely have an extended family dominated by straight members.
certainly weakens this assertion, but the uniqueness of this neighborhood points to the broader point that very few LGBT people live in places like the Castro. I noted above that a full half (56%) of same-sex couples live in zip codes with fewer than 100 other gay couples. By comparison, only 1.4% of African-Americans live in zip codes where they are similarly isolated. LGBT people therefore need to create free spaces while geographically dispersed throughout the larger population, and many LGBT individuals must travel in order to interact with others.

A further demographic challenge is the different residential patterns of gay men compared to lesbians. Lesbian couples outnumber gay male couples overall, but more gay male couples live in zip codes with relatively high LGBT populations. Thus, lesbians face an even greater challenge than gay men to the physical proximity that allows for the development of collective identity. These residential patterns also serve as a barrier to gay men and lesbians interacting and sharing collective identity. Lesbian couples outnumber gay male couples two to one in 18% of zip codes that have over 1,000 couples and the reverse is true in 5% of these zip codes. This geography may exacerbate the cultural tendency among LGBT people to separate by gender both to socialize and to organize for social change.

LGBT people have established spaces in which to build community and collective identity. Before 1970 these consisted of bars, clubs, and movement organizations located almost exclusively in a few neighborhood enclaves in major cities. Since 1970 LGBT spaces, while still concentrated in urban areas, have proliferated throughout the country. In addition to commercial and social movement spaces, I identified LGBT periodicals and online communication, film festivals, and sports leagues as ways that LGBT people
come together. In the previous chapter I also identified the first Pride events as places where gays and lesbians built collective identity and united across both gender and racial/ethnic lines. The growth of each of these spaces represents an improvement in LGBT people's ability to form collective identity despite their demographic separation. However, one further type of barrier to this formation is cultural.

_Cultural._ The first step for each LGBT person to meet, form community with, and collectively identify with other LGBT people is to personally come out and identify as LGBT. Though LGBT people have become much more culturally visible over the past 40 years, macro-level culture is still heteronormative, meaning that everyone is presumed straight and gender-normative until proven otherwise. Added to that, the cultural construction of queer sexuality and gender as deviance rather than minority status exerts cultural pressure against individual public identification as LGBT. While this has lessened since 1970, it is still very much present and constitutes a cultural barrier against forming LGBT community. Moreover, this is a cultural barrier that African-Americans and women do not face and thus further illustrates the cultural distinctiveness of the LGBT struggle for equality.

The legal/political and cultural inequality of African-Americans and women separate them structurally and culturally from white men as minority groups. African-Americans in particular, some argue, are separated culturally as a way to reinforce their lower socioeconomic status (Gans 2005). Their cultural challenge is thus to politicize their externally defined collective identity and turn it into an internal resource. LGBT people, too, must define their identity as politically meaningful. They also face the cultural challenge, though, of defining their identity as collective – that is, as an identity
feature held in common by many individuals. While the nature of African-Americans' and women's inequality lends itself to this collective identification, since queer sexuality and gender is constructed as deviance their inequality is a barrier to collective identification.

A second cultural barrier to forming LGBT collective identity is to unite across gender, racial/ethnic, and class lines. As I noted above, LGBT women and men have not historically shared the same political concerns or social spaces. Likewise, racism and class divisions have hindered community building that is inclusive of this diversity. Some social spaces like inclusive film festivals and sports leagues do bring LGBT women and men together but others like bars and clubs cater only to one gender. Activists in the women's movement have faced similar cultural barriers to unite across racial/ethnic and class lines. With both race and class privilege, affluent and middle class white women have dominated feminist social movement organizations and feminist theory. Second wave white feminists in particular were criticized for ignoring the concerns of women of color and poor women and setting up a false choice between loyalty to one's race or class and loyalty to one's gender. This is an area, then, in which LGBT people experience a cultural barrier similar to that of another group.

The LGBT population faces structural, demographic, and cultural barriers the LGBT to developing collective identity and thus the cultural resources that allow for/aid collective action. While they share cultural barriers such as uniting across racial/ethnic and class lines with the women's movement, most of their barriers are unique to this community. In order to develop meso-level cultural resources such as shared symbols, ideology, and leaders, LGBT people must first come out publicly with their identity,
physically find other LGBT people, and develop relationships outside previous residential or family based social networks.

**Conclusion**

LGBT people lived in a more culturally and legally equal world in 2010 than when the first Pride events were staged in 1970. In forty years their legal/political struggle went from fighting criminalization of their sexual acts to pushing the state to recognize their relationships and protect them from discrimination. Activists in many states have succeeded, but Americans are still vulnerable to legal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity federally and in a majority of states. Similarly, same-sex relationships are not legally recognized in most places in the U.S. Evidence of employment discrimination and the benefits of legal relationship recognition point to the need for these types of laws. Culturally, LGBT people are more visible both in their micro-level social circles and in the macro-level mass media. The proportion of Americans with negative implicit cultural attitudes towards LGBT people decreased, but nearly one half continue to believe that homosexual behavior is morally wrong. LGBT people also have more cultural resources with which to challenge inequality than they did in 1970. Though they are demographically dispersed throughout the U.S., they come together in political and social spaces and form collective identity.

Social movements research about how identity-based movements work has developed by studying, among others, the civil rights and women's liberation movements. These movements use culture both in the form of explicit tools to challenge macro-level codes that underpin inequality and as implicit meso-level collective identity to mobilize and sustain movement activity. The majority of this work has addressed movement
campaigns aimed at achieving legal/political equality and corresponding state-directed tactics. Research on movements and tactics with cultural goals and targets suggests richer use of symbolic meanings. To understand the role of Pride parades in the struggle for LGBT cultural equality, I explored three questions about the nature of their inequality through comparison to African-Americans and women: 1) What is the source of social power that perpetuates LGBT cultural inequality? 2) What is the qualitative nature of LGBT cultural inequality? and 3) What cultural resources do LGBT people have with which to collectively challenge their inequality?

In this chapter I argued that while state power has perpetuated LGBT cultural inequality, it has done so by undermining rather than reinforcing their status as an identity group. Given their relatively recent historical emergence as a social group, the state has played a different role, for a shorter amount of time, in perpetuating LGBT inequality than it has for African-Americans' and women's inequality. Likewise, the nature of LGBT cultural inequality centers on the construction of queer sexuality and gender as deviance and not as a feature of a minority group. This leads to a struggle for cultural legitimacy that is qualitatively different from that encountered by women and African-Americans as they stand up for cultural equality. Finally, LGBT face unique structural, demographic, and cultural barriers to building meso-level culture in the form of collective identities. These barriers mean that LGBT people to not find “free spaces” within externally defined geographic or cultural marginalization and instead must create them.

With this descriptive and analytical background on LGBT inequality, in the following chapters I consider how one tactic, Pride parades, challenge literature on movement tactics and uses of culture.
Pride Parades Since 1970

Participants declared the inaugural Pride events in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles on June 27, 1970 a resounding success, and word quickly spread to gay and lesbian advocates across the country. The following year, these cities held even bigger events. New York’s event remained more of a march and drew, according to the Advocate, up to 20,000 people, while the event in Los Angeles “had more the aspect of a Shriner's parade – complete with clowns, outlandish costumes, and a deft baton twirler – than of a civil rights march” (“Thousands Turn Out”: 1). Chicago’s event went from a relatively small march drawing two hundred in 1970 to a grander parade with 1,200 participants in 1971 (“Thousands Turn Out” 1971). They were joined by marches in Boston and Atlanta and a rally and “gay-in”1 in San Jose, CA (“Thousands Turn Out” 1971; “cyclops” 1971). In 1972 Detroit, Philadelphia, and San Francisco hosted Pride parades as well (“Christopher Street Parade” 1972; Jenkins 2011; Stein 2004). The parade in San Francisco was notable because though it was known even then as a gay mecca, community leaders were skeptical of the utility of Pride for their city in 1970 and

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1 “Gay-ins” were much like Pride marches without collective locomotion. Individuals occupied public space, such as parks, and openly displayed their gay identity. They were inspired by “be-ins” and “love-ins” common to 1960s hippie and counterculture and the sit-ins of the civil rights movement.
1971. Originally gay and lesbian leaders viewed Pride as too confrontational given the relatively good relationship the community had with city officials, but by 1972 it had proven a successful event so they organized a parade of their own (Armstrong & Crage 2006).

Since these early marches, the number of Pride parades in the U.S. grew to 110\(^2\) as of 2009. Pride parades are also held in over thirty countries around the world, many in Europe but also in unlikely places like Asunción, Paraguay and Bengaluru, India. Figures 4.1-4.5 show the diffusion of Pride parades across the U.S. since 1970\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Data were collected by the author using information provided by Pride organizers. An additional 62 cities host Pride festivals, which are held on public or private grounds and open to the public. Three amusement parks – Disneyworld in Orlando, FL, Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, CA, and Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, TN – also host Pride events. However, I include only Pride events with collective locomotion in my analysis.

\(^3\) Figures only include those parades still in existence.
Figure 4.1. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 1970 (N=3)

Figure 4.2. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 1980 (N=21)

Figure 4.3. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 1990 (N=48)

Figure 4.4. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 2000 (N=66)

Figure 4.5. U.S. LGBT Pride Parades, 2009 (N=110)
As illustrated in the figures, Pride parades were never isolated to a particular area of the country. While they cluster in major population centers, they are not clustered by political or cultural dimensions. By 1980 half the parades were held in either the South or the Midwest, both in major cities like Houston and in smaller places such as Des Moines, IA. Table 4.1 shows the current geographic distribution of Pride parades.

**Table 4.1: Parades by Region of Country**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>States Without a Parade</th>
<th>States in Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>53.7 million</td>
<td>CT, DE, NH</td>
<td>CT, DE, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>99.2 million</td>
<td>AR, MS</td>
<td>AL, AR, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>59.8 million</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>66.3 million</td>
<td>WY</td>
<td>AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parades are now held in 43 states and the District of Columbia. Those states without a parade host Pride festivals – one or two day events with booths and entertainment that do not include a collective locomotion component. Proportionally, there are a few more parades in the West and Northeast compared to the Midwest and South. In addition to their geographical distribution, Pride parades are held in both small and large cities. Figure 4.6 shows the emergence of Pride parades that are still in existence by year and the population of the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in which they are located.
After the first parades were founded in the 1970s in large metropolitan areas, there was a steady growth of parades in all sizes of MSA. It is true that Pride parades are held in urban centers, but common perception is that they happen only in major cities with vibrant gay neighborhoods like New York and San Francisco. Though I found that all MSAs with over 2 million people (save Detroit) hosted Pride parades, these accounted for only one third of all parades. Since 1976, parades have been founded in roughly equal proportions across MSA population categories. The biggest growth has been in the smallest and largest population categories, each accounting for 30% of new parades. Most recently, from 2001 to 2009, half of all parades (48%) have been founded in the smallest MSAs, those with populations below 500,000. Moreover, of the 20 parades with unknown starting years, one half are held in MSAs with fewer than 500,000 residents. Despite common perception, then, Pride parades are not a strictly metropolitan phenomenon.
Finally, pride parades also vary greatly in their size, measured by the number of participants and spectators. Size estimates were provided by parade organizers for 2008 events. Parade size ranged from 50 people in Pasco, Washington to over one million in New York City. Table 4.2 shows the breakdown of parades by size and the median population of the MSAs in which parades are held. Size categories were determined by taking quartiles of the size estimates given by parade organizers, thus they are in roughly equal groups.

Table 4.2: Parade Size by Population in Hosting MSA N=110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Parade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Median Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Small, 0-1,300</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>272,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, 1,301-4,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>524,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium, 4,001-20,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1,134,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, 20,001-90,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2,738,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Large, 90,000+</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3,715,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size Unknown</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>820,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,075,530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size of parade correlates with the population of the area in which they are held. Of those parades with less than 1,300 participants, twelve are held in MSAs with fewer than 500,000 people and four in MSAs with fewer than one million. Likewise, eleven of the largest parades (drawing over 90,000 participants) are held in large population MSAs (over two million people) and two are in MSAs with one to two million residents.

Parades in middle size categories show similar correlation between size and the population of their MSA.

To further test the influences on parade size, I ran a series of linear regressions. In the first model, I regressed MSA population on parade size. I added year the parade was founded to the second model and ran a likelihood ratio test to determine if this addition significantly changed the explanatory power of the model. Finally, I added
remaining independent variables – geographic region, % white and % same-sex couples in MSA, median income in MSA, and statewide same-sex marriage recognition – and ran a likelihood ratio test. I included the percentage of white residents as a measure of racial/ethnic diversity, and the percentage of same-sex couples as a proxy for LGBT population. Though Pride parades are not strictly for LGBT people, a higher LGBT population may indicate a greater constituency for Pride events. Same-sex marriage is a highly charged political and social issue and its legal status is one indicator of local acceptance of LGBT people. Table 4.3 summarizes the results.

Table 4.3. Regression of Independent Variables on Parade Size, N=75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSA Population</td>
<td>0.020**</td>
<td>0.015**</td>
<td>0.017**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Founded</td>
<td>-6463**</td>
<td>-5552**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Region*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Same-sex couples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>186665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same-Sex Marriage Recognition**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State law prohibits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution prohibits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio Test</td>
<td>17.73**</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05  ** p<0.01
° Northeast is reference category
°° Legal same-sex marriage is reference category

In all models, MSA population was highly correlated with number of participants in an area's Pride parade. Alone, in model 1, MSA population accounted for 24% of the variation in parade size. The year a parade was founded was also strongly correlated with
parade size such that the earlier the parade was founded, the larger its current size. A likelihood ratio test between models 1 and 2 indicated that the addition of founding year increased the explanatory power of the model. This was also evidenced by the increase in $R^2$ value by seventeen points. The addition of remaining independent variables did not increase model 3’s explanatory power over model 2 and none of the added variables significantly affected parade size.

From this information, then parade size increases along with size of the population in its hosting MSA and with the length it has been in existence. While there is considerable variation in parade size and year of founding such that there do exist small parades founded early in the history of the phenomena, regression analysis showed that early founding is a predictor of large size. Moreover, though there are substantive reasons that region, diversity, LGBT population, and acceptance of queer sexuality and gender would affect the number of people that attend Pride parades in a given region, these reasons are not supported by regression analysis. In subsequent chapters I interrogate whether these factors influence the meanings that participants attribute to the events.

In sum, Pride parades have expanded far beyond what original participants dreamed. They are held in most states and in cities of all sizes. While the largest parades in New York, San Francisco, and other major cities draw the most attention, the majority of parades are held in smaller cities like Birmingham, AL and Las Cruces, NM.

**Methods**

My study of contemporary Pride parades in the U.S. consists of observations at six parades during the summer of 2010, semi-structured interviews with fifty participants,
and content analysis of the racial and gender make-up of crowds using digital photographs. In this section I detail site selection, data collection, and analysis, then discuss the methodological challenges I encountered.

Selection of Cases

What little research has been conducted on Pride parades has focused on the largest of these events that draw tens and hundreds of thousands or participants (e.g. Browne 1997; Kates & Belk 2001; Herrell 1992; Johnston 2005). While these parades draw the most media attention and thus create the popular image of what Pride parades are, they represent only a fraction of the 110 parades that were held in the U.S. in 2010. In order to get a fuller picture of Pride, I systematically selected six parade sites according to number of participants, geography, and demographics of their host cities. Using the data set that I constructed of all LGBT Pride events in the U.S., I separated parades into quintiles by size and selected one event from each group. I added the parade in New York City as my sixth research site because it is both the largest Pride event in the country and it carries symbolic importance as the site of the Stonewall riot.

To choose between parades in the same quintile, I considered region of the country, demographics, and measures of gay-friendlyliness. Though not statistically representative, my goal was to construct a sample of parades that represents the diversity of these events. Geographically, I chose parade sites in each of four Census regions and from separate divisions within these regions. Since there are nine Census divisions and I was only able to attend six parades, I did not attend a parade in the East North Central, West South Central, or East South Central divisions. Demographically, I matched parade data with census data by the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in which parades were
held. I used the percentage of white population as a representation of racial and ethnic diversity and chose parades in cities with high, middle, and low diversity. I also looked for variation by the median income in each city. I used measures of individual-level cultural attitudes and relationship recognition statutes to represent gay-friendliness. Data on cultural attitudes come from the 2010 GSS and are separated by Census division. A second proxy for gay-friendliness is the presence state laws recognizing same-sex relationships. Passage of these laws requires both public support and muted opposition. Such laws represent steps toward legal equality, which may then make the cultural climate more friendly to LGBT people. Finally, as a practical matter I chose parades with different dates. Table 4.4 lists the parade sites I chose with their size and information on geography, demography, and gay-friendliness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
<th>% Homosexuality is not wrong at all</th>
<th>Relationship Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fargo/ Morehead, ND</td>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>W North Central</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>$24,290</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>New England</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>$26,897</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>Legal Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>$25,492</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>$29,030</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>$25,329</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>State Civil Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>Middle Atlantic</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>$29,913</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>Domestic Partnership*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As of 2010. In 2011 New York State passed marriage equality and now issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

The parades in my study represent a wide diversity on all variables and mirror the diversity of the population of Pride events. Parades were distributed throughout the country such that the two closest parades, Burlington, VT and New York City, were
separated by 350 miles and vastly different in size. The MSAs in which parades are located vary from 51.3% white population in New York City to 93.6% white population in Burlington, VT. The make-up of non-white population is different as well. African-Americans are the largest minority group in Atlanta while in San Diego Latinos are the largest. These groups are both substantial proportions of the population in New York City. Parades vary by median income in their host MSA, though there is slightly less diversity in the parades chosen compared to all parades. For the population of all MSAs that host parades, median annual income ranges from $16,000 to $39,000, but the range in my sample is from $24,000 to $30,000. However, over half of all parades are in MSAs that have median incomes within this range.

Parades were located in the gay-friendly cultural climate of Burlington, VT where three quarters of residents believe homosexuality is not wrong at all and the state grants marriage licenses to gay couples, and in the non gay-friendly climates of Salt Lake City and Atlanta, with no legal relationship recognition for same-sex couples and majority disapproval of homosexuality. Unfortunately these are not the most unfriendly regions; residents of East and West South Central regions (the Deep South, Texas, and Oklahoma), had even higher rates of disapproval. Though there were fourteen parades in these regions, none fit the criteria needed on other variables.

Field Observation

I attended each parade and made detailed observations of the entire event. Depending on the size, I arrived one to two hours before the scheduled start time and observed the preparations made by parade contingents and organizers and watched spectators interact as they gathered for the parade. I spoke informally with both marchers
and spectators about their perceptions of the events. During the parades, I walked back and forth along the route to watch the parade and observe spectators as various contingents passed by. When there were protesters, I observed interactions between the two sides. I paid particular attention to parade contingents that received especially positive reactions from spectators; there were none that received negative reactions. I noted the signs participants carried, the shirts they wore, and the slogans they chanted. I took detailed audio fieldnotes during events and summarized them with theoretical notes after events concluded.

**Participant Interviews**

Participants are defined as those who attended Pride parades as either a marcher spectator, sponsor, or volunteer. Research assistants conducted brief on-site structured interviews with participants asking about their experience with Pride parades and demographics. The main purpose of these interviews was to solicit contact information for semi-structured interviews via phone. Research assistants began soliciting interviews one to two hours before each parade started and continued until crowds dispersed after each parade. They were dispersed through the crowds at each parade such that I placed one or two in parade line-up areas to approach marchers and others at various points along the parade route. Once parades started, those interviewing marchers moved to other areas and continued to solicit interviews and contact information from spectators.

Research assistants sampled participants by quota according to perceived gender, age, and race/ethnicity. I set a 50/50 gender quota for each parade, and research assistants strove for diversity by gender presentation, approaching some participants who presented themselves normatively and others who did not. By age, I achieved variation
with a quota of two-thirds perceived under 40 and one-third over 40. All respondents were over age 18. I set race/ethnicity quotas relative to the non-white population in each hosting MSA. In Atlanta, San Diego, and New York research assistants approached participants they perceived to be non-white for one third to one half of all interviews, while at the remaining parades they followed an informal quota by approaching non-white individuals according to their relative presence in the crowds. Finally, I instructed research assistants to approach participants that were diverse in terms of their stereotypically “flamboyant” behavior and the formal and informal groups with which they socialized. This is a nonprobability sample in that respondents were chosen by walking through the crowd and soliciting brief information, and as such results cannot be generalized to the population of Pride parade-goers.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with Pride participants via phone between one and six months after the event. In the case of two parade sites, Burlington and Fargo, participants were also recruited via local email lists since the initial sample was comparatively small. All participants attended Pride parades in one of the six cities in 2010 as either a marcher, spectator, volunteer, or sponsor. Given initial quota sampling, participants were diverse in terms of gender, sexual identity and role in the parade. Table 4.5 summarizes these characteristics of interview respondents.
Semi-structured interviews lasted between 12 and 40 minutes in which participants described their experiences at their respective Pride events and their perceptions of Pride parades in general. I asked interview respondents to compare Pride parades to other mass demonstrations like political marches and St. Patrick’s Day parades in order to place Pride in the spectrum of collective public displays. The interviews sought participants' understandings of the purpose and meaning of Pride parades and their evaluations of their respective events. I asked them about the local climate for LGBT people and the role of Pride parade in the community. Finally, I asked respondents for their impressions of the racial/ethnic, gender, and class diversity at their Pride parades.
Crowd Photographs

I took between 6 and 20 photographs of spectators at various points in each parade, then content analyzed the diversity of crowds. There were an average of 15 identifiable individuals in each photograph. At larger parades, crowds were much more dense and while photographs captured many people, the faces and bodies of many were obscured. We analyzed only those spectators for whom there was a clear view to distinguish personal characteristics. A research assistant and I coded spectators for perceived race/ethnicity, gender, and gender presentation. We developed specific coding rules together. This was an asset to coding validity because we each brought our own cultural understandings to the task. As I discuss in more detail below, I approach Pride parades as an LGBT-identified insider with personal knowledge of LGBT culture. My research assistant identifies as straight and lacks this cultural knowledge. By collaborating on coding rules we were able to use our personal perspectives to develop specific criteria. This was an asset particularly in coding for spectators' gender presentation. However, as we are both white and female we approached these categories from the same social location.

We determined perceived race/ethnicity based on skin color and facial features and perceived gender by individuals' physical characteristics such as body size, weight distribution, and visible secondary sex characteristics such as breasts or broad shoulders. Gender presentation was the most difficult category. We relied on our shared understandings of social norms to code as individuals as gender normative or non-normative. Criteria for the normative category included long, styled hairs, skirts or dresses, and accessories such as purses or jewelry for women and short hair, baggy
clothing, and short- or long-sleeved (as opposed to sleeveless) shirts for men. We coded women as gender non-normative if they had, among other things, short, masculine style hair, wore baggy shorts or athletic clothing, or lacked feminine accessories. Signs of gender non-normativity for men included tight clothing and sleeveless shirts or going topless.

We each coded half of all pictures independently. To assure coding validity, we also coded a subset of spectators and calculated inter-coder reliability, achieving Cohen's kappa scores of 0.72 for race/ethnicity, 0.84 for gender, and 0.53 for gender presentation (Cohen 1960). The kappa score for gender presentation is lower than ideal, but may be regarded as falling within a moderate range for reliability (Landis & Koch 1977).

Analysis

I transcribed semi-structured interviews and analyzed them to find common themes using MAXQDA qualitative software. I started by sorting responses by whether they addressed external or internal dimensions of Pride. External dimensions were those that spoke to Pride as a public statement for those outside the LGBT meso-level group and internal were those that related to this community. I grouped responses within the external dimension according to common themes such as the target of action and the means to achieve external goals. Within the internal dimension I sorted responses further into three groups – physical space, emotional responses, and boundary work - following literature on developing collective identity. After isolating common themes from interviewer data, I compared these to my detailed observations to see if participants’ perceptions match my own.

In order to capture variation among parades, I divided parades according to two
characteristics: size and cultural climate towards LGBT people. Parade size is indicative of local LGBT community's ability to mobilize its members and supporters and is thus a measure internal to parades. I divided parades into small/medium and large size groups. The small/medium parades drew well under 50,000 people, traveled up to one mile, and included few floats, if any. The large parades were grander affairs in all respects.

Cultural climate is external to parades and is the relevant context in which parades are held. I used the same two measures of gay-friendliness that factored in site selection to separate sites as gay-friendly and non-gay friendly. All parades sites marked as gay friendly were located states with some type of relationship recognition for same-sex couples and in regions where over half of residents believed homosexuality was not morally wrong. LGBT people in non gay-friendly sites lacked legal protections for their same-sex relationships and faced greater moral disapproval. I use state and region of the country as cultural units for two reasons. First, acceptance of homosexuality correlates positively with city size so that any city will be likely to have a more friendly environment toward LGBT people than a rural area; thus using the city as a cultural unit would yield little variation. Second, data from brief structured interviews indicate that on average one third of participants at each parade traveled over 25 miles (outside city limits and in some case suburbs) to attend. This means that a large portion of participants come from more rural environments so that the cultural climate faced by those at the parade extends beyond the city.

Finally, since sexual orientation is the main identity category relevant to LGBT Pride parades, I measure individual variation according to participants' stated identity.

4 Despite this distinction, neither of the three “non gay-friendly” cities recognize any form of same-sex relationship.
While participants used a variety of identity labels, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and straight, I collapsed these into LGBT and straight. Table 4.6 shows parades grouped by number of participants in sample, participants' sexual identity, size and cultural climate.

Table 4.6 Parade Sites by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>N</th>
<th># LGBT</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Miles in Parade Route</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Homosexuality is not wrong at all</th>
<th>Relationship Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fargo/Morehead, ND</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Small/Med</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Non Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Small/Med</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>Legal Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Small/Med</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Non Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Non Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>State Civil Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Gay-Friendly</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>Domestic Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I ran cross-tabulations and chi-squared tests to show variation among by identity, size, and cultural climate. Given the qualitative nature of my data, I can only suggest preliminary differences among parades.

Ethnography of the Ephemeral

My study is an “ethnography of the ephemeral” (Paulsen 2009, 509) because unlike traditional ethnographies that involve months and even years of observation in the field, each phenomenon that I researched lasted only five to ten hours. With this short time period, my major challenge was going beyond my first impressions to compose a thick description based on participants’ own meanings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 1995;
Paulsen (2009) identifies three challenges to this type of ethnography: gaining entrée and establishing a position from which to observe; moving beyond the immediately available informants; and refining research questions in light of emerging insights. To meet these challenges, I spent months preparing by talking with parade organizers in various cities, researching the history of each parade and its current cultural climate, and constructing my data set of all Pride events in the country. I added to this my personal knowledge of and familiarity with these events through years of participation as both a marcher and spectator. Before starting this project, I had attended Pride events in six cities across the country and one in Asunción, Paraguay while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer. Combining this personal experience with professional preparation, I started data collection with a thorough knowledge of what to expect and what to look for in light of my research questions.

Gaining entrée to parade sites was not an issue because they are open to the public and draw large and diverse crowds such that neither I nor my research assistants stood out. I did not have contact with parade organizers or participants prior to the events. Given my experience with Pride parades and my membership in the LGBT community I approach Pride as an insider. I dressed casually in polo shirts and shorts, typical of the more conservatively dressed parade participants. A number of features of my personal appearance mark me as “family” to fellow LGBT people, such as my short, spiked hair, nose ring, and visible tattoos. This observational position as an insider helped me as I was able to easily build rapport with participants and parade volunteers. In one instance in New York, a female volunteer in a very crowded area allowed me access to a table on
which to stand and observe the start of the parade, remarking that “there aren't many cute soft butch girls like you around!”. While I blended in with my personal appearance and familiarity, I also set myself apart from Pride participants through my behavior. Most participants staked out positions along the parade route with groups of friends and interacted with those in their immediate vicinity. I limited my contact with any one person or group, instead walking along the parade route making observations and taking pictures.

The next challenge was the flipside of the first: to avoid too close contact with those informants who were immediately available to ensure both diverse perspectives and as much as possible an unbiased perspective on the event. To this end, I used formal and informal quotas and employed research assistants to gather contact information for phone interviews. As described above, I established sampling guidelines to ensure a diverse group of interviewees. By using research assistants, each with unique personal characteristics, I was able to reduce interviewer effects. I recruited research assistants through contacts with local colleges such that most were undergraduate or graduate students. The majority did not identify as LGBT but had some familiarity with Pride parades. My first contact with respondents was after the events via phone or email.

Finally, my professional preparation and personal experience also mitigated my limited ability to refine research questions in light of new insights. Though I developed new questions and insights at each parade, my observational goals did not change substantially between them. I interviewed participants while completing parade visits and for three months after these were finished. Using what Paulsen calls the “swarm strategy” (2009, 521), I was also able to rely on the perspectives of my research assistants
to check my assumptions about the meanings of Upstate Pride.

In the following two chapters I present the results of my research. Chapter 35 addresses the external aspects of Pride parade by focusing how they contest the dominant cultural code that stigmatizes homosexuality. Chapter 6 turns the focused inward on the ways that Pride parades build community and collective identity among LGBT people.
CHAPTER 5

LGBT PRIDE PARADES AND PUBLIC PROTEST IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE

“I’m of Irish descent. And I have much more pride in being gay than I do in being Irish because I think that everyone likes to be Irish on St. Patrick’s Day. But you have to be pretty brave to be gay on Pride Day.”

- Blake, a gay male spectator at the 2010 Pride parade in Burlington, VT

Blake described his city, Burlington, VT, as very supportive of LGBT people. He said that gay couples can regularly be seen walking hand-in-hand in the city's main business district without backlash. Despite the friendly climate, he viewed Pride1 as a contentious event. His understanding of macro-level culture was that LGBT identity continued to carry negative implications in comparison to something like Irish identity. While tolerated in Burlington, he did not think that LGBT identity was viewed as desirable. Blake's observation that “you have to be pretty brave to be gay on Pride Day” speaks to Pride parades as social movement tactics that contest macro-level culture that constructs queerness as undesirable deviance.

In the introductory chapter I argued that the dominant literature in social movement research concerns movement campaigns primarily aimed at legal/political change. Though the ultimate goal of many identity-based movements is often cultural

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1 Throughout this chapter and the next I follow participants' use of the singular “Pride” to refer to Pride parades as a unitary phenomenon.
equality, they pursue legal/political equality as a way to bring it about. Theoretical work in multi-institutional politics (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008) and new social movements (Pichardo 1997) pointed to the importance of non-state institutions and macro-level culture as sources of power in society. I argued that the ability of the state is limited in the extent to which it controls cultural equality and that this control is always indirect. Moreover, the role of the state as a source of power over cultural equality may vary for each marginalized group. In chapter 3, I presented evidence that the state is not the main source of power underpinning LGBT inequality. When studying the LGBT movement for cultural equality, then, it is important to look to the ways that groups challenge non-state institutions and macro-level culture.

An important part of social movements is the tactics they use to enact change. With its main focus on campaigns for legal/political equality, most research concerns tactics that target the state. Incorporating the language of cultural sociology, I described movement tactics as explicit level cultural tools developed at the micro- to meso-level\(^2\) of movement organizations and constituents. When directed at the state, these cultural tools communicate fairly simple meanings as demonstrations of political power that challenges institutionalized state power (Barber 2004; Benford & Hunt 1992; Tilly 1995; 2008). Demonstrators may employ other explicit cultural tools, such as collective action frames, as they stage tactics in order to challenge implicit individual cultural attitudes and gain

\(^2\) The designation of micro- or meso-level depends on the number of individuals engaged in a tactics. Smaller tactics put on by a group of activists who know one another are micro-level, while larger mass demonstrations that draw participants from a particular constituency or subculture (such as environmentalists or African-Americans) are meso-level.
followers. The immediate goal though is legal/political equality, through which activists ultimately seek cultural equality.

A small body of research has examined movement tactics directed at dominant culture rather than the state. Rather than institutionalized state power, these tactics are explicit cultural tools that challenge macro-level implicit cultural codes. These tactics, such as ACT UP's “SILENCE=DEATH” campaign (Gamson 1989) and California same-sex couples' public weddings (Taylor et al. 2009) challenged cultural codes through symbolic inversion. The meaning of each explicit cultural tool (tactic) was specific to the macro-level cultural code it challenged. This research shows that in order to understand these cultural tactics, one must describe the nature of the cultural inequality expressed in implicit macro-level cultural codes. In chapter 2, I described LGBT inequality as centered on a struggle for cultural legitimacy as a minority group.

In this chapter, I analyze LGBT Pride parades as explicit cultural codes. I focus on the meanings of these events from the perspective of participants – those who marched in and watched parades in 2010. I use semi-structured interviews with participants to describe what they said Pride parades meant and my own field observations for what they communicated through slogans, dress, and actions.

**Previous Research on Pride Parades**

In chapter 2 I described the inaugural Pride events in New York City and Los Angeles. The main theme of both events was gays and lesbians marching as themselves by publicly declaring gay identity to demand cultural equality. Participants in each city communicated this in different ways. NYC activists staged a march that incorporated festive parade elements. The Los Angeles event looked more like a full blown parade.
Despite this variation in form, the message of both events was the unashamed public declaration and celebration of gay identity. In chapter 3 I reviewed how the LGBT community’s legal and cultural status has changed since 1970 and in chapter 4 I traced the growth and diffusion of Pride parades throughout the country. In this chapter I look at six Pride parades that were held in 2010 and considered the meanings of these explicit cultural tools.

The public declaration and celebration of gay identity remains the stated purpose of LGBT Pride parades (InterPride 2009). Research into these events has most often described them as sites of resistance to heteronormative macro-level culture through the public display of queerness (Brickell 2000; Browne 2007; Johnston 2005; Kates & Belk 2001). From her study of two Pride parades in the UK, Browne (2007) concluded that Pride was a “party with politics” in which participants challenged heterosexual norms through performances of queer sexuality and gender. Similarly, Kates & Belk (2001) found that Toronto Pride participants celebrated their queerness by consuming goods to mark their identity such as rainbow flags. These studies contest the popular critiques of Pride parades that their party atmosphere and commercialism erode the serious message they purport to convey (Chasin 2000; Savage 2003). Instead, they show that through partying and commercialism Pride participants actually resist heteronormative culture.

These studies support my treatment of Pride parades as serious social movement events. However, they have three main weaknesses in relation to my research questions. First, nearly all of this research is based outside the U.S. in countries where the laws and, most likely, macro-level culture are more friendly toward LGBT people. Second, virtually all research on Pride parades is based on parades that draw over 100,000
thousand people\(^3\). Parades of this size are a small minority of those held in the U.S.; 88% of U.S. Pride parades draw fewer people. I include six parades of widely varying sizes in my study, from Fargo with its 350 participants to New York City with one million, which makes this study a more complete representation of Pride events. Third, most research on Pride parades comes from the disciplines of geography, economics, and leisure studies and not from a social movements perspective. With this perspective I examine Pride parades as explicit cultural tools used to further the LGBT movement goal of cultural equality.

**Public Contention at Pride**

Pride parades take place along public, generally prominent, city streets and are open to all. Each respondent mentioned this public nature as an important feature of Pride. In three cities, Fargo, Burlington, and New York, the parade ran along the main commercial downtown street; in Salt Lake City it was along peripheral but still central downtown streets. In the other two cities, Atlanta and San Diego, the parade was mainly in the city's “gayborhood”: central neighborhoods known for high LGBT populations and containing gay bars, bookstores, and community centers. All parades blocked traffic on city streets for one to eight hours, but the extent to which each parade disrupted everyday routines of city residents depended on their size and the day on which they were held. The least disruptive parades were those in Fargo and Salt Lake City because they were

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3 One notable exception is the work of Joseph (2010) on the year round work of Pride planning committees in three cities: Boise, ID, St. George, UT, and New York City. While concerning Pride parades, this work analyzes them as community service organizations and does not consider their meanings as one-day demonstrations.
held on Sunday mornings when their smaller and more conservative mainstream populations were less likely to be in commercial districts. Parades in Atlanta, San Diego, and New York City were also held on Sunday mornings but were slightly more disruptive due to their size and the size of the cities' populations. Burlington's parade was took place on Saturday afternoon on the city's pedestrian-only thoroughfare and caused the biggest disruption to normal routines, but this was mitigated by the parade's relatively small size.

Most respondents (43 out of 50) described cultural contention in relation to the public nature of Pride parades. That is, they expressed a sense that parades run counter to social norms and that there are people who object to the events. Participants described three reasons they believed Pride parades are contentious: unwillingness to discuss queer sexuality, misunderstanding of LGBT people, and intolerance for LGBT people.

Participants in non gay-friendly areas in particular said people in their communities simply did not want to talk about queerness. Jessica, a straight ally from Fargo, said that

JESSICA: In the community I live in it's not something that's always talked about, or not something that's always brought up in conversation, it's still kind of under the rug.

For these participants Pride parades were contentious because they went far beyond talking about queerness by staging public parades in celebration of it. When queer sexuality was talked about, participants thought that dominant understandings were characterized by misunderstanding and intolerance. Many said that people in their communities misunderstand LGBT people by thinking of them as categorically different from straight people and characterized by deviance rather than acceptable difference. By contrast, Pride parades challenge those in the mainstream to see the humanity and
diversity of LGBT people. Similarly, participants viewed dominant macro-level culture as intolerant to LGBT sexual and gender difference. They described a cultural climate in which it is wrong to be queer and LGBT people are not fully accepted. For participants, Pride parades run counter to these three cultural attitudes – invisibility, misunderstanding, and intolerance – because they are loud spectacles that present LGBT people as they are without apology.

Importantly, each of these reasons for contention was cultural, not political. Moreover, most participants' descriptions of the reasons Pride parades are contentious accord with my argument that LGBT inequality is rooted in their struggle for cultural legitimacy. All marginalized groups may contend with invisibility, misunderstanding, and intolerance, but the way participants described these points to a macro-level conception of LGBT people as deviants rather than as a legitimate minority group. Participants said that members of their communities wanted to treat queerness as if it did not exist, which is possible only if it can be hidden. Likewise attitudes characterized by misunderstanding and intolerance both regard queer sexuality as a changeable individual feature and not a group identity.

Not all participant descriptions supported my claim about cultural legitimacy. A few described intolerance towards LGBT people as the same type of hatred or bigotry that is directed at other marginalized groups. They said that people in their communities were intolerant towards LGBT people because they are different but not necessarily morally objectionable. Many participants also referred to the most extreme examples of contentiousness, such as protesters who demonstrated against Pride parades or particular
friends or neighbors that reacted strongly against parades. While participants talked of these examples as representative of macro-level culture, this is not possible to verify.

With the exception of Atlanta, there was little overt backlash to the parades. Burlington's parade marched through downtown on a busy Saturday at lunchtime and received cheers from the diners at restaurants along the routes. Protesters at Pride parades are often religious groups who object to the social acceptance of LGBT people because they believe homosexual behavior is immoral. At three parades – Fargo, Burlington, and New York City - I did not see any protesters and at two – Salt Lake City and San Diego – protesters were confined to one area and police kept them physically separated from participants. While isolated, the scene around the three protesters at Salt Lake City was quite contentious. Encircled by police for protection, they held large signs declaring homosexuality (along with a long list of other things they consider sinful) while a constant crowd of participants argued with them loudly. One participant held a sign near them saying “I'm not with these assholes”, which drew cheers and many pictures. In Atlanta, there were six separate groups of protesters at locations along the parade route. All held signs announcing their belief in the immorality and unnaturalness of homosexuality, such as, “Jesus Lord of All or Hell Awaits You” and “I Now Pronounce You Pervert and Pervert”. The largest group had a public address system with which they played gospel music before the parade and issue condemnations during. This group was located at a crowded corner and became a site for many contentious displays. In one such display, the parade's official Pride marching band approached the corner playing “Poker Face” by Lady Gaga (a favorite in the LGBT community). They stopped in front
of the protesters, turned to face them, and played the spirited chorus while the crowd reacted with loud cheers.

While protesters were present at some parades, participants described the contention of the parades coming from the contrast of the atmosphere there with that of their daily lives. According to participants, in their everyday lives LGBT people feel alternately invisible, misunderstood, or condemned but at Pride parades they were put on celebratory display. Protesters represented the most visible and extreme cultural opposition to LGBT people.

A few participants described the contestation of Pride by referencing parades as cultural symbols. As Ruth, an older straight ally marching in Fargo, ND explained,

RUTH: I think people -- I like to remind people that we're public about lots of things that we care about. We have patriotic parades because we care about our country. We have veterans parades because we want to honor people who have served our country in the military service. We have lots of ways in which we're open, we publicly acknowledge things that as a society we care about. And that if we're really open, then we're open to seeing a public parade about people being gay or lesbian or transgendered or bisexual.

By comparing Pride to patriotic and veterans’ day parades, Ruth identified it as a symbol of affirmation. For her and six others, parades are cultural tools used to officially recognize and honor a group of people or an event. They identified Pride parades as culturally contentious because because they publicly affirm a group that is often marked as deviant in macro-level culture. The perceived macro-level cultural objection made Pride contentious for participants.

On an individual level, respondents talked about the experience of marching despite others' negative reactions. Blake, a gay man from Burlington, VT, illustrated contention in the quote that opens this chapter comparing participation in Pride to
participation in St. Patrick's Day festivities. Blake’s assertion that “You have to be pretty brave to be gay on Pride Day” is at the heart of the contestation at Pride parades. For him, parades are events in which all who attend identify themselves with the celebrated group and there is an amount of risk involved in identifying oneself with LGBT people. In other words, straight people who attend Pride may be perceived as gay, and this involves risk. By contrast, there are no longer negative associations in American macro-level culture with being Irish, so “everyone like to be Irish on St. Patrick's Day”. Ashley, a straight participant at Atlanta’s parade, recounted backlash from her family and friends after attending the event. Her boyfriend suggested she may be gay, while her aunt admitted her negative reaction was prompted by her own reticence to attend an event where she may be perceived as gay. As a strategy, participants identified Pride as a subtle cultural statement that dares others to object.

Though they saw them as contentious, participants described Pride events as parades rather than protest marches. In form, they certainly looked more like parades. Even the smallest events in my study, those in Fargo and Burlington, were made up of diverse contingents representing school groups, politicians, commercial sponsors, and community activists. There were marching bands and floats, throngs of spectators (depending on size), and even awards for favorite contingents. Participants identified Pride as more contentious than parades like St. Patrick's Day but rejected their characterization as protest marches. They said Pride differs from protest marches in two ways: 1) its message is more subtle and diffuse, and 2) it fosters a more upbeat atmosphere. Tobias, a gay man in San Diego, explained how the message of Pride is different from more traditional protest marches:
TOBIAS: I'm not really sure that there's much overlap between the parade and these more focused, politically oriented demonstrations such as a march on Washington. Or perhaps the issue is that it's more subtle. If you see different elements of the parade like PFLAG and the different religious organizations, and you know there's a Jewish organization and you know there are the Episcopal Cathedral, the law enforcement. Perhaps it's more of a subtle sort of support for a group that historically over the decades had been, you know closeted as a community -- the community had been closeted as a whole.

Tobias called the message “subtle” because it is delivered through the presence of varied groups rather than their explicit statements. Tobias mentioned religious and social groups that take the relatively simple action of marching in the parade. He did not point to continued advocacy of these groups (though they may actively promote support of LGBT people year-round) but instead found meaning in their participation on the day of the parade. Tobias articulated the sense that Pride’s message is broad cultural support rather than more narrow political advocacy. The more subtle message of Pride may also make it less effective. Protest marches are well established cultural tools to communicate the political power of a marginalized group, but parades are not as often used for contentious purposes. Rebekah counted as a positive the lack of an explicit political agenda:

REBEKAH: When you see a parade, there is a suspension of time, there is a suspension of reality, there is a suspension of, “do I agree or disagree”. It's a spectacle, it's a circus, and there's a certain amount of – unless the parade has a certain political agenda, if they're going to bring up something that people are signing onto or not signing onto – but if it's a celebratory parade then it invites the spectator to come along on the fantasy, to come along on the ride. And there's not, it's not asking you to take sides. But something like a gay Pride parade in itself asks you to take sides because there is an agenda there, but you can make that analogy bake to the Irish, to the St. Patrick's Day Parade. By cheering on the revelers you are saying that we accept you Irish people as a real entity. So there's an engagement and an acknowledgment on the part of the observer who sort of inherently I am helping you to legitimate what you're marching for, but it's also not asking for a political perspective.
To her, parades invite spectators to suspend immediate judgment and to join the spectacle. Other participants, too, thought that the upbeat, parade atmosphere at Pride made for a positive experience. But they worried that those in the mainstream who did not participate in Pride would misinterpret its message. Rather than courageous declaration of a stigmatized identity, they might instead see needless and even offensive display of private sexual matters. The parade form at Pride can be effective in shaping macro-level cultural codes of what groups are celebrated in society, but ineffective in changing individual cultural attitudes. In the next section, I detail how participants viewed the purpose and meaning of Pride and relate these to the contentious cultural climate in which the parades happen.

*Visibility, Support, and Celebration*

Participants used three themes to describe the external, public meaning of Pride: visibility, support, and celebration. Each theme only makes sense in the context of the public nature of Pride parades and macro-level cultural construction of queerness. That is, to make visible, celebrate, and support a social group is not by nature contentious, but it is in the context of macro-level cultural stigmatization of queer sexuality and gender. The first theme is visibility, was mentioned by 38 participants (76% of those interviewed). Participants using this theme said that Pride is about making visible the existence of LGBT people and their straight allies. They did this, first and foremost, by staging the event on public city streets in the middle of the day. At all parades, streets were closed to traffic for at least two hours. In terms of sheer numbers, with one million participants New York City parade drew more people than the 200,000 who participated
in the last LGBT March on Washington in 2009, which was a traditional protest march (Cloud 2009).

Messages of visibility took two main forms: defiant visibility with the message that LGBT people exist and deserve to be acknowledged; and educational visibility to dispel misconceptions about LGBT people. The first form combated perceived ignorance in macro-level culture, the second combated perceived misunderstanding of LGBT people.

Defiant visibility was mentioned by 13 people and can be summed up by the familiar chant, “We're here, we're queer, get used to it!” Countering the construction of queerness as deviance, the message of defiant visibility is that LGBT people will not change to accommodate macro-level culture. This theme was present at the first Pride events in 1970 as well, as participants marched to make themselves visible as gay and lesbians. Like the first Pride marchers, contemporary participants publicly declared their sexuality in the face of what they saw as a culture that tried to keep them invisible.

Participants referenced aspects of parades, such as sexual displays, that may be read as offensive or frivolous in relation to defiant visibility. Ed, a gay man in Atlanta, said these displays were part of the Pride's defiant message:

ED: On the one hand, I could see that [de-emphasizing sexual displays would encourage support]. But on the other hand, I guess maybe their point is, yes, we are men who have sex with other men, deal with that. Sexual displays – scantily clad men or suggestive dancing on floats – were comparatively rare but have long been associated with Pride parades. While many believe these displays are detrimental to the image of the LGBT community, participants like Ed say they are meaningful by challenging intolerance based on the belief that queerness is
deviance and should not be made public. In a similar vein, Jonah, a gay man from San Diego, described the way he understands the defiant visibility of Pride parades:

JONAH: Sometimes I think that they [mainstream society] just don't get it a lot. But at the same time it's still very important that we do it because it's like, no matter what people think of our community, we're not going away. We're here and we're going to have our rainbow parades whatever they want to think about it. You know, we're going to have our crazy floats and wear our high heels, and you know, do our thing. So I think it's very important for people to understand that you know, we are a community you know that loves everyone and likes to have a lot of fun and everything, and we're not going away. We are a part of San Diego.

Jonah described Pride as a way to claim belonging in the larger city community. Like Ed, he acknowledged that some displays – for him, those that are more stereotypical – are judged negatively by the mainstream but he asserted their importance. For both men, Pride is about defying cultural codes that cast LGBT people as inferior and deviant. By refusing to downplay sexual and gender displays that go against heterosexual norms, Pride participants lay claim to cultural legitimate minority status. Defiant visibility meant being present despite any opposition – in fact in the face of anticipated opposition.

Participants also talked about the defiant visibility of presenting LGBT community as a united whole. They said that Pride parades exist in order to show LGBT people and their straight allies as a “united front” against those who wish to ignore or condemn them. One way that participants showed a united front was through the use of the rainbow flag. This flag was designed specifically for this purpose by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978 (Lambda Legal 2004). Each color was meant to represent different aspect of gay and lesbian life such as art, nature, and healing, but as it has also come to represent the many parts of the LGBT community (Lambda Legal 2004). In Atlanta, a straight couple draped their baby's carriage with a rainbow flag as they
marched with their Presbyterian Church. In San Diego, a group of “bears” (self-proclaimed large, hairy gay men) repurposed the California state flag with its symbol of a bear by replacing the flag's stripe of red with a rainbow. In Salt Lake City, a mounted contingent called “Aces Wild” carried rainbow flags as they rode their horses in the parade. In every city, residences and business along the parade route hung rainbow flags. These flags were visible symbols that tied together the diverse participants and were a way to present themselves as united in purpose.

Participants recognized large diversity in terms of sexual orientation, gender expression, race, class, age, and religion in the community of LGBT people and allies. An older gay man in Atlanta, Jonathon, related the collective visibility to mainstream parades:

JONATHON: I would describe [Pride] as a fun, uplifting parade that shows unity not just in the gay communities, but in the straight, transgender, and bisexual communities, because there is every one of every denomination there religious as well as sexual. And we are all there marching in a parade, basically as a united front. Not for any cause but for us. You know, straight people have the opportunity to do that in Fourth of July Parades, and Labor Day Parades, and in any other type of parade they can do that. But that is our only venue to do that, to show our solidarity as a community.

Like others discussed above, Jonathon understood Pride parades as playing on the cultural symbol of parades as events to collectively show unity for a cause. Collective visibility was defiant because participants felt that cultural forces sought to silence the LGBT community.

Participants invoked defiant visibility to contest what they perceived as mainstream ignorance of the LGBT existence. They also said that Pride parades contest the stereotype-fueled misunderstanding of LGBT people that they felt dominated macro-
level culture. Twenty participants invoked this theme, which I call educational visibility. In this form, participants said Pride makes LGBT people visible as they really are, not as they are caricatured to be. Blair and Martin, both from Salt Lake City, described the educational component of their Pride parade:

BLAIR: I think [Pride] is important because then other people can see how our community is, enjoy what we do and it’s not just what everybody thinks it is.

MARTIN: You know, [Pride] is important for the people who are participating but it’s also important for the crowd, the people that are watching. To actually see and experience something different, and expose little kids to it. That it’s not this big scary thing. Especially here in Utah, parents teach their kids it’s the most wrong thing you could ever do- to be gay or lesbian, transgender. I think it just shows that it’s a fun community and they’re proud of who they are. I think it’s almost most important for not the people participating but the people watching outside the community.

These participants and others argued that if people could only see the LGBT community accurately, they would accept it and support greater cultural equality. In a similar vein, others described Pride participants as neighbors and upstanding citizens, stressing their similarity to the mainstream.

I saw educational visibility through the diversity of parade contingents. Parades represented an impressively wide array groups from local LGBT communities and their supporters. Marching contingents were organized around church congregations, local gay sports leagues, political advocacy groups, politicians, gay-straight alliances from colleges and high schools, troupes of drag queens and kings, LGBT community health initiatives, and local and national corporate sponsors. Likewise, parade spectators were diverse in age, racial/ethnic background, and gender presentation. I observed more non-normative personal expressions at the larger parades: scantily clad young men, drag
queens and kings, and women and men displaying affiliation with LGBT subgroups such as bears and leather. However, participants with non-normative displays mixed with and were outnumbered by the more normative crowd. At all parades I observed gay and straight parents with children, seniors, and people dressed conservatively in shorts and t-shirts.

From the perspective of participants who mentioned educational visibility, Pride parades on the whole present a positive and accurate image of the LGBT community. This is the main distinction between defiant and educational visibility. In the logic of defiant visibility, it does not matter whether the image of the LGBT community at Pride is interpreted as positive or wholly accurate because Pride seeks primarily to challenge both macro-level codes. By contrast, the logic of educational visibility is that there is nothing truly objectionable about queerness and as an accurate representation of the LGBT community Pride seeks to change individual attitudes. The trouble with this logic is that many people, both inside and outside the LGBT community do find some representations at Pride objectionable. Sexual displays, or even more modest displays of affection, make queer sexuality visible to an extent that some do not appreciate. The logic of educational visibility harks back to the accommodationist strategy of the pre-Stonewall homophile movement in which activists emphasized their similarity to mainstream heterosexuals. During the Annual Reminders discussed in chapter 2, participants followed strict dress codes to present themselves as upstanding citizens who fit into rather than challenge mainstream heterosexual society. Moreover, this logic follows a “bottom up” approach to cultural change by targeting individual attitude change in order to achieve broad cultural equality. While not a negative in itself, it is out of sync
with the logics of defiant visibility and other themes that strive primarily for top-down macro-level cultural change.

The second major theme was Pride as a show of support for LGBT people, mentioned by 27 respondents (54%). Deb, an older lesbian in Salt Lake City, described the Pride parade as “a great display of public affection for gays” that was notable for its contrast to her everyday experience in which her sexuality was not supported. The important part of this support was its public nature and external focus. While many participants also talked about attending Pride to support individual queer people in their lives, or to support the LGBT community more broadly, this theme places Pride as a message to those who are intolerant towards this population by saying essentially, “I’m on the other side”. Contestation is inherent in the theme because participants conceived of their participation as a way to publicly declare themselves on the side of LGBT people. According to straight ally Jessica, in Fargo,

JESSICA: Participation is huge for Pride parades because I think it's a good way for the community to be driving by or walking by and see a bunch of people all there for one thing and that's support and the rights of the LGBT community. So I think participation is huge for how many people are affected and are involved.

For Jessica simply attending Pride was a way to show support for the LGBT community. She imagined those who passed by and saw the parade being impressed by the large number of people coming out in support of this marginalized group. I noticed that straight participants in particular visibly emphasized their involvement in Pride as a way to publicly support LGBT people. In Salt Lake City, I saw a number of people wearing t-shirts that said “I’m Straight and I Support Equal Rights” or holding signs with the
similar phrase, “I’m Mormon and I Support Equal Rights”\(^4\). Likewise in Fargo, the women’s soccer team from a local college marched with a banner that read “I love my gay teammates”. These slogans suggested that there was something uncommon about the person displaying them; that they held strong convictions that ran counter to those of most people in their positions. They may also have been a way for participants to mark themselves as straight at these LGBT-centered events.

One group that stood as perhaps the most potent symbol of support was Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG). This group, designed to help people embrace their LGBT loved ones, was actually started at a Pride parade. In 1972, Jeanne Manford marched with her son in New York’s parade. After many gays and lesbians saw her and asked that she talk with their parents, she decided to begin a support group (PFLAG 2009). The group now has affiliates in 500 communities in the U.S. and abroad, with over 200,000 members. In the parades I observed, PFLAG members often marched with their children holding signs declaring “I love my gay son”, “I love my lesbian daughter”, and “Hate is not a family value”. These signs countered the Right's political framing of opposition to LGBT rights as “family values”. They also spoke to the rejection experienced by many LGBT people when they come out to their families.

PFLAG groups received the strongest emotional reactions of all contingents. I heard loud cheers when PFLAG contingents marched, and saw parade goers approach individual members to thank them and often receive a hug. Margaret, a straight ally in

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\(^4\) This sign held extra weight in the wake of strong advocacy by the Mormon Church for the passage of California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in the state.
Atlanta who has marched with her local PFLAG group for many years said she often sees spectators with tears streaming down their faces as her group walks by. She described the first parade she went to:

MARGARET: The first time was absolutely amazing. I walked around with my son mostly. I felt as I were an anomaly. I had folks, when my son would introduced me as his mom, I had folks say, “It’s amazing that you’re here supporting your son.” We even had one couple take a picture of us, as the son and the PFLAG mom. It was great.

Margaret's experience speaks to the continued cultural challenge that LGBT people face at the macro-level. She “felt as if [she] were an anomaly” for marching in public support of her son. Participants reactions to these supportive displays evince everyday lives where support is either withheld entirely or is not made public.

Many participants mentioned the support of institutional actors, namely local and national businesses politicians, and religious groups. In addition to Pride as a way for individuals to publicly declare their support for LGBT people, then, it is also a venue for institutional actors to put themselves on the side of acceptance and inclusion of LGBT people.

Businesses were involved in all parades as financial sponsors and as marching contingents – often the two went together. Sponsors used slogans on banners and t-shirts that connected Pride and their business. Marchers with a local bar and grill in Atlanta wore shirts that said “Taking Pride in Our Service”, while San Diego Public Defenders marched with a banner that read “Getting You Off Since 1988.” At the Atlanta parade I observed the heaviest business involvement. The parade itself had an official sponsor, Delta Airlines, and the company had a large marching contingent. Much of the business involvement was like Delta's (albeit to a smaller scale), combing financial support,
official recognition on parade banners and other paraphernalia, and a marching
contingent made up of employees handed out souvenirs with rainbow colors or the Pride
theme. While participants were aware that it was marketing, many (13) said they
appreciated the public show of support. Danielle, a straight ally in Fargo, explained why
she liked seeing businesses at the parade:

DANIELLE: I mean literally I appreciate that they're showing support to
the community here in town and I would be more likely to go there if I had
to -- with all other things equal I would choose them just ‘cause they had
been there. So that's political, and more just a show of support.

For Danielle and others, marching in the parade or financially sponsoring it was a way for
businesses to publicly place themselves on the side of the LGBT community. Even if it
was a cynical attempt to sell more products, participants appreciated it. In contrast to
Chasin's (2000) critique that corporate influence has turned Pride parades into a market to
sell goods to the LGBT community, Pride participants viewed business involvement as a
public show of support.

Participants took a similar attitude towards politicians’ involvement in Pride
parades. While many regarded it as a cynical attempt to advance their own careers, seven
described their involvement as a public show of support. Politicians marched in all
parades, but I noted considerably more in the gay-friendly cities of Burlington, San
Diego, and New York than in non gay-friendly cities. According to Jonathon, an older
gay man in Atlanta,

JONATHON: I think the political side is a lot more… politicians are
getting involved in the gay pride parades. There are a lot more politicians
that are taking a stand on gay rights and gay marriage and gay issues and
not just putting their money where their mouth is, they are actually there in
the parade supporting us. There are so many organizations out there that
are fighting for our legal rights as well as our civil rights. And so I think
it’s good to see all those organizations that are in the parade because that does present a positive political and legal force to the parade.

Jonathon and others made an interesting separation between the political and the cultural. In this statement, Jonathon identified “taking a stand on gay rights and gay marriage and gay issues” as the political side of politicians' jobs. He viewed their participation in Pride as part of the cultural side in which they symbolically supported LGBT people by marching in a public Pride parade. While he and others hoped the two are connected and appreciate politician's presence, they were not entirely uncritical of politicians' motives.

Finally, eight participants mentioned the public support shown by numerous religious groups who marched in Pride parades. Their support was made more meaningful by the fact that the protesters at parades were religious groups whose message was that homosexuality is sinful and anti-Christian. Those religious groups that marched in parades held signs declaring their different vision of a religious attitude of love and acceptance of LGBT people with phrases like “Jesus Loves Everyone”. In Atlanta, in particular, there was heavy participation by religious groups in support of the parade. The route passed a number of churches and at two members handed out water and made their bathrooms available to parade participants. Ruth, a straight ally who marched with her church in Fargo, described how her group was motivated to participate because of the negative actions of other Christian groups:

RUTH: There were probably eight or ten of us last summer who marched with a banner that is from our church so people would know that it was a church affiliated group because that's so hard for people to -- you know there's so many negative associated with a lot of our churches and there's really Neanderthalic issues of sexuality. So we were really eager to be known as a group of people from the Episcopal church who were out and supportive and so on.
For Ruth, marching the parade was a way to align herself and her congregation on the side of LGBT people. Other participants noticed, saying they were surprised and delighted to see supportive churches in the parade.

Like defiant visibility, the message of public support challenged macro-level culture from the top down. While a few participants said they hoped their support would affect individual attitudes, such as those who passed by and saw parades, most talked about public support in a general sense. They hoped that by participating in parades they would add to those on the side of LGBT cultural equality and thereby reduce the strength of cultural forces against equality.

The third major theme, mentioned by half of all participants (25), was Pride as a celebration of being queer. Many invoked this theme simply by saying that the events are about being proud of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Like defiant visibility, this theme was also part of the first Pride events in 1970. Celebration was evident in the festive atmosphere of parades. Particularly at larger parades, Pride was an opportunity to have house parties near the parade route or spend a nice summer day with friends. Many bars and restaurants along the routes in every city but Fargo hosted special events, advertising drink specials and an opportunity to extend the festivities beyond the parade.

More so than the other two themes of visibility and support, on its face there is nothing contentious about celebration. In fact, for a minority of participants Pride was simply a fun party without contention. While participants’ intentionality is an important piece of a social movement tactic, cultural contestation does not rest on this factor (Taylor & Rupp 2004; Taylor et al. 2001). I argue that the message of celebrating LGBT individual and collective identity is powerful in light of the history of the macro-level
treatment of queerness as deviance. Celebration communicates not only the message that being queer is not deviant, but that, like minority status, it is a source of pride.

Though a few participants spoke of celebration irrespective of cultural contestation, most did make this connection. Angela, a lesbian in Burlington and Jonah, a gay man in San Diego talked about collective celebration at Pride:

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe Pride to someone who had never been and never heard of it?
ANGELA: I would say that it's a festival; it's a parade and a festival and it celebrates, you know, it celebrates queer people and LGBT people...And, you know, it's sort of meant as a day for us to sort of celebrate who we are. I think there are lots of days where we get to be like hey I don't get to file my joint tax return or hey I don't have [inaudible] rights or hey I don't have this. So like one type of day where we can be excited about -- I mean I'm excited about who I am every day, but some people aren't and I think it's a great day as a community to be excited together about who we are.

JONAH: It's like every year there's one day, one day a year where my entire community mobilizes together and is truly proud and confident about all of ourselves. You know, and I think that's very powerful for us to have a day of Pride and being GLBT.

Both Angela and Jonah spoke of Pride as a special day set apart from their everyday lives. Angela referred to her daily life of legal and cultural benefits denied to her as a lesbian, while at Pride being lesbian meant celebrating herself with others like her. This celebration is a cultural challenge by a meso-level social group – Pride participants – to the implicit macro-level cultural code that links queerness to deviance.

For a few participants, the celebration at Pride was explicitly born of the oppression LGBT felt in mainstream society. Rebekah, an older straight ally from Burlington, explained the connection:

INTERVIEWER: What would you say would be the message communicated through Pride?
REBEKAH: That people who have known a lot of oppression can turn that oppression into joy. Not to denigrate or downplay the suffering, but also to raise it up in a way that transcends the suffering and brings joy to it. There wasn't anger, there was no place for any of the more difficult feelings, it was just a time to celebrate. It is a very ancient human ability, to take a rough time and find those moments of joy.

This sentiment answers a frequent critique of Pride parades: Why have a parade for Gay Pride? It’s not as if heterossexuals hold Straight Pride parades! As Rebekah explained, Pride parades may be a way for people to find hope in the face of opposition. This translation serves both internal community goals of solidarity and strength and external cultural goals by offering an alternative narrative about what it means to be LGBT. By marching down the street in a cultural ritual of celebration, LGBT people and their allies declare that queerness is a positive human variation worthy of respect and inclusion.

LGBT Pride parades contest macro-level culture that constructs queerness as deviance through visibility, support, and celebration. With the exception of one type of visibility, educational, all three themes challenge macro-level culture from the top down. That is, they challenge the link between queerness and deviance at the macro-level in order to change the treatment of LGBT people in their everyday lives. Educational visibility was aimed at the reverse approach, challenging individual implicit attitudes about LGBT people as a way to change macro-level culture.

**Variation by Personal Identity, Parade Size, and Cultural Climate**

To test variation in uses of themes, I ran cross-tabulations of each theme by participants’ stated sexual identity, parade size, and the regional cultural climate towards LGBT people, and calculated chi-square statistics. I compare participants’ personal identity to test whether this individual characteristic impacts the way participants describe the meanings of Pride parades. I treat size as a variable internal to parades and
thus something organizers and participants may affect. Finally I compare use of themes by the regional cultural climate of parade sites, a variable that is external to parades and may affect their meanings. Table 5.1 presents cross-tabs of each theme with identity, size, and cultural climate variables.

Table 5.1 Theme Variation by Individual, Internal, and External Variation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Individual Variation by Sexual Identity</th>
<th>Internal Variation by Parade Size</th>
<th>External Variation by Cultural Climate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LGBT N=36</td>
<td>Straight N=14</td>
<td></td>
<td>N=50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>31 (86%)*</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>20 (74%)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18 (78%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>17 (47%)</td>
<td>10 (71%)</td>
<td>16 (59%)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 (48%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19 (70%)*</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>16 (44%)</td>
<td>9 (64%)</td>
<td>13 (48%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 (52%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 (65%)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05 in Chi-square test

The first theme, visibility, varied significantly by individual sexual identity. Participants who identify as LGBT were more likely than their straight counterparts to say that Pride parades are about making the LGBT community visible. Meanwhile, the themes of support and celebration were used more by straight participants, but given the small number of straight participants in my sample the observed difference was not enough to be statistically significant. This makes sense at face value; straight participants can show their support and celebrate LGBT community at Pride parades, but through their presence they only indirectly make LGBT people visible. Moreover, within the broader LGBT community there has been a strong emphasis on individuals’ coming out as LGBT since the 1970s (Armstrong 2002). Activists argue that the visibility of individual LGBT people within families and communities is key to movement success,
an assertion that is backed up by research on factors that encourage acceptance for homosexuality (Becker & Scheufele 2011; Brewer 2008). Thus, LGBT participants may be more personally familiar with the theme of visibility and extend their individual visibility to the LGBT community at Pride parades.

There was very little variation in any themes by the size of the parade; each theme was mentioned at roughly equal percentages by participants at small/medium parades and those at large parades. The one exception may be use of the support theme, mentioned by 59% percent of those at small/medium events compared to 48% large parade participants. However, this may be explained by the small sample size and overlap with the cultural climate variable (there are two non gay-friendly cities with small/medium parades). It is also notable that there is no variation by size in the use of the visibility theme. Visibility was as important to participants in Fargo, where the parade drew 350 people and lasted twenty minutes, as to participants in New York City where it blocked two miles of traffic for hours and was attended by one million people. Though the amount of disruption caused by each parade varied its size did not affect participants' view of its importance in making the LGBT community visible. Thus, despite the difference in the look of parades from the smallest in Fargo to the largest in New York City, it appears that this internal factor did not affect the meaning of Pride for participants.

There is also no difference in use of the visibility theme between participants in gay-friendly vs. non gay-friendly cities. Though we may suspect that visibility would be more important to those in non gay-friendly cities since the cultural climate is harsher, this was not the case. The other two themes, support and celebration, show stark variation by cultural climate. Pride participants from gay-friendly cities used the
celebration theme more than their counterparts, while those in non gay-friendly cities preferred the support theme. This finding suggests that participants are responding to the challenges of their environments. In places where LGBT people have some acceptance, as evidenced by inclusive laws and surveys showing higher tolerance for LGBT people, their cultural challenge is to push for continued equality. They meet this challenge with open celebration. In places where the climate is harsher, LGBT people and their allies have more modest goals and use Pride parades as a way to publicly show that there are people on the side of gays and lesbians.

I tested for interaction between individual-level and parade-level variables. The proportion of LGBT-identified participants varied little by parade size and cultural climate. Two-thirds of respondents at small/medium sized parades identified as LGBT compared to 70% of those who attended large parades. There was a slightly higher proportion of LGBT-identified respondents from gay-friendly than non gay-friendly cultural climates, 74% vs 63%, respectively, but this difference was not statistically significant. Logistical regressions of parade-level and individual-level identity variables on each theme showed no difference in statistical significance from chi-square tests. Based on these multivariate tests I can conclude that the observed variation by parade-level and individual-level variables is properly identified in chi-square tests.

Comparisons of theme by variables that are individual, internal, and external to Pride parades show variation in each theme. Participants' sexual identity correlates with their use of the visibility theme regardless of the internal size of the parade they attended or the external cultural climate in which the parade was held. LGBT participants described Pride parades as about visibility to a greater extent than straight participants. I
theorize that this is because visibility impacts LGBT people more in their personal lives and they are more aware through the emphasis of visibility in LGBT culture and activism. On the parade level, I tested participants’ use of themes by internal parade size and external cultural climate and found that cultural climate correlates more with how participants talk about the meaning of parades than the size of parades. This finding adds to the evidence to identify Pride parades as cultural contests over the construction of sexual orientation and gender identity. Differences in use of support and celebration themes suggest different uses for Pride parades depending on the larger cultural climate towards LGBT people. Those participants in gay-friendly cultural climates were more likely to describe Pride parades as public celebrations of LGBT people, while those in non-gay-friendly climates described them as opportunities to show public support for the LGBT community.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown that Pride parades are explicit cultural tools used to contest macro-level culture in the pursuit of LGBT equality. After establishing that participants did see parades as contentious, I summarized their meanings and purpose with three themes: visibility, support, and celebration. Participants who identified as LGBT emphasized visibility more than their straight counterparts, while the cultural climate in which parades were held correspondent with participants’ uses of the two remaining themes. Those in gay-friendly areas spoke of Pride more as a celebration while those in non-gay friendly areas spoke of it more as a show of public support.

This research yields two conclusions about the external side of Pride parades. First, while most social movements research concerns campaigns and tactics with
legal/political equality as their immediate goal, Pride parades directly aim to effect cultural equality. Second, Pride parades challenge macro-level culture by enacting alternative and contentious codes about queer sexuality and gender. Unlike traditional demonstrations aimed at showing political power for or against specific policies, these events imagine an alternative through public display.

Pride parade target cultural change by making culture, not politics, the site of conflict. LGBT people in the U.S. live in diverse legal and cultural climates. In some places, like Burlington, VT, citizens are protected against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and they can legally marry same-sex partners. The Pride parade in this city ran through the center of town on a busy Saturday with what seemed like unreserved support. In other places, like Atlanta, GA none of these legal protections exist and though LGBT people have created a thriving neighborhood, the Pride parade was met with protesters coming from six different groups.

Despite these differences in local climate for LGBT people, Pride participants that I interviewed consistently reported cultural challenges. No matter their location, respondents said that LGBT people are invisible, misunderstood, and not accepted in their communities. Even in Burlington, VT, all six participants said that Pride was a contentious act. Most pointed to the struggles of LGBT people in more rural areas of the state to be visible, accepted, and understood. Participants in all cities wore t-shirts and held signs messages like “God loves all people” and “Love conquers hate” which were contentious by implying that many, perhaps a majority or people believed that God does not love or approve of LGBT people and that intolerance is motivated by blind hatred. All of the contentious struggles identified by participants are cultural rather than political.
Participants' descriptions of the negative cultural climate towards LGBT people align with my argument that at the macro-level of U.S. culture queerness is constructed as deviance rather than as a minority status. A deviant behavior is one that can and should be changed while a minority status, while often maligned as inferior, is nonetheless a culturally legitimate basis for group identity. To participants mainstream invisibility, misunderstanding, and intolerance was premised on the idea that it is possible for LGBT people to cease to exist as an identity group. They countered this idea at Pride through a public, visible display of unabashed LGBT identity. Participants also identified Pride as cultural by aligning it more with a parade than a political march. While there has been little study of the contemporary use of parades to make cultural challenges, parades have historically taken many meanings, as “modes of propaganda, recreation, local celebration, and national commemoration” (Davis 1986: 3; see also Nagle 2005; Smithey & Young 2010). In 1970, activists in Los Angeles staged a Pride event in the form of a parade and were met with both celebration and backlash. For contemporary participants, a parade is a public affirmation of a group of people or an important event. The difference with Pride, they said, is that the public – or at least a significant portion of the public – does not want to affirm LGBT people as a legitimate and valued group in society. If Pride were not contentious, it would be just another parade.

Participants compared their events favorably with traditional political marches, saying that marches are more serious (or even angry) and more focused on a single issue. Participants' comparison to other parades was evident in my observations. Like other parades, Pride events were composed of various contingents that included school groups, churches, social groups, marching bands, commercial sponsors, and floats. Marchers and
spectators cheered and applauded rather than chanted political slogans. Contestation was
evident but not explicit, except where there were protesters. It came from the fact that
this was a different kind of parade, not that it was a political march.

Since Pride parades are only one case of cultural contestation, I cannot make
general conclusions about contentious acts directed at macro-level culture. What I found,
though, is in line with previous research on this type of tactic. Like other examples of
cultural contestation – drag performances (Rupp & Taylor 2003), multiracial identity
claims (Bernstein & de la Cruz 2010), and same-sex wedding (Taylor et al. 2009) – Pride
parades engage in conflict by flipping a cultural code on its head. Pride parades use a
cultural symbol of affirmation – a public parade – to make visible, support, and celebrate
a community that is alternately invisible, misunderstood, and condemned through the
macro-level cultural construction of queerness. Whereas traditional political marches
follow a script in which they communicate political power, Pride parades enact a creative
display to directly challenge cultural codes. Marches say what they are about through
verbal messages and by visually standing on one side of an issue. Pride parades are
prefigurative: they attempt to change culture by actually doing what they want the wider
culture to do. Participants do not simply say that LGBT people should be visible,
supported, and celebrated, they do these things by staging a grand parade.

I showed variation in use of themes by both individual and parade level variables.
At the individual level, LGBT participants were more likely to use the visibility theme
than their straight counterparts. This made sense as LGBT participants are the ones
personally affected by lack of daily visibility and the ones able to make themselves
visible at Pride parades. At the parade level, the internal variable size of parades
participants attended did not affect their use either theme. Regional cultural climate, a variable I identified as external and thus beyond the control of parade participants, did affect their use of themes. Those participants in the more gay-friendly areas of Burlington, VT, Sand Diego, and New York City were more likely to describe the message of their parades as celebration. Those in Fargo, ND, Salt Lake City, and Atlanta, which I describe as non gay-friendly areas, were more likely to describe their parades as public demonstrations of support of LGBT people. I theorize that this difference reflects parades' sensitivity to the needs of their larger cultural environments. In regions where LGBT people have less cultural acceptance, participants emphasize showing support for them, placing themselves on their side in opposition to the larger climate. In regions where there is greater acceptance for LGBT people, participants push even further by emphasizing not just acceptance, but celebration of queer gender and sexuality.

The downside of the cultural message of Pride is that it is open to interpretation. I did not find much disagreement among participants about Pride parades' positive meaning. While they emphasized different themes, participants were not critical of Pride parades as explicit cultural tools to bring about LGBT equality. This is evidence of selection bias in my sample as it is reasonable to expect that those who participate in Pride are likely to feel positively about it. Despite participants' positive evaluations of Pride, I argue that the theme of educational visibility is most problematic as a challenge to macro-level culture. Participants said that Pride parades show LGBT people as the diverse yet upstanding citizens they are and thus combat the misunderstanding that they are a deviant class. This assertion is premised on the idea that non-participating members
of the mainstream would not find anything at Pride parades objectionable. Educational visibility contrasts with the other version of visibility, defiant visibility, with which participants said Pride parades are about making LGBT people visible despite aspects of the community that some find objectionable. Defiant visibility was evident in the first Pride parades in 1970, while educational visibility was more characteristic of the accommodationist strategy of the pre-Stonewall homophile movement.

Celebration is another theme that is open to misinterpretation, but I argue that it does not suffer the drawbacks of educational visibility. The latter theme operates through a bottom up model of cultural change by relying on individual attitude change to bring about macro-level change. Participants said they hoped members of their communities would see LGBT people as they are and change their negative attitudes towards them. Celebration, by contrast, operates through a top down model, seeking to make the macro-level cultural code more favorable to LGBT people. Rather than attempting to convince individuals that LGBT people are not deviant, the public celebration at Pride seeks to change queerness from a quality that is deviant and should be changed to a quality this defines a culturally legitimate minority group and should be celebrated. This model is about establishing new social norms for behavior based on an altered cultural construction, so it does not rely on individual interpretation or attitude change. Defiant visibility and public support operate through this model as well.

My findings are in line with previous research on Pride parades that interpreted these events as creating important sites of individual resistance to macro-level heteronormative culture. However, by viewing these events as social movement tactics, I go beyond the focus of previous research on individual acts of resistance and interpret
Pride parades as collective challenges to macro-level culture. More than creating safe spaces for individuals to resist heteronormative culture through partying and consumption (Browne 2007; Kates & Belk 2001), Pride parades are explicit cultural tools used by the meso-level group of Pride participants to challenge the macro-level construction of queerness as culturally illegitimate deviance.

Through its focus on state-targeted protest tactics, literature on social movements assumes that meaningful social change happens through political change generally in the form of favorable policies that create greater legal/political equality for the aggrieved group. Activists advocate for legal/political equality through all means possible – direct appeals to legislators, mass displays of political pressure, even attempts to sway public opinion. Often cultural change is a byproduct of this state-directed action as collective identities draw people together and issues are framed in new ways. Cultural equality is often the ultimate goal that can be achieved through legal/political equality. Pride parades cut out the middleman (political change) and directly challenge cultural codes that underpin inequality. In this chapter I showed that Pride parades communicate cultural messages of visibility, support, and celebration in order to establish LGBT people as a legitimate social group.
CHAPTER 6

INTERNAL COMMUNITY BUILDING AT PRIDE

“For a day on Sunday everyone’s covered in rainbows and glitter. I got covered in glitter. I did not leave my apartment wearing glitter, but I had glitter all over me when I left. So it’s good in that way, it kind of marks everybody in a way that we aren’t marked typically. You can obviously choose to do that, you can chose to make yourself look the way gay people look hypothetically. But you can also not... But especially when you're on the train going there and half of your train is covered in rainbows, [you think], “Wow that's a lot of gay people.”

- Morgan, a lesbian spectator at the 2010 Pride parade in New York City

Morgan attended the 2010 Heritage of Pride March in New York City. In this city where people live largely anonymous public lives, in a culture where LGBT identity must be declared, the Sunday of Pride Week is a day when strangers form a community marked by glitter and rainbows. In the last chapter I argued that visibility is an important element of Pride parades in the sense that these are events where LGBT people and their allies make themselves visible to a mainstream public that they feel ignores, misunderstands, and condemns them. In this chapter I examine how visibility turns inward; for Morgan and other participants Pride parades are a time when LGBT people make themselves visible to each other and form a community. Straight allies join in this community as full participants, allies, or supportive outsiders. Like visibility, the themes of celebration and support have internal dimensions for Pride participants. Again, their public nature is key to the work of Pride parades - when oriented outward, these events
challenge macro-level culture by publicly celebrating, supporting, and making visible LGBT people and their allies; as I turn my focus inward, I show how the public nature of Pride parades make community building physically, emotionally, and cognitively possible.

The primary mechanism for forming community within social movements is collective identity - a shared sense of self among movement participants. Collective identity is an implicit cultural feature at all social levels (micro to macro). For social movements, collective identity is most relevant and the meso-level of group cohesion as it is a way for people who are otherwise strangers to have some degree of familiarity and unity. In the introductory chapter, I reviewed three ways that mass demonstrations foster collective identity. First, they bring people together physically who then need to coordinate their actions to march together at a steady pace (McPhail & Wohlstein 1983). Through myriad one-on-one interactions, participants in mass demonstrations develop both implicit and explicit cultural tools to facilitate their coordinated actions (Becker 1982). Second, mass demonstrations foster shared emotional experiences, which bond participants to one another and are components of mutual identification. Third, mass demonstrations create literal and symbolic boundaries between participants and non-participants; particularly those who are blamed for the injustices against which the demonstration is held.

This information is all from research on mass demonstrations with the legal/political equality as their immediate goal. Research on social movement tactics aimed at cultural equality does not address the internal movement effects for those participating. Outside social movement literature, research on public parades point to a
few differences with regards to internal effects. Though there are instances, including Pride, where public parades are used explicitly to seek social change, they are generally understood as distinguished from protests by their uncontentious nature. Parades may be held by a macro-level social group such as a town-sponsored 4th of July or Christmas parade or by a meso-level subcultural group like a neighborhood or community center sponsored Puerto Rican or Cinco de Mayo parade. Spectators at parades usually far outnumber marchers, and they have strong elements of entertainment and spectacle. Additionally, parades are composed of organized contingents of community groups, corporate sponsors, and marching bands while protest participants are generally only loosely organized into small groups.

The three mechanisms for developing collective identity in social movements – interaction, shared emotions, and boundary work - pertain to parades as well but in a slightly different way. Parades facilitate both more and less interaction among participants. Spectators – which do not really exist for protests – have ample opportunity for interaction and for some this may be the explicit purpose for participating. Marchers, though, may have less opportunity because their activities are more formally organized than those involved in protest marchers.

Emotionally, parades tend to create a more celebratory atmosphere than protests, leading to positive shared feelings of joy and excitement. Though not specific to parades, dramaturgical theory applied to public rituals helps explain the importance of emotions for building community at Pride parades. Dramaturgy explains social life at the interpersonal level as a series of cultural scripts. Culture in the world at all levels – micro-, meso-, and macro- - defines which emotions individuals should experience and
express in social situations (Turner & Stuts 2006). Individuals who break the cultural script by not experiencing or expressing prescribed emotions in a given interaction will feel shame or embarrassment (Goffman 1967; Scheff 1988). Negative emotions then decrease an individual's bond with the group whose script she broke (Summers-Effler 2004). A way to increase social bonds, then, is through shared positive emotional energy and one mechanism to produce that is interaction rituals. By gathering together, sharing a focus of attention and mood, and coordinating actions, individuals engaged in rituals experience the heightened emotions of collective effervescence (Collins 2004). The positive emotional bond formed in the micro-level cultural group may then counter the negative emotions individual experience when they break a macro-level cultural script.

The significance for boundary work in community building is that while protests are externally focused against an “other” that is the source of injustice, parades are more internally focused towards those participating as marchers or spectators. Contentious parades held by meso-level subcultural groups engaged in boundary work by claiming public space – a neighborhood, a few blocks – for that group (Abdullah 2009; O'Reilly & Crutcher 2006). The claimed space is then safe for identity expressions that may be against macro-level behavioral norms but are celebrated within the subculture (Abdullah 2009; Davis 1995; O'Reilly & Crutcher 2006). Rather than creating a boundary by defining one's group as in opposition to another, parades create boundaries by allowing groups the space to develop and express themselves as if those cultural codes that oppress them do not exist.

Previous research on Pride parades has addressed both their emotional and boundary work. Browne (2007) found that the upbeat, party atmosphere at Pride parades
united diverse participants as they celebrated queer sexuality together. Kates & Belk (2001) argued that Pride parades fostered collective effervescence as participants emotions were heightened by the sheer numbers of people engaged in the parade ritual and by the collective excess of their celebration. By establishing parades as sites for queer expression, participants enforced boundaries between queer and straight people and defined queer collective identity (Johnston 2005). Similarly, Herrell (1992) argued that Chicago's Pride parade reinforced collective identity among LGBT people by generating and attaching symbols to the community. One issue these studies do not address is ways some segments of the LGBT community may have been excluded in forming boundaries defining collective identity. In this chapter, I examine the forms of community building at 2010 Pride parades and connect this internal work to the external messages of these events.

**Barriers to Community and Collective Identity for LGBT People**

As discussed in chapter 2, LGBT people face distinct structural, demographic, and cultural challenges to form community and develop collective identity. All LGBT people face the structural challenge of needing to seek out LGBT community as adults outside the families and communities in which they are born. Demographically, LGBT people comprise only a small percentage of the population. According to the best estimates available, 3.8% of the U.S. population identifies as LGBT (Gates 2011). Though their population density does vary across the country, there is not nearly the clustering as occurs in racial/ethnic minority populations groups. Table 6.1 details LGBT population density in the metropolitan statistical areas in which each parade in my study was held, as measured by the percentage of households with same-sex couples.
Table 6.1. Same-Sex Partner Populations at Each Parade MSA.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>% of Unpartnered households</th>
<th>% of Same-sex partner households</th>
<th>% of Opposite-sex partner households</th>
<th>Proportion OS to SS partner households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fargo, ND</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>188:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>51:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>93:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>66:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>63:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>65:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: American Community Survey 2007-2009 3 year estimates

In the metropolitan statistical areas in which my six parade sites are located, straight partnered households outnumber gay households by 66:1. The highest proportions of straight to gay households were in Fargo, ND (188:1) and Salt Lake City, UT (93:1), both small/medium size parades in non gay-friendly cultural climates. The lowest proportion was in Burlington, VT (51:1), which is a small population center but was the only site at the time of data collection in a state recognizing same-sex marriages (New York has since changed). Even in Burlington, though, LGBT people are far outnumbered and thus face the demographic challenge of finding, meeting, and building relationships with other LGBT people.

Continued stigmatization of homosexuality and racial/ethnic, gender, and class diversity present cultural barriers to LGBT community. The first step to for an LGBT person to meet, form community with, and collectively identity with other LGBT people is to personally come out and identify as LGBT. Heteronormativity means that everyone is presumed straight until proven otherwise. It also means that cultural pressure is asserted against breaking the norm of heterosexuality such that homosexuality and gender variance is stigmatized. The everyday effect of this for LGBT people is that the macro-
level cultural script necessitates experiencing and expressing emotions that conform to the heterosexual norm. When an LGBT individual fails to, say affirm an attraction to someone of the opposite sex, she may experience the embarrassment or shame of breaking the cultural script. This script and attending negative emotional energy is a hindrance to forming a positive bond with other LGBT individuals. Evidence of employment discrimination, widespread belief in the immorality of homosexual behavior, and discourse surrounding LGBT political issues such as same-sex marriage confirm this cultural stigmatization.

A second cultural barrier to LGBT community is the broad diversity of LGBT people. Sexual orientation is distributed throughout the population such that there is comparable racial/ethnic, gender, and class diversity among LGBT people as the population as a whole. The same barriers to racial/ethnic integration that exist in the broad population – residential segregation, separate cultural traditions, and overt and covert racism – exist among LGBT people. Regarding gender, while straight men and women come together in heterosexual pairs, gay men and lesbians can socialize romantically and platonic in separates spheres. Most LGBT bars and clubs cater either to men or women creating large gender imbalances in many LGBT spaces. Gay communities have a history racism and sexism and major activist organizations have been overwhelmingly run by white men (Armstrong 2002; Duberman 1993). LGBT people experience divides in social class because most spaces for socializing are commercial and located in cities, creating a barrier for the participation of LGBT people with lower incomes.

In the previous chapter I described the ways that Pride parades contest the macro-
level construction of queerness as culturally illegitimate deviance through visibility, celebration, and public support. In this chapter, I look at how Pride parades address challenges to forming LGBT collective identity and examine whether there are conflicts between external cultural contestation and internal community building. I analyze community building according to three functions identified in the literature: physical interaction, shared emotional experience, and boundary work. Moreover, I test for variation by the three individual and parade level variables – personal identity, parade size, and cultural climate - that I used in the previous chapter. Rather than performing this analysis after describing main themes, as I did in the last chapter, in this one I analyze variation throughout the paper.

**Community and Collective Identity at Pride**

**Physical Community - Interaction**

Pride parades draw enormous crowds. According to my data set of all Pride events, in 2009 over six million people attended a parade either as a marcher or spectator. In chapter 3, I tested the effect of parade-level variables such as years in existence and MSA-level variables such as total population on the size of each U.S. pride parade, as measured by the number of people participating as marchers or spectators. I found that larger population in parades' MSA and the earlier parade founded correlated with greater parade size. Region of the country, LGBT population size, racial/ethnic diversity, and state legal recognition of same-sex relationships did not affect the size of Pride parades. Therefore, data presented above about the relative sizes of LGBT populations at each parade site are measures of the ability of LGBT people to meet and socialize with others but do not affect the size of each parade.
As public events, parades are open to all and are thus more accessible than festivals that are enclosed and often require entrance fees. Unlike traditional protest marches, their public nature functions as an invitation to open participation. Similar to protest marches as public events they are spectacles for passersby and the general public through media coverage. Thus one important aspect of Pride events is to bring people together physically.

**Crowd Data.** As described in chapter 3, I took photographs of spectators at various points in each parade and used them to estimate the diversity of crowds. A research assistant and I coded spectators for perceived race/ethnicity, gender, and gender presentation. We each coded a subset of spectators and calculated inter-coder reliability, achieving Cohen's kappa scores within excellent to moderate ranges reliability (Cohen 1960; Landis & Koch 1977). In Table 5.2 I present estimations of diversity along with American Community Survey 5-year estimates for race/ethnicity of the metropolitan statistical areas in which parades are located.
Table 6.2. Spectator Demographics at Parade Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Parade Size</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Gender Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fargo, ND</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>White 96.1%</td>
<td>Woman 51.9%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 93.3%</td>
<td>Man 45.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* .8%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 6.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>White 87.1%</td>
<td>Woman 59.6%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 93.3%</td>
<td>Man 40.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* 0</td>
<td>Non-Normative 12.9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>White 83.9%</td>
<td>Woman 49.2%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 76.9%</td>
<td>Man 47.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* 3.4%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 12.7%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>White 72.5%</td>
<td>Woman 32.7%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 54.0%</td>
<td>Man 64.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* 15.3%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 12.2%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>White 61.2%</td>
<td>Woman 52.0%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 54.0%</td>
<td>Man 46.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* 4.1%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 34.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>White 58.8%</td>
<td>Woman 43.5%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd Data Census</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black 47.0%</td>
<td>Man 55.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other* 9.4%</td>
<td>Non-Normative 31.8%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes Hispanic/latin@, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and mixed-race

Crowd data indicate there was slightly less racial/ethnic diversity at Pride parades than in their area populations as a whole. At all parades save one, in Burlington, VT, there was a slightly higher percentage of white spectators than in the population as a whole. Attendance by black spectators was generally proportional to the populations except in Atlanta and New York City where there was a substantial difference. These two parades also had the largest differences in attendance by white spectators compared to their areas' populations, with a difference of over 10 percentage points for each. One reason for this may be that both cities also host Black Gay Pride events catering specifically to this community (IFBP 2011). Participation by people from other non-white racial ethnic groups was also notably lower than in the general population in Salt.
Lake City and San Diego. Part of the difference may be methodological; analysis of crowd photographs measured spectators’ race/ethnicity as perceived by two coders while census data measures self-identification. Overall, these data show that the Pride parades in my study were less racially/ethnically diverse that the areas in which they were located, but the in most cases this difference was not large.

There were interesting differences in gender makeup at parades. At three parades – Fargo, Salt Lake City, and San Diego - there was a roughly even gender split (men and women within 10 percentage points). Of the remaining three, Burlington was dominated by women while there were more men at the parades in Atlanta and New York. Atlanta’s parade in particular had two times as many men than women. There is no clear pattern to parades with even gender splits and those without; I do not know the reason.

Finally, I measured spectators’ gender presentation as a type of diversity. As detailed in chapter 4, a research assistant and I used specific criteria including hair length and styling, clothing, and presence of makeup and accessories to judge individual’s gender presentations. Presentations of those coded as normative were on the whole either feminine or masculine according to their perceived gender, while those coded as non-normative incorporated one or more elements typical of the other gender. At the smallest three parades 82-83% of spectators’ gender presentation was normative and that of the other 17-18% was non-normative. There was a marked changed with the next two parades, Atlanta and San Diego, as nearly one quarter of spectators presented non-normative gender. Surprisingly, the highest percentage of gender normativity was observed in New York City with nearly 90%. I attribute the degree of gender normativity at parades to two factors: the extent to which parades foster supportive and encouraging
atmospheres and the amount of straight people that attend parades. Non-normative
gender presentation can be a cultural marker of LGBT identity, and thus is more common
among those who identify as queer. I do not have an explanation, however, for why New
York City would foster either a less supportive atmosphere or draw more straight
participants. I will return to the question of supportive atmosphere later in this chapter.

**Participant Interviews.** Two-thirds of participants (33 people) mentioned the role
of physical interaction at Pride parades, saying they bring LGBT people and allies
together as a community, draw out a large diversity of people, and are sites for
meaningful personal interactions.

One third of participants (16 people) mentioned the simple fact that Pride parades
brings a lot of people together in one place and that this physical togetherness builds
community. Regardless of the diversity of those who attend, participants found it
significant that LGBT people simply have a place to gather. Shane and Court, gay men
who attended Burlington's and New York's parades, respectively, explained:

SHANE: I like that there is so much visibility. You know, like I know that
there are a lot of people in the LGBT community, but often times they are
real spread out, you know. So it makes it difficult to get together. There
aren’t really any big events that draw everyone together... But Pride is
obviously like the biggest one so...It’s just like a little gay town.

COURT: Yes there is [something special about Pride] because on a day to
day basis, I don't really interact with many gay people. I’m not saying I’m
in the closet in any form or fashion, I’m totally out, but I generally don’t
have many gay friends. And even the ones that I do, I don’t spend that
much time with when I go out and do the gay things, particularly out to
bars, like the gay bars or any other gay functions or groups and stuff. So
its really great to have those events every year where you're able to see
other people or meet other people who might be going through the same
things as us or some similar experience. Just something that you know you
have the common language with them already.

Shane's description of Pride as “a little gay town” is significant given LGBT people's
demographic and structural isolation from one another. LGBT people are a small percentage of the population and there are only a few neighborhoods in the country – all in major cities – with substantial clusters of LGBT residents. Pride parades are among the few non-commercial spaces, and by far the largest spaces, where one can be primarily amongst LGBT people. According to Court, even living in New York City with access to LGBT spaces he does not interact with other gays on a daily basis. Court described having an implicit meso-level “common language” based on the similar experience of living as a gay man with which he can connect with gays who are strangers at Pride parades. On a basic level, Pride parades serve an important function as a site for LGBT people to come together.

In the last chapter I described visibility as an external message of Pride such that participants made the LGBT community visible in the broader culture. When considering internal community functions of Pride parades, visibility turns inward by making LGBT people visible to one another. Shane and Court, and other participants remarked on their physical proximity to many other LGBT people as a special feature of Pride parades. I did not find any conflict in these two functions of Pride parades. That is, visibility at Pride works in both directions, external and internal, without diminishing the function of either.

Interestingly, mentions of this theme did not vary by size of parade even though large parades were all held in cities with LGBT population clusters. Nor did mentions vary by the cultural climate for LGBT people; roughly one third of participants in both gay-friendly and non gay-friendly locations said that Pride parades brought LGBT people together in community. There was variance by sexual identity, however, as fourteen of
the sixteen participants who commented on bringing people together identified as LGBT. Like externally oriented visibility, this finding is understandable because LGBT people would be more aware of opportunities to gather and share a personal desire for LGBT community spaces. These data suggest that physically bringing people together is a common feature among all Pride parades. Regardless of the number of people who come together to march or the external cultural climate facing LGBT people, many participants find it meaningful that parades are able to create sites of LGBT people to congregate and interact.

Nearly half of respondents, 24 people, remarked positively on the diversity of race, age, class, sexual orientation, and subgroups within the LGBT community. Participants in my study said that Pride events were unique for gathering all elements of the LGBT community along with straight allies. Many said that their Pride parade was more racially/ethnically diverse than their city at large, though this perception is not supported by crowd data. In my observations I did not see spectators separate themselves by race/ethnicity and this did not appear to be a barrier to interaction. Save the two smallest parades, Fargo and Burlington, all others included more than one racially/ethnically specific contingent, like the Brazilian dance group in New York or the band playing traditional Mexican music in Salt Lake City. Those who commented on parade's lack of diversity pointed to forces larger than the parade such as simple demographics and cultural segregation. A few participants in Atlanta mentioned Black Gay Pride events as the reason for lower African-American participation.

Regarding gender, participants said that Pride parades brought queer men and women together despite separation in their everyday lives. Howard, a volunteer at
Fargo's Pride parade, said that,

HOWARD: The biggest tension [is that] gay men and lesbians don't tend to associate and commingle very often. And they do at the parade. It's not necessarily a tension so much as a social, I guess, fact.

Like those commenting on racial/ethnic diversity, Howard pointed to broad social forces that could not be overcome at an annual parade. Another Fargo participant, though, did see women and men bridge gaps at Pride:

DEE ANN: I think Pride is an opportunity for us all to come together and put those differences aside. I see gay men dancing with lesbians and I see all of the hugging and touching and caressing and all of the good side of what we really are, and that's wonderful.

I observed many interactions between men and women at Pride parades, though not to the extent characterized by Dee Ann. Most typically spectators were in single-gender groups of three or four but in close proximity to many others and with some interaction.

I also observed diversity in personal expression and affinity groups. At all parades, marching contingents represented a variety of interests including church groups, corporate sponsor, LGBT sports leagues, affinity subgroups (gay dads, “Bears”\(^1\), drag queens, Dykes on Bikes), politicians, school groups, and more. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants at large parades mentioned diversity more than those at smaller parades (65% vs. 33%, respectively). Larger parades simply have more people. They are located in larger population areas where there is more room for differentiation and segmentation and with larger racial and ethnic minority populations. Martin and Tobias, gay men from Salt Lake City and San Diego, respectively, described the significance of this diversity:

\(^{1}\) Men who self-identify as larger and harrier than average gay men and use this identification as a basis of unity.
MARTIN: I think it’s just kind of that weekend that absolutely everybody is really tied together, and it’s their weekend. No matter if you're the crazy club kid or you're the older couple that's been together for years, it kind of brings everybody together. Because normally those groups don't, they're not in the same places at the same time, they're not doing the same things, but only at Pride.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you think it works that it seems to all come together even though as you mentioned people come for such different reasons?

TOBIAS: Well, and that's really the beauty of it. That if you polled a thousand people there I think that you really would get generally a sense of people wanting to support the community, but the way that that gets manifested is probably very different. Some people do that by getting drunk, taking drugs, and having sex, while others are bringing their families. But again, I think the way that it works is the power of a group of people coming together and recognizing unity in all the differences there are, that are represented in that gathering. And I think that that's probably the major way that it works; that we are different but we are one in terms of a community.

For both men, diversity went beyond classic social categories to differences by personal expression and interests. Tobias's statement in particular echoes Armstrong's (2002) description of what she calls the gay identity movement, which claimed unified LGBT identity through diversity of expression. According to Armstrong, Pride parades embody this theme by “provid[ing] experiential evidence for the claim that unity and diversity [are] not in contradiction” (2002: 4). Statements about diversity did not vary by the cultural climate in which parades were held, suggesting that is more a function of the number of people participating than of external pressure for certain personal displays. Nor did the mention of diversity vary by participants' sexual identity. From my observations and participants' statements, diversity by race/ethnicity, gender, and personal expression and interest was visible at Pride parades.

The only group that participants mentioned as underrepresented at Pride parades was transgender people. Though all parades included at least one marching contingent
from the transgender community, six participants said that transgender people were not as visible as they should be. Most attributed this to ignorance on the part of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals about the ways that transgender people fit into the community. As described in chapter 2, sexuality and gender identity/expression are analytically distinct categories. One's sexuality – one's attractions, explicit behaviors, and public identification – center around the object of one's sexual and romantic affections. Gender identity, by contrast, is one's internal sense of gender - whether one feels oneself to be woman, man, or somewhere in between. Along with gender identity one communicates gender through expressions such as clothes and mannerisms. My analysis of photographs of Pride spectators measured gender expression as a proxy for participants' overt non-normative presentation; those outside the norm in their gender expression could identify as gay, transgender, or even straight. Though there is considerable overlap between sexuality and gender identity/expression, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals break the cultural norm of heterosexuality but do not necessarily break gender norms by acting or feeling more feminine or masculine than their straight peers. Likewise, transgender individuals break the cultural norm that one must identify with his or her biological sex at birth, but they may identify publicly as heterosexual. If Pride parades, as many participants say, are unique sites for LGBT people of all types and their allies to gather, then participants must contend with both sexuality and gender identity/expression.

In practice, of course, many gays, lesbians, and bisexuals do break gender norms in their personal expressions with things as simple as shorter hair cuts for women or tight jeans for men, and a number of transgender individuals also identify as gay or bisexual. On a grander scale, drag – adopting clothing and mannerism normative for the other
gender for theatrical performance – has a long history in gay culture and drag queens and kings (men performing as women and women performing as men, respectively) were quite visible at Pride parades. Despite these connections, gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists have struggled find common cause with transgender individuals because of the difficulty incorporating issues of both sexuality and gender identity/expression (Stone 2009). Same-sex marriage, for instance, is an important issue for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals to a greater extent than transgender people. I'll return to the question of gender identity/expression and sexuality later when I discuss boundary work and LGBT Pride parades. For now, the important thing is that while a few participants saw Pride as a venue for interaction and education around gender identity, others said that ignorance on the part of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals inhibited participation by transgender individuals at Pride.

Though only one participant mentioned it, I also noticed the conspicuous lack of visibility of bisexuals at Pride parades. While lesbian, gay, and some transgender participants declared their identities with signs and t-shirts, I did not see any participant explicitly identify themselves as bisexual. Likewise, I did not observe a specifically bisexual marching contingent in any parade. While it has become commonplace for community and advocacy organizations to include “bisexual” in their names, I did not observe participation of self-identified bisexuals in parades. Jade, from Fargo, was the only self-identified bisexual participant that I interviewed. She attributed the lack of bisexual visibility at Pride to general lack of acceptance of bisexuals in the gay and lesbian community in Fargo. After dating women for a time, she said she was called a “traitor” by another lesbian when she began dating a man. This is only one woman's
experience so it is not possible to determine whether it is common, but in this case bisexual invisibility was attributed to ignorance about and intolerance towards bisexuality.

The third aspect of physical togetherness was the way that Pride parades became places for interpersonal interaction. Sixteen respondents talked about meeting new people, socializing with friends, or connecting with organizations at Pride parades. In my observations at parades, I saw plenty interaction among both friends and strangers. At larger parades, restaurants and bars along the parade route hosted parties to watch the event. In particular I noted many interactions among people from different affinity groups. In San Diego, I watched a twelve year old girl take a picture with a man dressed in leather, and saw a woman motorcyclist walking with a drag queen as they prepared their respective marching contingents. In Fargo, college age lesbians mingled with older gay men as they waited for the parade to start. In Atlanta, spectators of all types congregated on a corner across the street from a particularly enthusiastic group of protesters, talking together and cheering as the parade went by. I noted the most interaction before parades started as those marching socialized with people in their own and other contingents and spectators talked with one another about past parades, plans for attending other events, and their own and others' creative displays.

Brian, a gay participant in New York's Pride parade, described his interactions at Pride:

Brian: I try to meet a lot of people, meet as much people as I can, say hello to people from out of town, people I think might be from out of town, just try to make more new friends. Sometimes I end up on one side of it and my friends were on the other side of it and I was talking with some of the people I had never met, I didn’t even know them, I just met them that day and I was talking with them.
Brian sounds like a particularly social person, and for him Pride is an opportunity to socialize with whoever is around. His comment speaks to an environment that encourages such interaction, especially in New York City, whose residents are not known for their friendliness to strangers. The experience of Ashley, a straight woman who attended Atlanta Pride while visiting a friend, also spoke to this open, friendly environment:

ASHLEY: Well, it just like, I think I just mean it in the terms of like everyone kind of associates with everyone else even though it was like a stranger typing them on the street, like everyone kind of treated each other like they knew them, you know.

Ashley said that “the family-type atmosphere” was her favorite part of her first Pride parade, and her experience illustrates that for many the openness to socializing with new people extended to both LGBT and straight participants. None of my participants mentioned negative interactions with other participants or trouble socializing with strangers, nor did I observe scenes counter to the friendly, social environment I have described. This may be because spectators appeared to attend with friends and so had people with whom to interact. Mentions of interpersonal interaction at Pride did not vary by respondents' sexual identity. Nor did it vary by the size of parade or the cultural climate in which parades were held. Across parades, then, interaction with fellow participants was part of the process to build community.

Pride parades contributed to building LGBT community by drawing together people who are geographically spread out and socially diverse; when they get together Pride becomes a site for a wealth of interpersonal interactions. The only exception is that some participants felt that transgender people were not fully included in Pride activities.
Otherwise I did not find anyone who felt left out of the social experience at Pride. These physical functions of Pride made possible the emotional aspects of community building.

*Emotional Community*

To participants, Pride parades were more than social gatherings; 43 respondents, 86% of those I talked to said that Pride was emotionally meaningful to them. Positive emotions were certainly on display as participants smiled, laughed, and cheered together. An atmosphere of community celebration was most evident at the kickoff of each parade. All parades started with energy as the first contingent was placed there to make a lot of noise. At five parades, groups called “Dykes on Bikes” took the lead spot and at one, Burlington, an energetic drumming group filled this spot. Dykes on Bikes have been affiliated with Pride parades since a contingent of 20 women motorcyclists headed the 1976 San Francisco Pride parade (SFDOB 2011). Since then loosely organized groups calling themselves Dykes on Bikes lead Pride parades. At each that I observed, women clad in leather and rainbows revved their engines loudly to cheering crowds as their entrance signaled the start of parades. In Fargo, the small contingent of five motorcyclists rode up and down the street ahead of the parade, while in New York and San Diego up to one hundred participants guided the parades slowly down the street. In San Diego the contingent was followed by a group of male motorcyclists. The loud start to parades signaled a high energy celebration.

For many participants, the emotional experience of Pride stemmed directly from the physical gathering of LGBT people. Ted, a gay man in San Diego, described this emotion when he attended his first Pride parade:

TED: It was in 1977 in San Francisco and I was just amazed, I was stunned to see so many gays, I was like oh my god, it was a feeling like
Like Ted, many participants said that simply being among a mass of LGBT people and allies on a public street was an emotional experience. For a community that is geographically dispersed, that often shared the personal experience of growing up without any LGBT social networks, and that lives in a larger cultural climate that misunderstands, ignores, and condemns LGBT people, this experience is rare and meaningful. Participants mentioned three specific reasons for the emotional impact of Pride parades: the feeling of community, a supportive and loving atmosphere, and sharing pride in LGBT identity. The combination of these aspects describes collective effervescence.

In addition to commenting on physical togetherness of LGBT people and allies, one third of participants (15 respondents) said that Pride parades generated a feeling of community for them. Similar to Ted's experience of feeling “like coming home”, participants described a sense of belonging to be surrounded by fellow LGBT people and straight allies. Dee Ann, a transgender woman in Fargo, described her experience:

DEE ANN: When I see my community come together ... It just wells up inside, you know like the feelings people get when they hear the Star-Spangled Banner or they see rockets exploding. I see that I have other people just like me and there's nothing wrong with me.

Being with other LGBT people at Pride parades validated Dee Ann's own identity as transgender by giving her the feeling that she is part of a community of like individuals. This is how collective identity and community are intertwined: as participants described it, feeling part of a community meant sharing a sense of self with others; the basis of the community was common identification. Particularly since LGBT people do not share geography, it is the identification with one another that is the foundation of their
community. Interestingly, though LGBT participants mentioned feeling community slightly more than their straight counterparts (35% vs. 23%, respectively), this variation was not statistically significant. Nor did mentions vary by parade size or cultural climate. The sense of community then was common to all parades in my study. Community feeling is illustrated by the use of the word “family” by LGBT people to describe their connection with one another. Six participants used “family” in this way, both to describe the supportive atmosphere at Pride and their relationship with other LGBT people.

As evidenced by the use of the term “family”, for many participants a second emotional aspect of Pride parades was the supportive and loving atmosphere they foster. Thirty-two participants, nearly two-thirds of all respondents, remarked on the feeling of support at Pride parades. They described this atmosphere as one in which everyone is welcome as they are. This was most clear when participants described bringing relatives with them, saying their relatives came away grateful that their LGBT loved one is part of a loving and supportive community. David, a gay man from San Diego, relayed the story of bringing his aunt with him to a parade:

DAVID: I was going to go out to San Diego for San Diego Pride, and I called my aunt and she asked if I could go. It struck me as odd, but I took her. She said she wanted to go. The reason being is that her son -- a couple, like ten years ago [came out as gay and the family did not react well]. So they're estranged, and he no longer has contact with the family. Now in hindsight, everyone realizes whatever mistakes they made, and I think she just wants to understand culture, she wants to be aware of what's going on. Her reaction to it couldn't have been any better than what it was. When she left she said that she'd never seen such an outpouring of love and happiness. It was like a giant celebration. I would speculate that she felt a little bit more comfortable, because she obviously doesn't know where her son is and I think she feels more cool about the whereabouts of her son because now she knows he's involved in such a strong supportive community.

As David's quote illustrates, many saw Pride as fostering the best a community may offer
by showing love and support for all who attend. Of course some participants felt that
treatment of transgender people was an exception to general acceptance. I did not talk to
anyone who personally felt that they were not fully accepted but many mentioned that
there was not enough awareness about or outreach to transgender people. Participants at
small/medium size parades mentioned the loving and supporting atmosphere more than
those at larger parades (78% vs. 48%, respectively) and mentions did not vary by cultural
climate. Thus, having less people is more conducive to creating and communication an
environment of support.

For some (14 people, 28%), the loving and supportive environment was most
clear in participants' freedom to express themselves. In light of the macro-level cultural
construction of queerness as deviance, participants saw Pride as one place where it was
safe to express oneself without fear of social sanction. Participants indicated that there is
power in creating a safe space for even the most radical displays. According to Angela, a
lesbian who marched in Burlington:

INTERVIEWER: What does someone walking down the street in leather or
walking down the street topless have to do with equal rights? What would
be your response to that critique?
ANGELA: I think it has to do with self-expression. I think it has to do
with having the right in feeling comfortable expressing themselves in the
way that they would like to in an open community, and a Pride Parade
seems to be really open and welcoming to people that want to express
themselves in that way.

Coming from Burlington, the most gay-friendly parade site in my study, Angela's defense
of free expression is fairly low risk. According to those I talked to, LGBT people in
Burlington generally feel comfortable being publicly out about their sexuality and gender
identity. In Fargo, by contrast, the situation is quite different. While the downtown
business association sponsored rainbow flags along the parade route and there were no
protesters at the parade, some participants described the parade as a rare day to be out as LGBT. One participant, Kevin, traveled over an hour from his rural North Dakota home to attend Fargo's parade. Describing his motivation to make the trip, he said

KEVIN: I wanted, it was kind of like [I am a] closet case everywhere, so the parade was the only place that I could be out publicly.

Depending on one's context, risky personal expression could be simply publicly identifying as gay or it could be dressing in leather and wearing a collar. For Kevin Pride was a safe space to publicly identify as gay without fear of reprisal. For others it was the chance to wear their most radical outfit or, as I overheard one San Diego participant say, to “fag out” by having fun dressing and acting more flamboyant than they would in their everyday lives.

Pride participants supported each as authentic expressions of self, but they balanced this value with possible negative consequences for the image of LGBT people. One third of participants (17 people) worried that sexual displays hurt the image LGBT people projected to the larger culture through Pride parades. George, a gay man in San Diego, said he noticed that there were fewer sexual displays in 2010 than in previous years at the Parade. He explained why he saw this as a positive development:

GEORGE: I think in general people just realize that when that stuff gets on the media, it doesn't help the cause any. I think there is underlying, if you get up there and you act very lurid and vulgar, lewd behavior isn’t going to help any. And so toning some of that down, I think helps the cause. And it probably helps why more and more people are slowly, slowly, coming around with Proposition 8² I think. So I think people are going to become much more supportive of gays, especially if they don't see a lot of vulgar behavior.

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² 2008 referendum in California that amended the state constitution to restrict marriage recognition to heterosexual couples.
To George and others, sexual displays inhibited individual attitude change by presenting LGBT people as deviant and objectionable. While they did not want to explicitly prevent fellow participants' free expression, they saw this goal in conflict with the goal of positive social change. This issue illustrates the downside to educational visibility, discussed in the previous chapter, in which Pride parades foster cultural attitude change by educating the general public about the respectability of LGBT people. This bottom up approach to cultural change is vulnerable to those that do not present a palatable image and represents a tradeoff between an external and an internal function of Pride parades.

Nearly one half of respondents, 21 people, talked about a third emotional aspect of Pride parades: promoting pride in oneself. Mentions of this aspect did not vary by parade size, cultural climate, or respondent's sexual identity. The link between queerness and deviance in macro-level culture is a cultural barrier to creating LGBT community, and one step to removing the barrier is to change LGBT people's internal feelings of shame that result in living in a harsh cultural climate. As a public statement, Pride parades challenge the construction of queerness as deviant and shameful by publicly celebrating it. Participants revealed that this celebration also has internal effects for the community and LGBT individuals by promoting self-worth and esteem. Jonah, a gay man from San Diego and Iris, a straight woman from Salt Lake City, describe the emotional feeling of pride:

JONAH: Every year there's one day, one day a year where my entire community mobilizes together and is truly proud and confident about all of ourselves. You know, and I think that's very powerful for us to have a day of Pride and being GLBT.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe Pride parade?
IRIS: It’s love. Having love for yourself, for everyone you meet, but mostly having love for yourself. If you can’t accept yourself, then no one
An important aspect of Pride for Jonah was facilitating confidence and pride in LGBT identity. Iris connected these feelings to the greater struggle for cultural equality, saying that self-acceptance is the first step to cultural acceptance. For those who experience shame from the legal and cultural inequality they face, Pride is a day where the hostile cultural climate is replaced by one of celebration for LGBT identity. As Dee Ann also showed earlier, the feeling of community was connected for participants to personal self-worth as they internalized the collective celebration and support for LGBT identity. To Emmet, a gay man in Salt Lake City, the existence of Pride parades gave him hope even from afar when he was not able to attend:

EMMET: I guess as a young person growing up I always saw reports of Pride parades and stuff and I always thought that ‘ok I was different’ but I didn’t see any of that in my community so I knew that somewhere, so it gave me like hope, or something to look forward to. I didn’t feel as alone.

From Emmet's experience Pride parades may have emotional benefits even for those who can not attend. By creating a meso-level community in which gay sexuality is celebrated rather than sanctioned, Pride parades foster self-worth as LGBT individuals follow a subcultural script rather than shame as they break a macro-cultural one. The positive emotions created for individuals can then lead them to bond with one another and thereby build community. In the previous chapter I argued that as as it is directed outward to the public, the meso-level cultural script celebrating LGBT identity challenges the macro-level construction of queerness as deviance. The question for the next section is what form of LGBT identity is celebrated and who is excluded as participants construct boundaries to define LGBT identity.

The feeling of community, loving and supportive atmosphere, and pride in self
inspired by parades are all evidence of communal bonding through positive emotional energy, or collective effervescence. Participants described their individual emotional experiences as a result of interacting one-on-one with others at Pride and being part of the communal celebration and supportive atmosphere. Collectively the music, cheering, and coordinated actions were ritualized group interactions that fostered heightened positive emotions. Those who marched talked about feeling euphoric as crowds cheered for them. Margaret, a straight ally in the Atlanta parade, said that Pride was “the closest thing to a religious experience without actually having one”. Similar to religious services, Pride parades have the quality of collective effervescence, a uniquely social emotional experience.

Pride parades bring people physically together, addressing the demographic, structural, and cultural isolation that LGBT people experience as members of society. Once together, parades are an interaction ritual which foster the positive emotional energy that LGBT people lack as they interact in mainstream society. The result is the LGBT people are able to bond as a meso-level subcultural unit. However, some felt that transgender people were excluded from this unit as a result of ignorance among lesbians, gays, and bisexuals about how gender identity and expression are connected to sexual orientation. Moreover, one feature that facilitates positive emotions for some, the support for diversity of personal expression, caused others to worry that some expressions would hurt the external image of LGBT people. This issue was one example of a trade-off between Pride's goals of internal community building and external cultural contestation.

Boundary Work

The third way that Pride parades build community and establish collective identity
is by defining boundaries. Three-fourths of respondents, 36 people, talked about the ways that Pride parades enforce group boundaries. Winston, a gay man in Fargo, talked about how Pride was an expression of his identity:

WINSTON: I enjoy participating in Pride just because like I said I do see these Pride festivals and parades as being part of a community. I grew up in a very, very small rural town area where the mention of gay sends panic throughout the city. A mob will chase you around with pitchforks. So I mean it was nice to be part of something that I am.

The entire collectivity at Fargo Pride was for Winston a place where he felt he belonged. The boundary here is simply between those who attend and embody the ethos of celebration of and pride in LGBT identity and those who do not. The combination of physical and emotional community at Pride contrasted with the other of daily society that is structured by the implicit macro-level cultural code that links queerness with deviance.

Beyond this simple boundary, I found three types of boundaries worked out at Pride. The first was between LGBT and straight people. The next two boundaries were between sets of each group. Pride parades divided straight people by those who were LGBT-supportive and attended and those who were not. LGBT people divided in their inclusion of gender transgression within the LGBT umbrella.

The boundary between LGBT and straight people at Pride parades was largely implicit; participants rarely questioned whether this boundary existed and instead their comments centered on how the boundary was reinforced. Nearly half of respondents, 23 people, talked about LGBT/straight boundary work at Pride. Jade, a bisexual woman from Fargo, talked about the first way this boundary was reinforced:

JADE: I'm not really quite sure how many like heterosexual people come in to observe Pride because it still has a very small feel. And so I don't think that a lot of people are going to it that aren't necessarily GLBTQ or have gay friends.
According to Jade, Pride is an event by and for LGBT people so that straights need an “in” through an LGBT friend. A straight woman at this event, Danielle, expressed the same sentiment when she said she marched with a political campaign and while it was a great experience, she “can't think of another context where [she] would have felt comfortable walking.” In Fargo this was reinforced by the strong networks between LGBT people so that while the boundary may have been partly symbolic it was also one between a group of friends and others outside the network. That is, LGBT people in Fargo were a micro-level cultural group in which individuals knew one another rather than a meso-level group where mutual identification would suffice for membership.

Respondents from other places made similar comments. Eugene, a gay man from Atlanta, relayed a recent conversation with a straight friend in which his friend was interested in attending Pride but felt she needed an invitation by an LGBT person as an unofficial entree to the event. Tony, from NYC, said that a straight person would need to go to Pride with LGBT people because “they'd know all the events and what to do and a normal person wouldn't know much”. These statements speak to a view that Pride parades are by and for LGBT people so that straight allies are welcome as bystanders but not as full participants. The reason given was that LGBT people have insider knowledge and ownership of the events.

A similar way that the boundary between LGBT and straight people was reinforced was by conceiving of Pride as a commemorative event for the LGBT community akin to a religious festival. Two Jewish participants – Rebekah in Burlington and Ralph in NYC – likened Pride to the Jewish commemoration of passover as a time when the community remembers past struggles that define them as a people. In this sense,
straight people (like non-Jews) are invited to observe but can never be full participants without personally identifying as LGBT. Blake, a gay man from Burlington, related Pride to another religious festival:

**BLAKE:** I think straight people can get a lot of payment and enjoyment out of the parade, just like I get from the Mardi Gras Parade, even though I don’t celebrate Lent or Advent or whatever comes after it. You don’t have to be of that mind in order to enjoy free beads, any reason to go down to Church Street and enjoy yourself on the street is fun whenever it is.

Blake's statement was typical in that he identified features of Pride parades that are universally enjoyable – like free beads and a colorful parade – but distinguished the implicit meaning of these features for LGBT and straight participants. For LGBT participants, the parade was a celebration and commemoration of shared history; straight participants did not share this history so may partly find joy through its entertainment.

As emphasized in the previous chapter, the public nature of Pride parades give them an external focus along with the internal functions described here. In that chapter I argued that Pride parades communicate the main themes of visibility, support, and celebration through their festive parade form rather than through verbal statements. As public celebrations to commemorate LGBT culture and history, Pride parades are explicit cultural tools used by the meso-level LGBT community to challenge macro-level cultural construction of queerness as deviance. As internally focused celebrations, Pride parades construct a boundary between LGBT and straight people by marking the commemoration as for LGBT people. To the extent that the explicit cultural tool is aimed at changing individual attitudes through a bottom up approach to cultural change, this may hurt its goal by excluding straight people from full participation. As a tool aimed at top down macro-level cultural change, the boundary between LGBT and straight people does not
hurt its goal because individual attitudes are not the target.

As an in-group activity and commemoration of shared history, Pride parades enforce a boundary between LGBT and straight people by marking the event as “for” those who identify as LGBT. Heterosexuals are invited as supporters, spectators, and consumers of gay culture but not full and equal participants. The boundary between LGBT and straight people is marked implicitly in the ways participants understand Pride and they ways they can be involved.

A second way the boundary between LGBT and straight was marked at Pride parades is through explicit displays of gay sexuality. Participants made overt sexual displays through their clothing and slogans. For example, a group of gay men Atlanta wore coordinated outfits of short shorts in each color of the rainbow to a man. In Burlington, San Diego, and New York a few participants wore gear distinctive to the gay leather community, an explicitly sexual affinity group that eroticizes leather garb and symbols (Peacock et al. 2001). A gay male dance troupe, the DC Cowboys, performed suggestively while wearing speedos and cowboy hats on their float in Salt Lake City. Many corporate and community sponsors employed sexual imagery in the slogans on their parade entries. The Georgia Humane Society float in Atlanta sported a banner picturing a dog with a bone in it's mouth that read, “Who needs balls when you've got a bone like this?” In San Diego, the city's Public Defenders' sign advertised that they'd been “Getting You Off Since 1988”. I observed more sexual displays in the larger parades of Atlanta, San Diego, and New York City, perhaps due to the the greater diversity of those involved. The only parade at which I did not see any sexual displays was in Fargo. This was the smallest event and located in a non gay-friendly cultural
climate. Participants attributed the lack of sexual displays to a more reserved Midwestern ethos and tight-knit community in which a lewd dance would quickly travel the grapevine back to the dancer's grandmother. Additionally, nearly all sexual displays were performed by men.

Since the first events in 1970 sexualized displays have been a controversial aspect of Pride events. As discussed in chapter 1, many found the inclusion of shirtless Groovy Guy contestants and a float featuring a large jar of Vasoline in Los Angeles's 1970 parade to hurt the cause of cultural equality by putting at the forefront aspects of LGBT community that were more objectionable to dominant heteronormative culture. Likewise in 2010, some participants I interviewed argued that overt displays of gay sexuality put off straight parade-goers and thus created a boundary between LGBT and straight participants. Christine, a straight woman who attended Pride in San Diego for the first time, described her reaction to explicit sexuality:

CHRISTINE: Well, there was a lot of guys on guys and girls on girls. It was pretty gross. I'm not gonna lie. It's more for my taste.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it would be a better event if some of that were toned down?

CHRISTINE: Yeah, I think it would make more people more comfortable to get out there and actually go. A lot of like straight people don't want to see that.

Of all the straight participants I interviewed, Christine was the least comfortable with gay sexuality. She attended a church that condemns homosexuality as a sin and has many family members that, as she said, “were more on the side of the protestors that were there standing along the bridge” and did not approve of her attendance at the parade. However, though Christine is on the conservative end of the spectrum of straight people who attend
Pride, her reaction illustrates the way sexual displays can work as a boundary. Reaction against sexual displays was not limited to straight participants; a minority of LGBT participants also expressed discomfort with such displays. However, they were clear that their discomfort was a personal issue and should not mean that others should censor what for them may be a true expression of self. Instead, LGBT participants concerned about overt gay sexuality at Pride talked about it in relation to straight participants and the image presented of the LGBT community. For instance, Dean in Atlanta described his embarrassment at the city's 1998 parade when, after working with his church to set up a water station along the parade route, they watched as a “condom man” was followed by a truck playing a song with the lyric, “I want to fuck you like an animal.”

DEAN: [I watched as they were] going by my church with middle aged and older volunteers, some straight volunteers here with whom the LGBTQ community was trying to build the bridges and here I was facing this social embarrassment from one community of which I am a part in the face of another community in which I am a part and I felt a lot of role conflict.

While Dean may have been uncomfortable with the condom man and sexual lyrics, he identified it as part of his community. His main concern was with the perceptions of those in his church community who may be put off by those elements. According to Ted, a gay man in San Diego, toning down the sexual side of gay culture signals an invitation to straight supports:

TED: I think it’s more of a community event now. It’s not just for gays and I kind of glad that this year, believe it or not, and maybe it’s because I’m older now becoming a little more of a prude, it wasn’t so sexual. The first parades I used to go to were real real sexual, a lot of men gyrating and stuff like that, but this year you didn’t see a whole lot of that, it was more toned down. And I feel like if you tone it down, it’s more accessible to more people and it was like opening arms to everyone...
Pride was a little less risque this year. If it is that way, I think it does make it more accessible to everyone. People aren’t afraid to bring their children, bring their grandmother- I saw a grandmother there, you know, so it’s like, its more inclusive I think now.

To participants like Dean and Ted, displays of gay sexuality construct a boundary between LGBT and straight people that signals to straight supporters that they are not welcome at Pride.

Others countered that these displays are important both as an external cultural challenge and an internal signal of acceptance for all types of personal expressions. Particularly in a macro-level culture that proscribes gay sexuality, these displays are powerful signs of the unique environment enacted at Pride events. Cameron, a gay participant in San Diego, summed up the dilemma over sexual displays:

CAMERON: I think that what really has to happen is that instead of regulating, you know the LGBT community needs to find itself, you know, exactly what its boundaries are and decide whether or not the Pride celebration is specially for the LGBT community or for the community as a whole.

As Cameron articulated, however externally and internally useful they may be, displays of gay sexuality mark a boundary between LGBT and straight people and signal that Pride is only “for” the LGBT community.

As discussed earlier, explicit sexual displays can hurt the public image of LGBT people and thus make it more challenging to change individual cultural attitudes through educational visibility. These displays can also hamper efforts to weaken the boundary between LGBT and straight people at Pride. Sexual displays also reveal a conflict in how to build community. Some feel that it is important that Pride parades foster a supportive environment in which all feel free to express themselves as they wish and that this
environment is essential to building community. However, if free expression includes explicit sexual displays, it may reinforce a boundary between LGBT and straight people that marks straight people as outside the community that is built at Pride.

Descriptions of an LGBT/straight boundary were more common by those at large parades and those in gay-friendly cultural climates. However, separating the data by individual parade reveals that the variation may be particular to each parade rather than a result of size or cultural climate. Participants from Burlington and New York City, mentioned this boundary at higher rates, while no participants mentioned it from Salt Lake City. Half of participants from the remaining parades talked about the LGBT/straight boundary. I did not observe nor detect from interviews a solid reason why this is the case. Given the number of ways this boundary is constructed, the finding is difficult to interpret. Mentions did not vary by respondents' sexual identity, indicating that the boundary was noticed by LGBT and straight participants alike.

Like physical interaction and shared emotional experiences, the boundary between LGBT and straight people reinforced at Pride parades helps to establish LGBT collective identity. I found that Pride parades establish this boundary through implicit meaning and explicit displays. Since they are structurally, demographically, and culturally isolated from one another, LGBT people have few means to create a positive boundary between them and the straight majority. The main boundary is maintained through a negative cultural code against LGBT people, defining them by deviance. Pride parades were a venue for the LGBT community to assert its distinctiveness by using symbols with implicit meanings for LGBT people, by commemorating shared history of Stonewall, and even through explicit displays of gay sexuality.
The second boundary that I found, mentioned by 36% of respondents, was between heterosexuals that support LGBT people and those who do not. The clearest way this boundary was constructed at Pride was through the contrast and often physical separation of Pride participants and protesters. Protesters represented the most extreme part of the hostile cultural climate. They wore shirts, held signs, and yelled to condemn homosexuality. In most places where protesters were present police officers enforced a physical barrier between protesters and participants, protecting the civil right of each group to publicly voice their opinions. Interactions between the groups at two parades illustrate boundary work. In the previous chapter I related two stories of direct contention between participants and protesters. In Salt Lake City three protesters holding large signs condemning homosexuality as a sin were encircled by police officers and a changing crowd of participants engaged in contentious debates with them about the validity of LGBT people's existence. In Atlanta, marchers and spectators cheered to drown out the condemnations of a religiously based group with loudspeakers.

Interactions with protesters were visible, overt displays of the difference between LGBT-supportive and -unsupportive straight people. Other displays by participants showed this by referencing an other with an anti-LGBT view. Religious groups held signs declaring their view that LGBT people are accepted and valued by God, which implicitly references a prominent belief that they are not. In Atlanta, one woman marched with a Baptist group holding a sign saying “I'm baptist, I'm Southern, but I'm

3 While in the previous chapter I described how protesters highlighted the cultural contestation at Pride parades, in this section I focus instead on the way their presence made visible a boundary between LGBT-supportive and -unsupportive people.
not Southern Baptist”, in reference to that denomination's anti-LGBT views. In Salt Lake City, I observed a similar statement against the position of the Mormon church as a number of participants wore shirts saying “I'm straight, I'm Mormon, I support equal rights”. Like the woman with the Baptist church, those wearing these shirts enforced a boundary between themselves and their coreligionists who do not support LGBT people.

For many participants (both LGBT and straight), heterosexuals marked themselves as supportive simply by attending Pride. Jonathon, a gay man and drag queen from Atlanta, described Pride as “a united front for the [LGBT] community but also a united front against hate and bigotry”. Thus Jonathon described a boundary between straight and LGBT at Pride but also a boundary between being supportive and not. In this sense Pride can be seen as an invitation to straight people to join in as allies to the LGBT community. Beyond building collective identity among those who are LGBT, Pride adds a fifth group of straight allies. Mentions of this boundary did not vary by size of parade, cultural climate, or sexual identity.

While the first boundary enforced at Pride excluded straight allies from LGBT community, the second invited them in. I delineate three ways that straight people managed these two boundaries and participated in Pride. First, straight people can “go native” and participate as if they were LGBT. A few LGBT respondents described bringing relatives who participated in this way: Sarita in Burlington said her brother who is “a really straight guy” loved attending Pride because he “got to wear a dress”; in San Diego, Jonah's “older heterosexual” father rode his motorcycle with a gay men's biker group. Straight participants such as these add themselves to the LGBT community for the day regardless of their personal sexual orientation. Second, straight people may
participate as allies, inhabiting a cultural space close but not identical to that of LGBT people – like the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, supporting the main group from a short distance. These allies march with their churches, sports teams, and political advocacy groups or hold signs from the sidelines proclaiming their support as straight allies. Third, straight participants may watch the parade as supportive outsiders. I talked to a few participants with this perspective, who understood the parade as belonging to the LGBT community and themselves as outsiders, but welcomed the opportunity to show support, learn about, and be entertained by this community.

This second boundary, between straight people who are LGBT-supportive and those who are not, is interesting to the parade aspect of Pride. In a traditional political protest, one is either part of it or not – one marches or stays home. At a parade, one may participate at various levels (Armstrong & Crage 2006). In addition to participation through one's role as organizer, marcher, or spectator, I found that straight people may participate as part of the LGBT community, as allies, or as supportive outsiders. With all levels, straight participants create a boundary between themselves and unsupportive straight people represented by protesters who condemn homosexuality. Pride parades create a physical and emotional space for LGBT community that is lacking in dominant heteronormative culture. By having this intermediate status as ally or supporter, Pride parades invite those outside the LGBT community inside their cultural space for the day. However, they may also reinforce that community membership is limited when they reinforce the boundary between LGBT and straight participants.

The third type of boundary participants talked about was between gays/bisexuals and transgender or gender variant people. This boundary was mentioned by a small
number, eight participants, but was significant particularly as I noted some exclusion of transgender people when discussing the diversity of Pride attendants. There was no variation by parade size or cultural climate, but all eight mentions were by LGBT participants. This was an issue that straight participants did not seem to notice. Participants said that their parades were dominated by gender-normative gay men and lesbians whose interests are not necessarily in line with those who break gender norms by presenting and/or identifying outside their biological sex. For instance, participants pointed to the political expediency of excluding transgender people from legislation protecting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals from employment discrimination based on their sexual orientation. The more inclusive form of legislation specifies both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression as protected classes. As Monique, a transgender woman from New York, put it:

MONIQUE: I mean, I'm not saying they [lesbians, gays, and bisexuals] are in any less struggle than we are, they are definitely in a struggle for rights too, but they have progressed much farther than trans people. So were still trying to get the basic rights that gay people have already been afforded and they also have gotten federal protection as where we are you know, still in the political arena.

For Monique and others, compromises in the political arena translate at Pride to a focus on political and cultural equality for sexual but not gender variance. That is, while Pride may challenge macro-level construction of homosexuality as deviance, it does not challenge the connection between gender variance and deviance.

A few participants felt that it was culturally expedient to downplay the connection between gender transgression and sexual orientation. Howard, a participant and former organizer of Fargo's Pride event, explained his view of Pride as a representation of the LGBT community:
HOWARD: My personal prejudice is I would rather it not be a representation of who we are because there are a lot of different groups within the gay community that are stereotypical and are attacked by the straight community as in this is why they're deviant. And, you know, that might be somebody who is transgender, or a cross dresser, or it might be somebody who enjoys leather. We don't have that type of representation in the parade, but we do have a transgender group here, but I don't think that's the purpose of the parade.

As Howard pointed out, those in the mainstream, dominant culture may react more negatively against people who are transgender than those who are gender-normative and gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Like the reaction against sexual displays, Howard feared that negative reactions towards transgender people may hurt the image of LGBT people. They may also, like he did, erroneously equate gender transgression with leather as an affinity group. According to Dee Ann, a transgender woman from Fargo, many in the gay and straight communities alike simply do not understand how sexuality and gender identity often go together:

INTERVIEWER: So what do you say to people who say transgender is more radical than people are ready to deal with, let's just focus on gay and lesbian for now.
DEE ANN: That's kind of difficult to do because it's such an intertwined part of everything. What you say to a young boy that's experiencing the oppression that he's a girl, or a young girl that's a tomboy. Are we supposed to tell them, which I believe doctors and a bunch of others right now are doing [unclear] the homosexual by calling them trans. That's a misnomer, that's wrong. We need to discover what, why it's there, the whole ideology, the whole package. Once we understand it a little more than we can see how it's such an integral - a trans man and a trans woman, together, are they a legitimate couple any more than two straight, a heterosexual couple? What difference does all of the, who cares what kind of panties I wear?

Gender transgression is an issue of one's gender identity and expression for which many undergo extensive medical and surgical alteration, while leather is a personal preference and even identity that does not entail significant or permanent alteration.
As Dee Ann described, there is a lot of overlap between non-normative sexuality and non-normative gender expression or identity. Likewise, opposition to both have the same roots in heteronormativity, which requires conformity to rules of masculinity/femininity and sexuality. Dee Ann envisioned Pride as a space to educate those particularly in the gay community about gender identity and she did this through floats and informational displays. Others thought the boundary between LGB and transgender people was too great to be addressed at Pride so that the events only reinforced the boundary existing outside of Pride. From all sides I conclude that Pride is a place in which this boundary is made clear and considered, if not resolved. Like Cameron said about the sexualized displays that reinforce the boundary between gay and straight, those involved in Pride need to decide who the parade is for – whether and how the “T” fits in with the “LGB”. I would add that Pride is a place for this boundary work.

While it is standard practice to include “T” with the initialism “LGBT” my findings show that not all Pride parades fully include those who are transgender or who otherwise break gender norms. Interestingly, none of my respondents who attended parades in Atlanta or San Diego mentioned a boundary between gays/bisexuals and transgender people. From my analysis of crowd photographs, these parades also had the highest percentages of people with non-normative gender presentations. This suggests that these parades may not foster the boundary that I detected at other parades. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have long struggled with whether and how to include non-normative gender expressions and identities in their community. Unfortunately I found that some Pride parades exacerbate the division rather than minimize it.

Social movement literature specifies three ways that mass demonstrations foster
collective identity among participants: by bringing people physically together, creating shared emotional experiences, and enforcing boundaries between in-group participants and outsiders. LGBT people have structural, demographic, and cultural barriers to forming collective identity and Pride parades provide a venue to develop it. Pride parades draw large numbers of diverse LGBT people together where they interact one-on-one and as a group. While together they share heightened emotions by feeling community, cultivating a loving and supportive atmosphere, and experiencing personal pride in one's identity. Pride is also a place for establishing bonds between LGBT and straight and supportive and unsupportive straight people. As parades rather than traditional protest marches, Pride events are able to draw a greater number of people, foster more positive emotions, and invite straight people to participate as allies.

On the down side, community building was harmed as not all LGBT people and expressions were welcomed at Pride. A few participants criticized their Pride events for not reaching out to the transgender community. While not mentioned, I noticed that self-identified bisexuals not visible at Pride parades either. Some also felt that organizers and fellow participants at their parades discourage explicit displays of gay sexuality and gender variance, privileging a less threatening image of LGBT community to mainstream society and a welcome to straight participants over support for those who preferred displays further from the mainstream norm.

Throughout this analysis I have made connections between these internal functions of Pride and the external functions discussed in the previous chapter. In the following section, I further explore the influence of the public nature of Pride parades on internal community building/collective identity.
Connection with External Aspects

As I emphasized in the previous chapter, Pride parades are public events. Unlike their festival counterparts, parades are staged on public streets which are free and open to all. Their public nature means that Pride parades carry externally directed messages along with their internal community building work. In this section I analyze the role of the public nature of Pride for this internal work by showing the connections between its external messages of visibility, celebration, and support.

In the last chapter I detailed the ways in which Pride parades challenge the macro-level construction of queerness as deviance. With queer sexuality and gender marked as deviant, heterosexuality is the norm and one's gender identity and expression should match one's physical sex. LGBT individuals break social norms and are sanctioned through social exclusion, discrimination, and even violence. Pride parades collectively challenge macro-level construction by making LGBT people visible, showing public support for them, and celebrating their community. With the exception of one form of visibility, educational, the themes of visibility, support, and celebration challenge culture through a top down approach, aiming at the macro-level construction of queerness rather than individual attitudes about LGBT people.

The cultural stigma against LGBT stigma inhibits their developing a collective identity as individual LGBT people must “come out” and face negative social sanctions when they do. Added to this cultural challenge, LGBT people are isolated from one another demographically because they are spread throughout the population and have only a few weak enclaves in major cities. Structurally, LGBT people grow up in predominantly straight families so that socialization as LGBT must begin later in life.
Just as Pride parades externally challenge the cultural construction of LGBT people as an illegitimate, deviant social group, they also address internal barriers to forming collective identity by bringing LGBT people together physically and emotionally and by enforcing boundaries to define the community.

The internal and external aspects of Pride parades are intimately connected. In a negative sense, the external goal of publicly challenging the negative cultural code regarding LGBT people conflicts with the internal goal of building community by giving cause to exclude those who transgress gender norms and who put on overt sexual displays. This presented more of a conflict with a bottom up approach to cultural change through individual attitudes. With this approach it is important to avoid displays that may hurt the image of LGBT people and inhibit favorable attitude change. With a top down approach, the goal is to change the construction of queerness and individual attitudes about LGBT people are less important. In a positive sense, the same mechanisms that challenge macro-level culture also build (albeit partially restricted) community among LGBT people and allies. The common thread is the role of the public nature of Pride parades.

The most consistent theme in regards to both the internal and external aspects of Prides parades is visibility. Pride parades make LGBT people and their allies visible both to each other and to the larger public. The challenge of visibility in both respects is demographic and cultural. By bringing together large numbers of LGBT people and allies in a public space, Pride parades show the size of the community and claim cultural legitimacy. Internally, they make LGBT people visible to one another. At Pride, participants have the rare opportunity to interact with fellow LGBT people from diverse
backgrounds. Pride is a place where LGBT people can get together despite demographic, structural, and cultural challenges. Moreover, the external and internal aspects of visibility reinforce one another: participants build unity by gathering together, which then allows them to present a united front to the outside world. On the downside, boundary work that excludes transgender people leads to an external cultural challenge of the macro-level construction of homosexuality but not gender transgression. This limited challenge then inhibits unity of LGB and transgender people as some feel it is culturally expedient to exclude transgender individuals from the public face of the community.

A second feature of Pride parades is support. Like visibility, Pride participants' show of public support for LGBT people is an externally directed cultural challenge with internal effects. Participants remarked on the loving and supportive atmosphere at Pride, which shows that support was also internally directed at fellow participants. By attending, Pride participants contributed to its atmosphere of acceptance for non-normative sexuality (and maybe gender) while as a public event this support contested a cultural code that treats this sexuality with disdain. Moreover, by showing public support, straight participants put themselves on the side of LGBT people and constructed a boundary between them and those who are unsupportive. With groups like PFLAG, the simultaneous external and internal support is clear – parents holding signs that say “I support my gay son” challenged the idea that homosexuality is a source of shame and runs counter to “family values” while at the same time these parents showed their own children and other LGBT people that they really do love and support them for who they are by declaring it publicly. Unfortunately this support had its limits for participants with more sexualized or gender variant displays. Some felt that these participants were less
supported internally because of concerns for the public image of the LGBT community at Pride. Thus, the public nature of Pride parades makes shows of support externally and internally meaningful for some, but for others is a source of tension.

Celebration is the third feature through which Pride parades challenge macro-level construction of queerness as deviance. Participants turn the tables on the dominant cultural code that prescribes shame by instead publicly celebrating LGBT identity. This macro-level challenge is also a meso-level affirmation that participants said strengthened their pride in personal identities. Personal pride addresses the cultural barrier to collective identity by removing shame as a reason to hide one's sexuality. Celebration also brings LGBT people and their allies together as they share positive emotions. Moreover, by celebrating together at a public event, participants constructed multiple boundaries between themselves and those who do not celebrate and between participants through the ways they expressed themselves as they celebrated. LGBT participants distinguished themselves from straight participants as they claimed the event as their own by celebrating their history and at times presenting sexual displays that marked straight participants as outsiders. Straight participants marked a boundary between them and their unsupportive straight counterparts who do not attend Pride by showing up and joining in the celebration of LGBT identity. Finally, at some parades lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants marked a boundary between them and transgender/gender variant participants by suppressing transgressive gender displays and claiming gay sexuality as the main issue of the parade over queer gender identity and expression. While this may serve to clarify and strengthen the collective identity of gays and lesbians, it excludes transgender and gender variant people from this group.
Differences by parade- and participant-level variables

Parades in my study varied by size, measured by the number of marchers and spectators in attendance, and cultural climate, measured by the LGBT people's legal and cultural status in parade's home states. The most relevant variation among participants is by their sexual identification as LGBT or straight. Throughout this chapter and the last, I have analyzed participants' responses according to these parade- and participant-level variables. Table 6.3 summarizes those themes for which variation is statistically significant5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parade Size</th>
<th>Cultural Climate</th>
<th>Personal Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small/Medium</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Non Gay-Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Diversity (physical)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loving/Supportive (emotional)</td>
<td><strong>78%</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT/straight boundary°</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB/T boundary</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square test p<0.05
° Results are skewed by higher percentages in two parades: Burlington and NYC

Analysis of external theme variation resulted in a parsimonious explanation. Since the external themes were claims made to dominant culture, as this culture varied so

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5 Internal themes were categorized as physical, emotional, and relating to boundaries. These categories are features of building collective identity and relevant variation occurs within each category.
did themes. Thus, Pride as a statement of public support was more prevalent when the cultural climate was not gay-friendly and Pride as a celebration of LGBT identity was common when it was. Visibility varied instead by participants’ personal identity as this theme was more salient for LGBT than straight participants. This makes sense as LGBT people are personally affected by the invisibility of this community in mainstream society. Parade size did not affect participants’ views of Pride's external themes.

Parade size, cultural climate, and personal identity were all factors in the variation of internal theme. Explanation of each is specific its meaning and thus cannot be summarized more generally. Parade size affected participants' perceptions of physical diversity and emotionally supportive environment Pride fostered. Those at large parades mentioned greater diversity of participants by ascribed characteristics such as race/ethnicity and by personal expression and affinity. My analysis of crowd photographs supported this correlation, as larger parades drew more non-white participants and more had non-normative gender presentations. I theorized that since large parades were located in more populated areas, they had more diverse populations from which to draw. Though the had less diversity, according to participants small and medium size parades were more likely to foster a loving and supportive atmosphere. I explained this finding by the more intimate environment created by having fewer people.

Mentions of boundary work were affected by cultural climate and participants' sexual identity. Those in gay-friendly environments commented on the boundary created between LGBT and straight participants more than their counterparts in non gay-friendly climates. Since explicit sexual displays were one way this boundary was enforced, I theorized that those in regions with more acceptance for LGBT people felt freer to put on
sexual displays than where there was less acceptance. Finally, only LGBT participants mentioned the construction of a boundary between LGB and transgender people. With straight participants partially excluded from LGBT community by a separate boundary, it is understandable that they would be less aware of boundary work within this community.

**Conclusion**

Pride parades create community by drawing people together physically and emotionally and by drawing boundaries between groups that participate and between participants and non-participants. The thing that connects the internal community building function of Pride with the external cultural contestation is the fact that parades happen in public. Internally, being in public means that parades are widely accessible and thus able to physically draw people together better than if they were enclosed festivals. Their public nature also heightens the emotional aspect because it is a contrast to LGBT people's daily lives – no other place than at Pride parades are LGBT people together in such numbers, which produces intense feelings of community, mutual support, pride in self, and collective effervescence. Also because they are in public, Pride parades are displays for all to see. They are held on major city streets, blocking off traffic and flooding the streets with rainbow flags. They are covered in the mass media and occasionally spark controversy. Their public nature allows Pride parades to contest macro-level culture. In some instances the internal and external goals of Pride conflicted with each other, but this conflict was mitigated by the top down approach to cultural change in which Pride contested macro-level construction of queerness rather than individual attitudes.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

This dissertation has been an exploration of the Pride parade phenomenon in order to consider the role of culture in the study of social movements. The majority of research on identity-based social movements addresses campaigns for legal/political equality and thus tactics that target the state. In contrast, Pride is a thoroughly cultural protest tactic that targets macro-level culture in order to achieve greater equality for LGBT people. Rather than seeking legal/political equality as a means to bring about cultural equality, Pride events bypass the state and contest the cultural construction of queerness as deviance that underpins LGBT inequality. While externally contesting culture, participants internally build community as they interact, share emotions, and define boundaries. Integrating cultural sociology and social movement theory, I understand these events as explicit cultural tools used by a marginalized meso-level social group to challenge implicit macro-level culture. This dissertation thus defines cultural protest tactics, develops a theoretical framework for their study, and suggests many avenues for future research to incorporate cultural protest with existing social movement literature.

Definition of Cultural Protest Tactics

Pride parades are a cultural protest tactic in the sense that they operate within the cultural arena, using cultural strategies to target cultural targets. In the introductory chapter, I delineated three ideal types of social equality: structural, cultural and
legal/political. Each type operates in a different arena with its own goals for action and rules for fair play. Social movements strategically act by devising tactics to target those that hold power in a given arena. Structural equality, for example, operates in the economic arena so labor activists hold strikes and boycotts to apply economic pressure for reform on corporate owners. Pride parades operate within the cultural arena by contesting the macro-level implicit construction of queerness as deviance using meso-level cultural displays of LGBT visibility, support, and celebration.

The cultural arena defines the field of play. Within this arena Pride parades involve culture in three ways. First, macro-level culture is the target of this collective action. The goal of Pride parades is to change the macro-level cultural construction of queerness, not to change laws or policies of the state. Second, Pride parades strategically use culture to make externally directed claims. These events are explicit cultural tools used by LGBT people and their allies. Third, Pride parades foster internally directed meso-level culture among LGBT people and their allies. In the course of external strategic action, LGBT and straight ally participants develop collective identity. The combination of these three cultural elements make Pride parades a thoroughly cultural protest tactic.

Pride parades strategically use culture to fight culture in many ways. While I describe traditional (political) mass demonstration itself as an explicit cultural tool to communicate political power, Pride events mix this form with that of parades. Participants described parades as celebrations to honor social groups or commemorate historical events. When applied to LGBT community and history they communicate that this group is worthy of cultural legitimacy and respect. Within each parade participants
communicated LGBT visibility through the use of rainbow flags, beads, and emblems. They showed public support with slogans on signs and t-shirts that referenced religious and cultural beliefs in equality and love for all. And they celebrated LGBT identity by playing songs associated with the LGBT community, displaying affection for one another, and promoting a general atmosphere of festivity.

In addition to the external cultural message, Pride parades also facilitate the development of internal LGBT culture in the form of collective identity. In each city Pride was the largest and most diverse gathering of LGBT people and allies all year. By bringing people together physically and emotionally and by drawing boundaries between groups that participate and between participants and non-participants, participants defined LGBT and straight ally identity. The downside, however, is that to some extent transgender people, bisexuals, and straight allies were not fully included in the community created at Pride.

Pride parades have always been a cultural protest tactic. Activists in 1970 were inspired by the disruptive tactics of the movements in 1960s/70s protest cycle when they marched for their identities as gays and lesbians in the first Pride events in New York City and Los Angeles. These events were staged to carry on the defiant stance of those who rioted against a police raid of a gay bar in New York City the previous year. Though the proximate cause of the Stonewall riots was police harassment, gay and lesbian community leaders interpreted the riots as a broader statement against an oppressive macro-level culture. In 1970, Pride marchers mixed celebratory parade elements with a political protest march to publicly declare and celebrate their gay identity. Their march did not target the state nor did it carry explicit political demands. Instead, marchers
declared and celebrated gay identity in order to challenge the cultural constraints against it.

This cultural protest tactic stands in contrast to the state-directed political protest that is the subject of much social movement research. These tactics seek legal/political equality either for its own sake or as a means to achieve structural or cultural equality. Operating within the legal/political arena, political protests aim to demonstrate political power through the disruption of everyday activity and/or the spectacle of mass numbers of committed activists. Social movement scholars have mostly considered the ways activists use culture internally to mobilize constituents (via collective identity) and externally to persuade new followers (via collective action framing). That is, culture is treated as a way to drum up political support for a cause, not as the site of collective action.

**Theoretical Framework to Study Cultural Protest Tactics**

I have integrated cultural sociology with social movement literature to develop a framework with which I studied LGBT Pride parades. This theoretical framework may guide research on other cultural protest tactics. First, I delineate three levels of culture in the world: micro-level culture that is shared by small groups of individuals who know one another; meso-level culture among subgroups in a society, and macro-level culture that is shared by all members of a given society. I describe the struggle for cultural equality as one between a meso-level subcultural group and the macro-level culture that marginalizes it as illegitimate, inferior, or a combination of the two. By incorporating this language of cultural sociology, I take contentious action out of the political arena with which much social movement research is concerned and place it in the cultural
arena. I then understand activists’ contentious actions as contests over cultural meanings rather than struggles for political power.

Second, I incorporate social movement theory and research to describe the cultural arena in which contentious action takes place. I explore three questions that address the source of inequality, its qualitative nature, and the meso-level cultural resources that a marginalized group has to fight combat inequality. The contentious politics, multi-institutional politics, and new social movements approaches emphasize the relationship between the distribution of power in society and the targets of social movement action. Stemming from these approaches my first question is the source of power that underpins a marginalized group's inequality. Stated in another way, to what extent does the state control the structural, cultural, and legal/political equality of a given social group and what other institutions or cultural forces influence these types of equality? For the LGBT community, I argue that state power has served to undermine rather reinforce LGBT group status. Additionally, with a shorter history of state attention (either positive or negative) to LGBT people, I look beyond the political arena to culture as a site of conflict for LGBT equality. Research on tactics directed at cultural targets demonstrates the importance of specifying the nature of a group’s cultural inequality in order to understand their use of symbolic meanings to challenge inequality. I described LGBT cultural inequality as centered on the pursuit of legitimacy as a minority group over illegitimate deviant status. Finally, drawing from research on the importance of internal movement culture, specifically collective identity among participants, I examine the ability of the group to develop meso-level collective identity which can serve as a resource to collectively challenge inequality. I identified three types of barriers –
structural, demographic, and cultural - to establishing collective identity in the LGBT community.

Third, I distinguish between implicit and explicit culture and specify the uses of each in contentious collective action. Implicit culture consists of symbolic meanings, norms, values, and attitudes that cannot be directly measured. Explicit culture is directly observable and measurable products such as writings, works of art, and music (Wuthnow & Witten 1988). In a social movement context, activists use explicit cultural tools such as collective actions frames to influence implicit culture in the form of individual attitudes or macro-level codes. Specific movement tactics can then be analyzed as explicit cultural tools used to contest implicit cultural meanings. In my analysis of Pride parades, these cultural tools communicate visibility, support, and celebration of LGBT identity which contests the macro-level cultural construction of queerness as deviance. The external function to contest and possibly change macro-level implicit culture also has the internal function to minimize barriers to building meso-level implicit culture in the form of LGBT collective identity.

Fourth and finally, I specify two models through which social movements may work to change culture. Most research on culture in social movements addresses change through a bottom up model in which activists seek to change the public's individual cultural attitudes so that they join movement organizations, pressure politicians, or vote in a way favorable to a movement's cause. With this model individual attitudes affect their behavior, which eventually leads change in macro-level codes, norms, and meanings (Swidler 1995). Top down cultural change is a second model (Swidler 1995). Through this model activists target macro-level cultural codes, norms, or meanings in order to
change the behaviors and eventually the attitudes that are acceptable in society. For LGBT Pride parades I found that, with one exception, the meanings of defiant visibility, public support, and celebration were directed at the macro-level construction of queerness as deviance rather than individual attitudes and thus operated through the top down model of cultural change. The one exception, educational visibility, targeted individual attitude change through the (intended) presentation of LGBT people as diverse, upstanding citizens deserving of equal rights and respect.

By applying these models to understand the pathways Pride parades sought for cultural change, I could also analyze the tradeoffs between external and internal functions of these events. There were fewer external/internal tradeoffs for those themes that operated through top down change and their internal functions than for the theme that operated through the bottom up model. The reason is that the message of educational visibility, through bottom up cultural change, was vulnerable to the perceptions of mainstream members of the public. Participants acknowledged that while some individual actions at Pride, such as sexual displays, contribute to the events’ internal shared emotional experience, the public may find these actions objectionable which would then hurt Pride's external message. Themes that operated through the top down model did not depend on individual interpretation and were thus less vulnerable to potentially objectionable participant displays.

The theoretical framework that I developed to study LGBT Pride parades can be applied to other cultural protest tactics. Its strength is to fully integrate understandings of how culture works from cultural sociology with social movement theory and research on contentious collective action. Neither field has addressed concerted, coordinated efforts
to change culture; cultural sociologists have studied how culture changes mainly as a natural consequence of social structural change, while social movement scholars have focused on collective action in the political arena. By integrating theory and research from both fields I have illustrated a framework with which to study protest tactics in the cultural arena.

**Avenues for Further Study**

Cultural protest tactics like Pride parades deserve further study by scholars of social movements. As the field increasingly considers the role of culture in social movement activity, it should examine the dynamics of movements in which culture is the site of contention. Pride parades are the cultural side of the LGBT social movement. On the political side, activists campaign for legal/political equality by pressing the state for non-discrimination laws and relationship recognition. On the cultural side, through Pride parades, activists seek cultural equality by challenging macro-level culture for recognition of the LGBT community as a legitimate minority group.

The majority of research on identity-based social movements has focused on their political sides. These are campaigns that operate in the political arena with tactics that make claims on the state for change. As the grantor of legal/political equality, the state holds total power in this arena and thus movements who sole purpose is to achieve this type of equality focus their activity within the political arena. But identity-based movements seek legal/political equality as a means to ultimately achieve cultural equality, a strategy labeled the politics of recognition (Fraser 1995; 2000). The state has only limited power in the cultural arena. It may protect citizens against overt actions of cultural inequality, such as employment discrimination, but it has no control over implicit
individual cultural attitudes or macro-level cultural codes. This leaves a host of potential cultural movement activity outside the political arena. Particularly when cultural equality is an ultimate goal, as it is with identity-based movements, scholars need to pay attention to collective action staged outside the political arena.

In this dissertation I have demonstrated the ways Pride parades operates as the cultural side of the LGBT movement. Other movements may also have cultural sides that are overlooked in scholarly literature. For instance, feminists have staged cultural protests in pursuit of cultural equality alongside campaigns for legal/political change. Two of these are Take Back the Night marches and SlutWalks. Groups mainly on college campuses have held the former events for thirty years mainly to protest widespread sexual assault against women (TBTN Foundation n.d.). At these events participants rally or march in an attempt to “take back the night” from perpetrators of sexual assault and transform it into a safe space for women where they need not fear the threat of sexual assault. The latter, SlutWalks, are a newer phenomenon in which marchers contest the cultural victim-blaming of women who have been sexually assaulted. Since 2011 activists in major cities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia have marched, some in what may be considered provocative clothing, to challenge the cultural notion that a woman may invite sexual assault through her clothing or actions (Stampler 2011). These are just two events that may be described as cultural protest tactics but have not yet been studied as part of the women’s movement. Other events include ethnic parades celebrating meso-level minority group cultures. Researchers may explore whether and to what extent these parades contest macro-level cultural constructions of minority groups in order to achieve greater cultural equality.
Beyond the call for more general attention to cultural protest tactics, my study raises several questions for future research regarding the connections between the cultural and political sides to social movements. One avenue of research is the crossover between participation in cultural protest and political activism. I argued that with their parade form Pride events draw wide diversity of people who can participate in various capacities – as organizers, volunteers, sponsors, marchers, or spectators. As fun and entertaining events that are open to the public, Pride parades attract many more people than do traditional political protests. Once present, participants bond with one another and build collective identity through physical interaction, shared emotions, and definition of boundaries. This collective identity may serve for future cultural or political activism. Taylor, et al. (2009) found that many individuals who participated in cultural protest in 2004 by staging same-sex wedding in San Francisco were motivated by the experience to give money and participate in political demonstrations for marriage equality. Cultural protest tactics, therefore, may mobilize previously disengaged individuals for both cultural and political activism. Future research may specify under what conditions and through what forms of participation individuals are mobilized for further action.

On a second, related avenue, research may examine organizational overlap and coordination between those that plan cultural protests and organizers of political protests. Political LGBT rights organizations such as the nationally prominent Human Rights Campaign and state groups such as Equality California and Equality Utah marched as contingents in each Pride parade and circulated petitions and information about LGBT rights legislation at festivals held after each parade. Political advocacy organizations that work on causes of interest to many LGBT people, such as Planned Parenthood and local
Democratic Party groups, also marched and staffed booths and Pride parades and festivals. Research may consider the ways that these organizations working on the political side of social movements use Pride parades to recruit and mobilize activists. Moreover, Joseph (2010) found that Pride organizers varied in the extent to which they promoted Pride as a political event to achieve legal/political equality. My research does not consider the experiences of those who organize Pride events, so future research may also consider the extent of their network ties with political activists.

A third avenue of research may explore the extent to which various movements engage in cultural protest and their strategic choices between cultural and political protest. In their analysis of 4,654 protest events staged between 1968 and 1975, Van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor (2004) found that gay and lesbian protests were most likely to target the public and African-American civil rights protests to target educational institutions. These results point to differing levels of interest in state-targeted political protest. Further research could match the targets and types of protest with marginalized groups’ social histories. I argue that state power plays a different role underpinning LGBT inequality than for other groups and I tie this to the recent historical emergence of LGBT people as a social group. With a short cultural history, U.S. laws are nearly devoid of reference to LGBT people. This means that the path to cultural equality for LGBT people may not run through the state. Pride parades are one tactic through which LGBT advocates push directly for cultural equality. Research on other movements, such as those for women and racial/ethnic minority groups, may follow this model by looking to the history and current cultural and political of marginalized groups to explain the extent of their cultural and political protest. Moreover, research may consider activists’ strategic
choices for types of protest.

A fourth avenue of research is the effectiveness of cultural protest tactics. One limitation of my study is that I did not measure whether Pride parades do in fact change individual cultural attitudes or macro-level cultural codes. While I show variation in the emphasis of public support and celebration according to regional cultural climate, I can only suggest that these themes are most effective for each cultural climate. Research may incorporate variation in cultural protest events to understand what messages are most effective. Research may also test the relative effectiveness of cultural and political protest tactics to understand the role of each in bringing about greater social equality.

My discussion of cultural protest tactics has focused on their use in identity-based movements. Scholars of non identity-based movements may also examine the ways that collective action in the political and economic arenas also engages the cultural arena. In addition to economic equality, for example, cultural recognition and respect is an important part of the labor movement's struggle for social equality. As illustrated most recently in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana, political debates over unions' collective bargaining rights frequently engaged cultural questions about the social value of teachers and other public sector union workers. Research may examine the ways in which protests surrounding these political battles also operated within the cultural arena. On the political right, scholars may research the ways Tea Party activism is both cultural and political. For instance, Tea Party activists have staged demonstrations in support of gun rights in which participants proudly display their guns and celebrate their right to use them. In addition to a political statement of the civil right of gun ownership, this is also a cultural statement of the value of guns in society. Researchers may utilize the framework
outlined in this dissertation to better understand the cultural side of all manner of protest.

I opened this dissertation with two scenes from the 2011 Pride season. In New York, a lesbian police officer proposed to her girlfriend two days after Governor Cuomo signed marriage equality for same-sex couples into law. In San Diego, 250 active duty and retired members of the U.S. military marched for the first time as a Pride contingent. Neither of these scenes fit our cultural image of protest, but as I have shown in this dissertation, they were tremendously meaningful challenges to LGBT cultural inequality.
APPENDIX

DESCRIPTIONS OF CHAPTER 2 INTERVIEWEES

All interviewees were active in the gay and lesbian communities of New York and Los Angeles at the time of the first Pride events in 1970. All save one, Tommi Mecca, marched in these first events. Below is a brief description of each person I interviewed for this chapter. All names are real and used by permission except when noted.

Los Angeles

**Pat Rocco.** Male, white. Gay filmmaker and performer in Los Angeles from the early 1960s on. Prominent in gay community with a large social network and strong ties to other community leaders. With Morris Kight, Troy Perry, and Bob Humphries organized the first Pride parade in Los Angeles in 1970. Was later president of planning committee in 1973 and was involved for many years afterward.

**Ruth Weiss (pseudonym).** Female, white. Lesbian feminist activist who lived both in New York and Los Angeles. Moved from New York to Los Angeles in May 1970 and marched in it's Pride parade with the local chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Outspoken about homophobia within the women's liberation group National Organization for Women (NOW) and sexism within male-dominated gay liberation groups. Attended many Pride events in both cities.

**Del Whan.** Female, white. Analysis is based on memoir about experience at first Los Angeles Pride parade. Had similar experiences with NOW as Weiss. Was part of LA Pride planning committee for many years. Also founded gay and lesbian student group at the University of Southern California in 1971.

New York

**Martha Shelley.** Female, white. Helped organize first Pride march in New York in 1970 and gave a speech at the end. Got involved through membership in the lesbian group Daughters of Bilitis. Has been cited in many books and articles about the Stonewall era of gay activism.

**Stephen F. Dansky.** Male, white. Marched in New York Pride through membership in GLF. Had been part of protests for civil rights, women's movement, and the Poor People's movement.
**Roberto Camp.** Male, Mexican-American. Also marched with GLF in New York Pride. Moved back and forth from Berkeley, CA and New York City.


**Paul Guzzardo.** Male, white. Marched in New York Pride. Involved with various gay activist group in late 1960s and 70s. Lived in New York City throughout this time.

**Perry Brass.** Male, white. Present at GLF meeting when Pride was first discussed in early 1970. Marched with this group in New York Pride. Founded the Gay Men's Health Project Clinic, the first clinic for gay men, in New York in 1972. Has written gay poetry and fiction since early 1970s.


**Philadelphia**

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