

VARIETIES OF ACTIVISM: PATHWAYS OF PARTICIPATION
AMONG LGBT RELIGIOUS ACTIVISTS

By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What do an anarchist, a former fundamentalist Christian, and a relatively apolitical and non-religious student have in common? Most conventional explanations of activist group participation, and perhaps human sociality more generally, would suggest very little. These three individuals would be presumed to occupy very different social spheres and to advocate for very different causes – if they were expected to advocate for certain causes at all. But in a fledgling LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) organization at the Catholic University of America, a conservative religious university in Washington, D.C., these individuals represented three of the most passionate individuals banding together to promote LGBT equality at their school.

Neil, the anarchist in this story, was perhaps one of the most predictably political individuals at his university. An atheist, Neil came to Catholic University not because of the school's religious identity but because of his desire to be at the center of political action in the nation's capital. For most of his college career, he spent very little time at the university itself, instead involving himself in an anti-war organization off-campus.

Yet a startling incident on campus made Neil realize that some of the change he needed to work for was on Catholic's campus itself. Walking through the parking lot at his school one night, Neil noticed several people slashing the tires of his car and spray painting the word "faggot" on it. Although he approached school administrators about the incident, he alleges that the leaders were more interested in brushing the hate crime under the rug than in broaching

difficult conversations about sexual identity issues on campus. Thus, his initial desire to become involved in LGBT activism at his school was sparked.

Ashley, a graduate student studying religion, had a very different background than Neil, having come to Catholic University because of its religious identity and her desire to study at one of the most high-profile Catholic theology programs in the United States. Indeed, Ashley had a conservative Catholic upbringing, telling me that she came to identify as a “fundamentalist Christian” when she was 19 and that she remained in that mindset for at least the next eight years. “I think if I had been anything” during those years of her life, she says, “I would have been someone who... would have been writing letters opposing [LGBT] groups at Christian universities.”

Despite her conservative convictions, Ashley slowly became aware of her attraction to other women. Believing that she could not be a gay Christian, and fearing that she would be sent to hell if she entered into a relationship with another woman, she took a number of steps to resist her same-sex orientation, including by enrolling in re-orientation therapy and praying to God to change her. She also had passive suicidal thoughts.

By her mid-20s, Ashley knew something had to change. She began extensively reviewing Church teachings and Scriptures so she could confirm for herself that same-sex relationships were wrong. But this led her to commentaries of Biblical texts and books on church history that gradually convinced her that so many arguments against same-sex relationships were inconsistent – “it was just one argument after another argument that slowly began to fade away and lose its support.” After two or three years of extensive re-investigation, she finally decided for herself that homosexuality was okay, and another year later, she came to accept her own identity as a lesbian.

When she finally came to Catholic University, Ashley decided that she did not want the undergraduates on campus to undergo their own struggles with self-doubt and internal torment – rather, she wanted to affirm the message that one could be gay and Christian. After reading op-eds in the campus newspaper condemning homosexuality, she decided to enter into the campus debate and – despite some reservations as one who had never been involved in activism before – decided to seek out a new outlet to promote LGBT equality on campus.

The final student in this story, Julie, was neither a committed activist nor a regular churchgoer at the time she joined the LGBT group at Catholic. Rather, for most of her college career, she “kept her head down” and applied herself to her studies. Although she would speak out in class if she disagreed with something or otherwise “felt something was off,” she was never heavily involved in social justice groups on campus or LGBT advocacy off-campus.

Even so, as a lesbian at a conservative university, she routinely encountered discrimination and “micro-aggressions” (that is, “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership,” Sue 2010, p. xvi). For example, she described an interaction with a professor, who was also a priest, who told her that she was “going to hell and [she] should just date and marry a man and that [she] would learn to love him.” Thus, she was aware of the need for a “safe space” for students like her on campus, and when other students reached out to her about a new LGBT group they were hoping to start, she happily joined.

While these three individuals hailed from different backgrounds and maintained very different political and religious perspectives – when they held strong political and religious views at all – they nonetheless all joined the unofficial LGBT group on their campus and dedicated themselves to that cause until graduation. They are also broadly representative of their

peers involved in LGBT activism at other Christian universities in the U.S. Like Neil, many participants have well-cultivated activist identities and dedicate themselves to direct action groups throughout much of their lives. But like Ashley and Julie, other participants are relative strangers to activist groups; many join activist causes only after undergoing re-socialization, and they bring about social change by educating their wider communities on LGBT issues or otherwise influencing their families and friends.

These students may not all readily resemble the kinds of individuals usually portrayed in scholarship on activist organizations. Yet, as I will argue in the pages that follow, each of these types of students is actively pursuing social change. While their motivations for joining LGBT groups may differ – with some seeking policy changes, others hoping for campus-wide dialogue, and still others hoping to create a safe space for people like themselves – these individuals are taking on “risk” (McAdam 1986), engaging in collective action in pursuit of their goals, and in many cases succeeding in transforming the policies and cultures of their institutions. In short, these students are all in some sense “activists.”

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THEORY, AND ARGUMENTS

This dissertation is premised on the idea that something important can be learned from the stories of seemingly disparate individuals. Writing in 1959, Mills argued that “no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey” (p. 6). The sociology he championed took seriously the role of social structures in shaping everyday life – structures that have long been perceived as the “stuff” of sociology. Nevertheless, he also advocated linking visible “public

issues” to seemingly “personal troubles,” illuminating how changes in society over time intersect with and help us make sense of changes in individuals’ personal lives.

The many movements for minority-group inclusion over the past few decades – and the unusually rapid evolution in attitudes and rights for sexual minorities over the past few years – have certainly reverberated through the biographies of LGBT youth and young adults, many of whom would not have been able to envision a place for themselves on their school campuses even a few years ago. In this dissertation, I draw on historical evidence about the growing success of LGBT movements and in-depth interviews with 65 student activists across four Christian colleges and universities in the United States (Goshen College, Loyola University Chicago, Belmont University, and the Catholic University of America) to illuminate how and why LGBT and allied students have come to embrace their role as change agents on college campuses and beyond. Specifically, I address the following research questions:

- (1) Why do individuals participate in LGBT activism at Christian colleges and universities?;
- (2) Why do individuals commit to LGBT activism at Christian colleges and universities?; and
- (3) How are individuals impacted by their participation in LGBT activism at Christian colleges and universities?

The dissertation’s central insights are that there is more than one way to engage in “activism,” and these varieties of activism have important implications for understanding pathways to activism, decisions to commit to activism, and biographical consequences of activism. Specifically, I identify three groups of participants in LGBT groups (politicized participants, religious participants, and LGBT participants), pinpoint differences in the LGBT

groups to which they commit (direct action groups, educational groups, and solidarity groups), and show the various ways they embody “activism” in their lives (through continued social movement activity, humanistic careers, and intentional relationships).

The first insight – that there is more than one way to engage in “activism,” which I define simply as the pursuit of social change – is on its own not new. A vast literature in social movement studies, of course, examines activist groups that deploy direct action tactics (such as sit-ins) in an attempt to achieve identifiable political goals, from policy changes to overthrows of governments (e.g., see a discussion of the traditional definition of social movements in Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004). The substantial attention these kinds of activists receive from scholars may be due to the disproportionate amount of disruption they cause and the enormous media attention they receive, because in the broadest conception of “activism,” they may indeed be in the numerical minority. For example, other activist groups seeking to bring about social change may pursue consciousness-raising in their communities and maintain goals that are more “cultural” in nature, from shifts in media representation to changes in intergroup attitudes (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Earl 2004). Furthermore, other activist groups may take most seriously the feminist notion that the “personal is political,” creating safe spaces that are often closed-off from the wider society and that intentionally focus on members’ identity development and knowledge growth (Fetner et al. 2011; Taylor and Whittier 1992). In practice, activist groups take on multiple goals and blend several strategies, but the point is that social change comes about through multiple means and in multiple forms.

While existing literature has shown that there are indeed “varieties of activism,” scholarly literature has not yet fully caught up to the notion that there is more than one way to be an “activist” – that is, an agent of social change. An important exception is Cornfield’s (2015) book

on artist activists in Nashville, which develops a typology of trade union reformers, social entrepreneurs, and enterprising artists who facilitate broader-scale collective changes, interpersonal changes, and personal changes, respectively. However, that book is not primarily concerned with critiquing the literature on activist group participation, which for its part focuses almost exclusively on heavily politicized individuals participating in direct action groups. Scholars generally neglect individuals motivated by a broader set of values (such as religious convictions) or by some positional identity (such as sexual identity) and who participate in activist groups geared toward interpersonal change or personal change. In other words, to return to the opening vignette, scholars assume most activists look a lot like Neil and less like Ashley and Julie.

Neil belongs to a first group of activists whom I call “politicized participants.” In historical-biographical terms, history has flowed most naturally through the biographies of politicized participants – participants like Neil foresaw where society was heading in terms of LGBT inclusion, and history was seemingly catching up with them. Much like the activists studied in the literature on social movement participation, prior to coming to his university, Neil had undergone an extensive process of “socialization” into left-wing political ideologies that embraced the inclusion of minority groups (e.g., Bosi 2012; Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988; Nepstad 2004; Viterna 2006). Prior to joining the LGBT group, Neil had also engaged in other social movements (such as anti-war movements) that helped solidify his own identity as an organizer and social movement activist and that ensured his transition to LGBT activism was relatively smooth (e.g., Bosi 2012; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Klatch 1999; Isaac, Coley, Cornfield, and Dickerson forthcoming; McAdam 1986; Viterna 2006; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991).

Neil, as with most “politicized participants,” thus possessed a number of personal characteristics that made him a prime target for “micro-mobilization” – that is, recruitment into other social movements. First, given his “socialization” into left-wing political ideologies, Neil exhibited “attitudinal affinity” with LGBT movements, or agreement with the values, tactics, and goals of LGBT movements (e.g., Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Cohn et al. 1993; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; Schussman and Soule 2005; though see Munson 2008). Next, especially due to his “prior movement participation,” Neil exhibited “microstructural availability,” or embeddedness in personal (friendship) networks that reaffirmed his attitudes (e.g., Bosi 2012; Dixon and Roscigno 2003; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Nepstad and Smith 1999; Snow et al. 1980; Viterna 2006) and organizational networks that could link him with other social movements (e.g., Bosi 2012; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Schussman and Soule 2005; Viterna 2006). Finally, because he was still quite young and lacked major personal and professional responsibilities outside of school, Neil happened to exhibit “biographical availability,” or a lack of personal constraints (such as a full-time job, a marital partner, or children) that might have detracted from potential social movement participation (e.g., Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; McAdam 1986).

Once “politicized participants” are recruited into a social movement, existing literature on “social movement commitment” presumes that individuals like Neil will commit to that social movement, and thus take on increased responsibilities and devote increased amounts of time, as long as they continue to exhibit characteristics such as “attitudinal affinity,” “microstructural availability,” and “biographical availability” (e.g., Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1993, 1995;

Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman 2003). Furthermore, existing literature presumes that politicized participants will commit to social movements if they do not face certain “meso-level constraints,” such as overly hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational structures that might inhibit their ability to devote large amounts of time and energy to a movement (e.g., Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Dorius and McCarthy 2011; Knoke 1981). In this case, Neil indeed continued to exhibit characteristics such as “attitudinal affinity,” “microstructural availability,” and “biographical availability,” and the LGBT group he joined at Catholic was non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic.

In university-based groups like the LGBT student groups examined here, graduation presents a natural end point for participation in an activist organization. Nevertheless, existing literature on “biographical consequences of social movements” shows that activist groups have enduring consequences on the lives of “politicized participants.” For example, following graduation, Neil pursued “subsequent movement participation,” in his case in a local organization that coordinates social movement campaigns in D.C. Naturally, Neil also became further and further entrenched in his left-wing political views (see other studies on the impacts of social movement participation on political behavior and views such as Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Isaac et al. forthcoming; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984). Finally, Neil’s involvement in LGBT activism impacted his personal life – given both his engagement with queer theory and his continued dedication to social movement activism, Neil refuses to enter into marriage (which he views as an assimilationist institution) and reports no plans to raise children (see other studies on the impacts of social movements on family plans such as Klatch

1999; McAdam 1989, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Van Dyke et al. 2000; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; Wilhelm 1998).

Neil is perhaps the prototypical activist, at least according to existing literature on activist group participation. Nevertheless, a quick consideration of the biographies of Ashley and Julie – individuals who were also deeply involved in LGBT activism – quickly adds doubt to the assumptions in existing literature. Ashley belongs to a group of “religious participants.” Prior to becoming involved in an LGBT group, religious participations like Ashley were not socialized into values conducive to LGBT activism, but were instead socialized into more conservative, religious worldviews that viewed non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities as worthy of condemnation. Indeed, Ashley says she sided with anti-LGBT campaigns growing up. Ashley eventually did exhibit “attitudinal affinity” with the LGBT group she joined, but she had few friends and few organizational connections (i.e., “microstructural availability”) that would affirm or facilitate her involvement in the LGBT group. She also lacked “biographical availability,” given that she worked and had a dedicated partner outside of school, and she had never been involved in other activist groups. Because she lacked characteristics such as “microstructural availability” and “biographical availability,” existing explanations for commitment to activist groups similarly do not apply to participants like Ashley. Finally, although Ashley engaged in at least one organized political campaign promoting marriage equality after graduation, she was most interested in promoting social change outside the confines of formal activist organizations – in her case, by transforming students’ views through her job in higher education – so literature on “biographical consequences of social movements” sometimes fails to capture stories like hers.

Existing literature on social movement participation also misses the many nuances in Julie’s story. Julie belongs to a final group of students who participate in LGBT groups mainly

due to their own sexual and/or gender identities. Participants with salient LGBT identities have often been socialized into accepting values (if not over-arching political ideologies), and they do all report “attitudinal affinity.” Furthermore, many participants with salient LGBT identities possess “micro-structural availability” (they have accepting friends) and “biographical availability.” However, they are distinct from “politicized participants” in that few had been involved in previous social movement groups. While on paper Julie shares many of the characteristics of committed social movement participants, characteristics like “attitudinal affinity,” “micro-structural availability,” and “biographical availability” fail to truly capture the essence of why she was so drawn to an LGBT group – to connect with other LGBT individuals on campus in a “safe space.” Finally, following graduation, rather than continuing to participate in a formal LGBT activist group, Julie mostly sought to bring about social change through conversations on LGBT issues with family, friends, and neighbors.

In the following chapters, I make the argument that scholars should take into account the multiple ways one can be an “activist” and thus come to join, commit, and emerge out of an activist group. I argue that Neil, Ashley, and Julie represent three types of activists whose biographies cohere around three basic types of collective identities – a so-called “activist identity” (held by politicized participants), a “value-based identity” (held by religious participants), and a “solidary identity” (held by LGBT participants) (Corrigall-Brown 2011; Gamson 1991). Addressing the first research question, and contributing to the literature on micro-mobilization, I argue that scholars have identified most of the components crucial to explaining decisions to participate in social movements – concepts like socialization, prior movement participation, attitudinal affinity, microstructural availability, and biographical

availability. Nevertheless, existing studies wrongly assume that activists possess each of these characteristics, as different configurations of these characteristics matter for each type of activist.

Addressing the second research question, and contributing to the literature on activist group commitment, I next argue that scholars have failed to account for why some participants take on increasing responsibilities and devote an increasing amount of time to activist organizations while others do not. While “rational choice calculations” based on the presence and absence of factors like attitudinal affinity, microstructural availability, and biographical availability may matter in some cases, and while “meso-level constraints” based on bureaucratic complexity and hierarchical organizational structures may detract from participation in other cases, I argue that activist group commitment is best explained by the correspondence between one’s most salient collective identity and the group ethos of the LGBT organization one joins. Politicized participants will feel most at home in what I call “direct action groups” – groups engaged in extra-institutional collective action, often through some form of “civil disobedience.” Religious participants will be most dedicated to “educational groups” – organizations dedicated to “hammering out” their collective values and sharing those values with their wider communities. Finally, those with salient LGBT identities will dedicate the most time and energy to “solidarity groups” – groups that offer a safe space for, and a chance to connect with, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and which facilitate personal development among their members.

Addressing the third research question, and contributing to the literature on biographical consequences of activist groups, I finally argue that not all participants in LGBT groups go on to pursue, or express plans to pursue, involvement in formal activist groups following graduation. While most politicized participants do tend to become involved in other direct action groups,

religious participants usually enter into humanistic careers (e.g., as teachers or social workers) through which they seek to make existing institutions more inclusive of LGBT individuals. Furthermore, LGBT participants are most interested in pursuing more intentional personal lives – starting conversations on LGBT issues with friends and families, entering into equal marital partnerships, and raising children with values of tolerance and acceptance. In other words, these varieties of activists will pursue varieties of activism.

BACKGROUND ON LGBT ISSUES AT CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES

As framed above, this dissertation contributes to theory on micro-mobilization in activist groups, commitment to activist groups, and biographical consequences of activist groups. More broadly, the dissertation also draws attention to our substantive and practical understanding of an important, yet understudied, social issue – discrimination against LGBT students, staff, and faculty across Christian colleges and universities in the U.S.

Issues facing LGBT individuals in the U.S. have, by now, reached the level of widespread public awareness. While same-sex couples have now gained formal marital privileges, youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender continue to face much higher rates of bullying and harassment than their straight peers, which in turn contribute to higher rates of suicide among LGBT youth. Despite Americans' increasing willingness to offer formal legal benefits to LGBT individuals, same-sex couples continue to lack many informal privileges that straight couples enjoy, such as the basic ability to hold a partner's hand without fear of violence or disapproval (Doan, Loehr, and Miller 2014).

In many ways, the problems facing LGBT individuals at Christian colleges and universities are quite similar to problems facing LGBT individuals in the U.S. at large – LGBT

students are more vulnerable to discrimination, bullying, and harassment than their straight counterparts. However, the over 1.5 million students who pass through the doors of these universities every four years often face even chillier campus environments, given that conservative religiosity continues to serve as a source of bigotry toward LGBT individuals (Whitley 2009). Thus, Christian colleges and universities are home to a particularly vulnerable population of LGBT young adults.

Despite their significance, issues facing LGBT individuals on Christian campuses have historically been hidden from public awareness, in part because of a basic objection – aren't Christian colleges and universities well within their first amendment rights to discriminate against LGBT students? And couldn't LGBT students simply attend public colleges and universities that are more accepting of LGBT individuals? Currently, it is indeed true that Christian universities are within their rights to discriminate against LGBT individuals – while the federal government bars Christian schools receiving federal grants from discriminating on the basis of factors such as race and sex, the government currently offers waivers to religious employers who discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation (Zoll 2014). Furthermore, it is certainly true that LGBT individuals are not compelled (by law, at least) to attend these schools.

Given such skepticism, then, it is worth considering a basic question about these cases: why care? Why be concerned about any issues facing LGBT students on Christian campuses when Christian schools are breaking no laws and LGBT students could avert discrimination by attending other schools? A first potential response to this question (and often missed in conversations about LGBT issues on Christian campuses) is that some Christian colleges and universities actively recruit LGBT students. Consider, for example, one of the four schools I spotlight in this dissertation – Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana. Goshen College belongs to

the Mennonite Church USA, one of the historic peace churches of Protestantism, often known for its involvement in traditionally left-wing causes such as peace and anti-war movements. Currently, the school is home to two officially approved LGBT student groups – Advocates, a group dedicated to raising awareness about LGBT issues, and Spectrum, a confidential social support group for students who identify as LGBT. Many other school organizations also play a role in making LGBT students feel welcome – for example, the school’s Campus Ministries group requires its student leaders to attend Safe Zone workshops that train attendees to provide support and empathy for fellow LGBT students. In these ways, as I discuss in chapter three, Goshen is like the hundreds of others (45% of all) Christian colleges and universities in the U.S. that officially recognize LGBT student groups. At Goshen and similar colleges, prospective LGBT students are informed about these official forms of support and told they will feel supported and accepted.

Despite such official forms of support, LGBT students who decide to attend Goshen quickly discover that the campus has issues. For example, the Mennonite Church USA continues to resist full equality for LGBT members and has discouraged inclusive policies at Mennonite schools. Although the Goshen board voted to add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the school’s non-discrimination statement in July 2015, faculty and staff who “came out” as LGBT were fired or pressured to resign from the school as late as 2014 (e.g., Pfund 2014). Thus, until the recent policy change, Goshen was like the 45% of Christian colleges and universities that lack non-discrimination statements inclusive of “sexual orientation” and the 90% of Christian campuses that lack non-discrimination statements inclusive of “gender identity.” This fact had given rise to a student-based Open Letter movement which petitioned the school to add

non-discrimination protections and which was very active during the time I interviewed students at Goshen.

Furthermore, while Goshen College may recruit LGBT students to its campus, LGBT students sometimes find a chilly reception from other students in practice. Indeed, the groups Advocates and Spectrum originally formed following acts of hate on campus. In one episode, as relayed to me by nearly every individual I interviewed at Goshen, some members of the Goshen community reportedly spray-painted the outline of a human body across train tracks that run through the campus, along with the words “Another Dead Fag.” In another case, after some pro-LGBT messages were posted on a campus bulletin board, a student reportedly set the bulletin board on fire.

A second school in this study, Loyola University Chicago, is quite similar to Goshen College in that it actively recruits LGBT students and supports multiple LGBT student groups. In fact, for the past few years, Loyola Chicago has maintained a non-discrimination statement inclusive of both “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.” Nevertheless, Loyola students have also encountered problems at the school. For example, for years, the university simply denied the campus LGBT group’s request to hold a “drag ball” (an event that had its root in 1920s and 1930s queer underground Chicago). Beginning a few years ago, they began allowing students to hold a more traditional “drag show” on campus, but this event was immediately met with resistance from one other student and two Jesuit priests who believed the event “promotes a lifestyle that is not aligned with the teachings of Saint Ignatius and the Catholic Church” (Advocate 2010). Eventually, the university ordered the group to hold the “drag show” in a closed-off room on campus that students could only see if they were intentionally going to the

event (and not simply walking by). The event remains in that space as of this writing (Advocate 2010).

More recently, after the state of Illinois legalized same-sex marriage in 2013, a lesbian couple expressed interested in having their marriage ceremony at the school, much like straight students had done for years. However, the university denied the couple the opportunity to hold their wedding at the school and quickly passed a new rule stating only “Catholic weddings” (between Catholic opposite-sex couples) would be allowed on campus, alienating many LGBT students (Kubicki 2014).

For these reasons, it is perhaps unfair to blame LGBT students attending many Christian colleges and universities in the U.S., who have been recruited to a campus only to discover it is less than welcoming in some respects. Nevertheless, it remains true that other Christian campuses show no official signs of support for LGBT students – indeed, the majority (55%) of Christian colleges and universities continue to lack officially-approved LGBT student groups, and many even include “homosexual acts” on their list of banned behaviors. Why would LGBT students choose to attend those schools?

Another potential response to this question is to offer another question: why would any student (straight or gay) attend a Christian university? To this question, the potential responses are numerous. For example, like their straight peers, many LGBT students do identify as religious, and often deeply so; they may seek an environment where they can grow in their faith at the same time they work toward a college degree. There is also the issue of academics: many religious universities are highly regarded academically (e.g., Notre Dame, a relatively conservative Catholic university, is on the U.S. News and World Report’s list of the top 20 universities), and these schools may have been the best to which students were admitted. Some

students seek a college close to home or in a large, LGBT-friendly urban city (e.g., Catholic University is in Washington, D.C.). Still other students, eyeing mounting tuition costs, choose to attend the school their parents will agree to pay for or that have given them the best scholarship – which is often a Christian university. Finally, we live in a time of very rapid social change, and many students attend their colleges or universities believing that it is only a matter of time before their schools adopt policies protective of LGBT individuals.

Another of the four schools I spotlight in this dissertation – Belmont University, which was affiliated with the conservative Tennessee Baptist Convention until 2006 and still identifies as a conservative Christian institution – is instructive for many of the reasons offered above. The school was very attractive to the majority of the students I interviewed because of its highly-regarded school of music business. Still, at the time I began my study, Belmont University was a less-than-hospitable environment for LGBT students. For example, until 2009, Belmont not only lacked non-discrimination protections but also formally prohibited any forms of “homosexual behavior” on campus. Students on Belmont’s campus were also exposed to daily instances of what psychologists have termed “micro-aggressions,” such as the casual use of words like “fag” and phrases such as “that’s so gay” in everyday conversation. Still other students told me they faced overt bullying and harassment on campus – for example, one student reported that pictures of male genitalia and words like “faggot” were repeatedly scrawled on his door during his freshman year of college. The final straw for many students came in 2010, when a lesbian soccer coach suddenly left the school after announcing to her team that she and her same-sex partner would soon have a baby. Although the exact circumstances of her departure have been shrouded by a non-disclosure agreement, most students whom I talked to believe she was forced to leave by the school (Coley 2014).

While, given such details, one might be tempted to “blame the victim” for choosing to attend such a school, the case of Belmont is instructive because it demonstrates the real possibility for LGBT students to bring about change even on conservative campuses. Specifically, following the departure of the aforementioned soccer coach, students across the campus, many associated with a newly formed, unofficial LGBT student group called “Bridge Builders,” coordinated rallies, letter writing drives, sit-ins, and media appearances at the school to call for new non-discrimination protections inclusive of “sexual orientation.” Only days after these protests began, the school not only announced it would adopt such non-discrimination protections but also initiated the process to formally approve the Bridge Builders group as an officially recognized student organization (Coley 2014). While LGBT students at the school still face many issues – and while the school has not yet adopted non-discrimination policies protective of gender identity – the case of Belmont challenges those who might write off the possibility for LGBT inclusion on conservative Christian campuses.

Catholic University, referenced at the beginning of the chapter, is likely the most conservative of the four universities studied here. The beginning of the study referenced many of the personal difficulties of Catholic students, but as at Belmont, the university also adopted official discriminatory policies toward LGBT students. Over the past several years, the university has continually denied recognition to an unofficial LGBT student organization known as CUAllies, and indeed has gone so far as to cancel pro-LGBT events scheduled by other student organizations (such as the College Democrats). The university also continually schedules events promoting traditional views of marriage and sexuality – including by a Cardinal who compared the LGBT movement to the KKK (DeBernardo 2012).

Still, Catholic University continues to attract many LGBT students who hold strong Catholic identities and seek a distinctly Catholic education, as well as LGBT students who are attracted by the politically-active and LGBT-friendly city of Washington D.C. Furthermore, like Belmont, many LGBT students come believing change might be just around the corner. This is not a crazy thought – in fact, for a period in the 1980s and 1990s, the university officially recognized an LGBT student group and included “sexual orientation” in its non-discrimination statement. Furthermore, LGBT students have succeeded in bringing about some change on campus – for example, all students are now required to sign a personal code of honor saying they will not bully or disparage their fellow students on the basis of characteristics that include sexual orientation.

Whether students come to a religious university that openly recruits LGBT students, or whether students arrive at their religious university because of other characteristics that appeal to them (such as the school’s religious identity, location, or academic programs), most LGBT students attend religious colleges because they want to be there, and they seek to cultivate a more inclusive campus community in good faith. LGBT students face many problems at these colleges – from official policies banning same-sex behaviors to campus climates that seem to foster discrimination and harassment – but they come to their colleges at a historical juncture in which it is quite plausible that even conservative Christian colleges may come to embrace their LGBT student populations. I seek to capture their unique stories here.

DATA AND METHODS

The previous sections have outlined this dissertation’s theoretical and empirical rationale.

Amidst the backdrop of growing student movements for LGBT inclusion on Christian colleges

and universities, this study seeks to understand the motivations of students joining LGBT groups on Christian campuses, their reasons for committing to LGBT groups, and their trajectories and plans after graduation. As LGBT students continue to face problems such as discrimination and harassment on campuses, this study shows how and why students join organizations that increase student safety and well-being on campuses and thus pursue empowerment and resiliency. The study also develops theories of social movement participation and its impacts. In this section, I discuss the ways in which I collected and analyzed data to better understand motivations for joining and committing to LGBT groups on Christian campuses, as well as the impacts of such LGBT groups on their participants.

In selecting Christian colleges and universities for inclusion in the study, I sought to achieve variation in schools' levels of inclusiveness or repression of LGBT students. Toward this end, I first built a database of all Christian colleges and universities in the United States and identified whether each Christian college and university had (a) an officially-recognized LGBT group, (b) a non-discrimination statement inclusive of sexual orientation, and (c) a non-discrimination statement inclusive of gender identity. Employing independent variables drawn from previous studies of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013) and previous theories on religion and social change, I then assessed the school characteristics and contextual characteristics associated with the presence of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination statements.

The results, which are reported in chapter three, show that the school characteristic most associated with the presence of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discriminations statements was a school's affiliation with a communalist or individualist religious tradition. Specifically, schools associated with communalist religious traditions that incorporate concerns over social justice

tended to be more inclusive and protective of LGBT students than schools associated with individualist religious traditions that tend to emphasize personal piety. Furthermore, the contextual characteristic most associated with the presence of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination statements was the school’s presence in a “blue” or “red” state or district. Specifically, schools in states or districts that voted for the Democratic nominee (Barack Obama) in the 2012 Presidential election were more inclusive and protective of LGBT students than schools in states or districts that voted for the Republican nominee (Mitt Romney).

TABLE 1-1. CASE SELECTION

Variables	<i>Communalist Theological Tradition</i>	<i>Individualist Theological Tradition</i>
<i>Blue State/District</i>	Loyola University Chicago (Catholic - Jesuit; Illinois)	Catholic University of America (Catholic; Washington D.C.)
<i>Red State/District</i>	Goshen College (Mennonite; Indiana)	Belmont University (historically Southern Baptist; Tennessee)

Guided by these results, I selected four Christian colleges and universities that have been sites of LGBT student mobilization in a way that achieved variation along the dimensions of a school’s religious affiliation and a school’s state or district (see Table 1-1). As discussed in the previous section, these colleges and universities are Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana; Loyola University Chicago in Chicago, Illinois; Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee; and the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. The first school, Goshen College, belongs

to a religious tradition that emphasizes social justice (the Mennonite Church USA, one of the historic “peace churches” in Protestantism) but resides in a “red” state (Indiana), and indeed a rural, conservative area of that state. The second school, Loyola University Chicago, belongs to a religious tradition that has historically emphasized social justice (the Jesuit order within the Roman Catholic Church) and resides in a “blue” state (Illinois). The third school, Belmont University, resides in a red state (Tennessee, albeit in the blue city of Nashville) and was historically associated with the conservative Tennessee Baptist Convention; the school now considers itself to be a conservative, non-denominational Christian university. The final school, Catholic University of America, resides in the very “blue” District of Columbia but is associated with the conservative wing of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, the school is the only Catholic university in the United States that received its charter from the Vatican.

To understand the motivations for participation in LGBT religious activism, I interviewed 65 participants in LGBT groups at these four Christian colleges and universities. I interviewed participants rather than non-participants given my theoretical goal of understanding variation among participants in LGBT groups at Christian colleges (i.e., given my goal of understanding “varieties of activism”) rather than understanding differences between participants and non-participants (an objective that has historically characterized studies of micro-mobilization but that tends to homogenize participants). This sampling approach is consistent with the few other recent studies on variation among participants in social movements (e.g., Bosi 2012; Isaac et al. forthcoming).

Most interviews were conducted during the 2013-2014 school year, during which time I traveled to each of the four schools and interviewed 12-15 participants. However, I also draw on an earlier wave of interviews conducted during the 2010-2011 school year at Belmont

University, during which time I interviewed 18 students actively protesting against that school's discriminatory policy on sexual orientation. I interviewed students at Belmont during two waves in part to assess the role of changing school policies on students' pathways to activism while holding other contextual variables constant. (None of the other schools has changed its official policies regarding LGBT students or faculty within the last several years). Furthermore, I interviewed four students during both of these waves to assess potential threats related to recall bias. I did not find recall bias to be an issue – students recalled the details of their initial participation just as well 3-4 years after their participation as they did in the first few months after their participation.

I identified potential respondents through a variety of means. Generally, I began by identifying websites and/or Facebook groups run by LGBT groups at each of the four Christian colleges and universities and then e-mailed all students listed as active student leaders and/or past leaders. When contacting both active and former student leaders, I not only requested their participation in interviews but also asked them for personal recommendations of current students or alumni who had participated in the group. Furthermore, when contacting active student leaders, I asked them to issue a call for interview participants either to a list-serve or a physical meeting of their group. This call for interview participants included a special request for individuals who had only participated for a short length of time, given that these individuals might otherwise shy away from interviews. Finally, after interviewing any participant who had agreed to or volunteered to an interview, I asked for recommendations of any other past or current students who had ever participated in the LGBT student group at the college or university.

The final sample at each college and university includes not only individuals who had served as leaders of each group, but also individuals who had served as active group members, individuals who had participated in the group for a short period of time, and individuals who had once participated in the group but later dropped out. Around half of the participants at each college or university were current students, while the other half of the participants at each college or university were alumni. These alumni include some of the founders or earliest participants of the movements at Goshen College, Catholic University, and Belmont University; I was not able to identify the earliest participants in the group at Loyola University given that group's early founding date.

TABLE 1-2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Loyola</i>	<i>Goshen</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Belmont</i>
<i>Age (Mean)</i>	21	21	20	23	21
<i>Race (Proportion Non-White)</i>	0.14	0.20	0.17	0.15	0.12
<i>Sex (Proportion Female)</i>	0.46	0.27	0.58	0.46	0.52
<i>Sexual Orientation (Proportion LGB)</i>	0.77	1.00	0.42	0.84	0.76
<i>Gender Identity and Expression (Proportion Transgender or Gender Fluid)</i>	0.08	0.27	0.08	0	0
<i>N</i>	65	15	12	13	25*

Note: * The Belmont data collection occurred during two waves.

The final sample is also diverse on a number of demographic characteristics. As Table 1-2 shows, a few respondents at each site identified as persons of color, although most respondents were white. These numbers are generally reflective of the campuses under study; according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, as of 2012, 26% of Loyola students identify as non-white, 14% of Goshen students are non-white, 17% of Catholic students are non-white, and 9% of Belmont students are non-white. The respondents are roughly evenly divided in terms of sex, although women made up only a quarter of the respondents at the Loyola site. (In interviews, respondents repeatedly mentioned that the Loyola group was known for being a male-dominated club.) Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, although straight individuals comprise the majority of respondents at the Goshen site. (At the time of my interviews, straight allies dominated the leadership of the Advocates group at Goshen, which was a point of contention among some within the LGBT community at Goshen.) Finally, while the Loyola and Goshen sites contained some individuals who self-identified as transgender or gender fluid, none of the Catholic or Belmont respondents identified as transgender or gender fluid, reflecting the more conservative nature of those campuses. Overall, of the individuals I personally contacted, the response rate was very high (85%), with the groups at Catholic and Goshen approaching 100% response rates.

The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 3 hours, with an average length of 1.5 hours, contingent on the extent of participants' involvement. I included a range of questions related to activist group participation. A first section of questions examined circumstances surrounding respondents' initial participation, including how and when they found out about the group; why they participated in the group; what they initially expected from the group; whether they personally identified as activists, people of faith, sexual minorities, or transgender; whether they

had any work or family responsibilities at the time they joined the organization; whether they told friends or family members they were joining the organization; and whether they feared backlash in response to their joining the organization. A second set of questions examined their lives before they joined the group, including whether their family, church, and/or school was accepting of sexual minorities and transgender individuals, as well as whether they had previously been involved in LGBTQ groups or other social movement groups. A third set of questions then surveyed students on their leadership responsibilities and levels of activity in the group, while the final set of questions attempted to understand students' post-graduation work, family, political, and religious trajectories (or at least their plans for post-graduation). A standardized set of demographic questions also captured information about respondents' ages, racial and ethnic identities, preferred pronouns, and so on.

After transcribing the interviews, I first coded the interviews deductively – drawing a list of important variables related to social movement participation from past studies (e.g., demographic variables such as race, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity; micro-mobilization variables such as movement socialization, prior movement participation, attitudinal affinity, personal connections, organizational connections, biographical availability) and then extracting information related to these variables into a spreadsheet. I also coded the interviews inductively using a “grounded theory” approach – closely reading the interview text and identifying themes that seemed to emerge from the data using ATLAS.ti. I then used a variety of different methods to analyze the variables and themes drawn from the deductive and inductive coding, including crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), correlation matrices, contingency tables, and inductive sorting and clustering. In general, the findings strongly support the basic insight that grounded this study – that varieties of activism exist, and consequently

multiple paths to joining social activist groups, committing to activist groups, and emerging out of activist groups exist.

OUTLINE

The chapters that follow flesh out the arguments presented in this introductory chapter. Chapters two and three provide context for the present study. Chapter two, specifically, explores the emergence and recent success of the LGBT movement over the past few decades. I not only discuss the LGBT movement's increasing victories in public policy and influences on public opinion, but I also highlight LGBT activists' organizing efforts within U.S. schools and religious denominations. In an effort to bridge macro-level, historical trends with the individual experiences of the activists studied here, I provide interview quotes that show how specific historical developments influenced and made possible the organizing work of students on Christian campuses.

Chapter three then presents a birds-eye-view analysis of the state of LGBT inclusion on Christian colleges and universities. Specifically, I draw on a database of all Christian colleges and universities in the U.S. and present statistics on the presence of (a) LGBT student groups, (b) non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation, and (c) non-discrimination statements inclusive of gender identity. I present descriptive statistics on the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies, and I employ logistic regression to assess the predictors of such groups and policies; as discussed in the previous section, these results guided the selection of the four Christian colleges and universities where I conducted interviews.

Chapters four through six comprise the core of the dissertation and present my analyses on pathways of participation in LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities. Chapter four

analyzes multiple pathways to joining such LGBT groups. As I demonstrate through QCA analyses supplemented with in-depth interview data, participants with salient political identities were generally raised in like-minded families and had participated in prior activist groups. In comparison, participants with salient religious identities were socialized into values quite hostile to LGBT activism and had never previously participated in activist groups, while participants with sexual identities are best characterized by their attitudinal affinity with the group they join.

Chapter five assesses variation in commitment to LGBT groups. I do not assume that any of the three “types” of activists discussed above are better suited or more predisposed to LGBT activism than others. Rather, drawing on quantitative evidence (correlation matrices, contingency tables) and qualitative evidence (in-depth interview quotes), I show that whether individuals commit to LGBT activist groups depends on whether their most salient identities corresponds with what I call the “group ethos” or nature of the groups in which they are joining, with politicized participants being most drawn to direct action groups, religious participants being most drawn to educational groups, and LGBT individuals being most drawn to solidarity groups.

Chapter six then explores divergences in the biographical consequences of LGBT group participation. While politicized participants express plans to continue participating in formal activist groups in the future, those with salient religious and sexual identities often plan to foster social change through other means. Specifically, religious participants plan to educate others on LGBT issues through humanistic careers, while participants with salient LGBT identities seek to apply the values of the LGBT movement to their personal family lives.

Finally, in the conclusion, I not only reiterate the arguments in the dissertation but also outline the study’s broader implications for sociological theory and those working to make colleges and universities more inclusive of LGBT communities.

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CHAPTER 2

LGBT RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Student participation in LGBT activism at Christian colleges and universities is made possible, in part, by the inroads LGBT movements have made into national political debates, educational institutions, and religious denominations over the past few decades. In this chapter, I present a broad overview of the LGBT movement in the U.S. since World War II. The first section recounts the major events of U.S. LGBT movements from the past few decades, as presented and periodized in past historical sources (see, e.g., Armstrong 2002; Fetner 2008; D’Emilio 1983). The second and third sections then focus on LGBT activism in the realms of education and religion, two institutions of particular importance to this study. Building on Mills’ (1959) contention that all social studies should shed light on “the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society” (p. 6), I provide quotes that show how seemingly abstract and distant historical events influenced students’ organizing on LGBT groups on Christian campuses. As I argue, LGBT activism on Christian colleges and universities is best understood by the unique confluence of political, educational, and religious changes at this particular historical juncture.

THE LGBT MOVEMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

While the LGBT rights movement has arguably been most prominent since 2003, when a state court ruling legalized same-sex marriage in Massachusetts and when stances on LGBT rights began to crystallize along predictable partisan lines, LGBT and allied individuals have led

organized movements for social change in the U.S. since at least the 1950s. In this section, I review the LGBT movement's beginnings, occasional stumbles, and eventual ascendancy. While much of the historical background precedes the movements for LGBT equality on Christian university campuses, the background is helpful for understanding the context in which campus- and religion-based movements arose, as well as for appreciating just how rapidly the opportunities for LGBT organizing on Christian campuses came about.

Most historical accounts of LGBT activism in the U.S. begin during or shortly after World War II, when cities in California such as Los Angeles and San Francisco became notable for their growing gay populations and gave rise to gay advocacy organizations (Fetner 2008: Ch. 2). For example, in 1950, the Mattachine Society, one of the country's first "homophile" organizations dedicated to promoting the rights of gays and lesbians, formed in Los Angeles, followed by ONE (1953, Los Angeles) and the Daughters of Bilitis (1955, San Francisco). Homophile organizations were known for their emphasis on discretion and virtuosity; few members of these organizations were willing to publicly out themselves and indeed often went to great lengths to maintain their secrecy (Armstrong 2002: Ch. 2; D'Emilio 1983). Nevertheless, such organizations provided important foundations for subsequent LGBT organizing in the U.S.

This early period of homophile organizing is notable for attracting what might today be considered unlikely allies, particularly communities of faith. For example, in 1963, a British publication entitled "Towards a Quaker View of Sex" provided "perhaps the very first faith-based affirmation of gay equality and went on to be hugely influential, selling 500,000 copies" (Walker 2013). Perhaps more importantly for the U.S. context, local progressive ministers took notice of the hardships facing gay men in San Francisco and slowly became advocates for their cause. In 1964, 16 of these ministers associated with the Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and the

United Church of Christ faiths met with 13 leaders of homophile organizations at what was known as the Mill Valley Conference. Shortly after the conference, one local church and two leaders of the Daughters of Bilitis decided to form the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, which is the first organization in the United States to use the word “homosexual” in its title. This Council was also responsible for organizing one of the first public events for homosexuals in the U.S., in the form of a fundraiser for the organization (Armstrong and Crago 2006; Boyd 2003).

By the late 1960s, many gays and lesbians became frustrated with homophile organizations and their emphasis on virtuosity and passivity. For example, homophile organizations did little to stop the increasing police violence against gay men congregating in bars in cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City, so “gay bars” became new sites of political struggle, perhaps best symbolized by the famous Stonewall Inn uprising in New York City’s Greenwich Village in 1969 (Armstrong and Crago 2006). In line with a national zeitgeist that saw the radicalization of other left-wing causes, these homophile organizations would soon be supplanted by more militant “gay liberation” and “lesbian feminist” organizations that encouraged homosexuals to “come out” and pursue sexual liberation. Many of these organizations also explicitly linked themselves with other New Left causes in favor of economic equality and women’s equality. This was a time of incredible growth for the gay and lesbian movement: while there were only 50 homophile organizations in the U.S. in 1969, over 800 gay and lesbian organizations existed in the U.S. by 1973 (D’Emilio 1983, p. 238). Yet this period was short-lived.

By the early 1970s, as the “Long Sixties” dwindled down, a national turn against New Left politics along with infighting among newfound “gay liberation” and “lesbian feminist” organizations led to many of these gay liberation and lesbian feminist groups’ demise. As

Armstrong (2002: Ch. 6) recounts, the focus of lesbian and gay activists turned inward toward constructing gay identities and building communities. Lesbian and gay activists did achieve some successes during this time period. For example, the ever-present gay subculture in San Francisco would become highly visible during the 1970s, and the first openly gay man in public office in California (Harvey Milk) was elected to a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Nevertheless, gay and lesbian organizations increasingly found themselves on the defensive in the 1970s, as former allies (such as faith communities) began to turn against them. For example, in the same year Harvey Milk was elected to office, an evangelical Christian activist named Anita Bryant formed Save Our Children, Inc., which successfully overturned a non-discrimination ordinance inclusive of sexual orientation in Dade County (Fetner 2008, p. 24). Her activism soon inspired efforts such as the Briggs Initiative in California in 1978, which sought to bar not only gays and lesbians but also their supporters from employment in public schools. While this ballot proposition was unsuccessful – President Jimmy Carter and even then-Governor Ronald Reagan came out in opposition to the initiative – it was certainly indicative of a reversal of fortunes for the gay and lesbian movement (Fetner 2008, p. 24).

The decade of Anita Bryant also saw the rise of the “ex-gay” movement in the U.S. In 1973, the country’s first ex-gay organization, Love in Action, formed in a suburb of San Francisco, followed in the late 1970s by the formation of Exodus International (Crockett and Kane 2012, p. 229). Claiming to help gays and lesbians become heterosexual through prayer and various reparative therapies, which have since been discredited, such organizations soon formed chapters across many states; Exodus International in particular claimed well over 200 affiliated chapters at its height (Crockett and Kane 2012, pp. 229-230; though see news of its recent closure, Payne 2013).

The gay and lesbian movement reached an even lower point in the 1980s. Beginning in 1981, an increasingly large number of gay men in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York City fell ill to what became known as AIDS. Once researchers discovered the source of the disease, activists were able to quickly mobilize and form social service organizations to respond to the pandemic, in part because of the prior existence of so many gay and lesbian organizations in the coastal cities. Nevertheless, many conservatives and even liberals either failed to respond – President Reagan did not acknowledge the pandemic until his second term – or engaged in new attempts to pathologize gay men (Armstrong 2002: Ch. 8).

Activists within lesbian and gay movements responded to this period of decline and crisis in two very different ways. One was through the rise of a militant queer movement in the late 1980s. Believing that the gay and lesbian movement had increasingly returned to the passivity of prior homophile movements, queer activists sought the revival of the more contentious tactics that marked the gay liberation and lesbian feminist movements. Especially notable was the formation of ACT UP, founded in 1987, which staged high-profile direct actions in such cities as New York City and Los Angeles to fight the AIDS pandemic. This queer movement was also critical of the homogeneity that marked many prior gay and lesbian organizations; adopting a more fluid perspective on sexual and gender identity, queer activists encouraged the inclusion of bisexual and transgender activists, as well as queer persons of color (Armstrong 2002: Ch. 9).

A second response was the adoption of more mainstream goals and tactics and a renewed commitment to institutional politics. Partly in an attempt to counter the pathologization of gay men following the AIDS pandemic, some organizations began to focus on issues that would facilitate the assimilation of gays and lesbians into mainstream society, especially same-sex marriage. Such campaigns were led by emerging interest groups such as the Human Rights

Campaign, which specialized in formal institutional tactics such as lobbying rather than more contentious tactics such as protests (Armstrong 2002: Ch. 9).

By the early 1990s and into the 2000s, it was clear that this second approach to LGBT politics was ascendant. Although the more radical “queer politics” organizations clearly had some influence on organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign – mainstream organizations began adopting acronyms such as “LGBT” that were inclusive of bisexual and transgender individuals – some queer groups collapsed almost as quickly as they began (Armstrong 2002, pp. 178-184). The mainstream organizations instead began promoting an agenda of assimilation, especially through the promotion of same-sex marriage.

The initial years of the same-sex marriage campaign were full of fits and starts. In 1993, a Hawaii Supreme Court ruling cast suspicions over Hawaii’s same-sex marriage ban. However, a national firestorm ensued, and in the midst of his 1996 Presidential re-election campaign, President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as a partnership between a man and a woman for the purpose of federal benefits (Masci 2008). After a lull in the same-sex marriage campaign, the Massachusetts Supreme Court reignited the debate in 2003, issuing a decision that made Massachusetts the first state in the U.S. to recognize same-sex marriages (Masci 2008). The court may have been encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2002 decision to strike down state laws that had effectively criminalized sexual acts between persons of the same sex (Carpenter 2012). However, national politicians again rushed to denounce or at least distance themselves from the same-sex marriage cause. In the midst of his 2004 Presidential re-election campaign, President Bush campaigned on a Federal Marriage Amendment that would ban all states from recognizing same-sex marriage. Voters in 13 states

approved state-level same-sex marriage bans that same year, followed by 10 more states in 2005 and 2005 (Masci 2008).

It was around this time that students across many Christian colleges and universities began organizing in earnest. However, given this political environment, they faced similar backlash in their efforts to promote LGBT inclusion. As a Loyola student named Colin noted, even at a relatively progressive institution such as Loyola University, the national political scene influenced the work they were doing on campus:

R: 2004 was just such a rough year... Obviously it's not anything as serious as the Reagan years when we had the AIDS epidemic going on, but for students like me, 2004 was the year of Karl Rove trying to put same-sex marriage bans on nearly every state ballot to gin up the evangelical vote to vote for W., and he was largely very successful. It was a very discouraging time right after the 2004 election, and it was something that I considered important to try to inject into Advocate as much as possible, even though the interest in the actual election process wasn't always there, to organize crossover events with our College Democrats group, to gin up support for pro-LGBT candidates. It was clear we were on the defensive, and there were many people on campus who were taking the opposing side.

Even in 2008, when then-Senator Barack Obama was elected President, voters in the normally socially liberal state of California voted to reverse a State Supreme Court ruling that had legalized same-sex marriage. Yet around this time of President Obama's election, the tide quickly began to turn for the LGBT movement (Becker 2014). In late 2008 through 2012, several states began to recognize same-sex marriages not only through court rulings (Connecticut, Iowa) but also, for the first time, through legislative statutes (Maine, New Hampshire, New York,

Vermont, Washington). President Obama, who before stated his belief that marriage should be defined as a union between a man and a woman, also came out in support of same-sex marriage during his re-election bid in 2012.

The years 2013 and 2014, when most of the respondents in this study were in college, would prove to be particularly consequential for the LGBT movement. A case challenging the vote to ban same-sex marriage in California reached the Supreme Court during its 2012-2013 term. Although the Supreme Court declined to issue a sweeping ruling on the case (based on a technicality), the effect of their demurral was to legalize same-sex marriage in California. Nine other states quickly joined California that year (Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island), and by 2014, court cases in a stunning 18 states legalized same-sex marriage across the country (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming). Finally, by 2015, the quick pace of same-sex marriage legalization seemed to convince the Supreme Court to revisit the question of marriage for same-sex couples and, this time, issue its landmark *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision legalizing same-sex marriage across the U.S.

The debate over LGBT rights certainly extends beyond same-sex marriage, incorporating such issues as employment non-discrimination ordinances, anti-bullying laws, HIV/AIDS funding, and intersectional concerns. Nevertheless, the total effect of the dizzying pace of the same-sex marriage debate in particular is hard to overstate. As not only “blue” but also traditionally “red” states began to allow same-sex marriages, students at Christian universities were able to begin imagining the possibilities for their campuses to “evolve” on issues of LGBT rights. Indeed, for students who were coming of age during a time period where the vast majority

of young adults expressed support for formal LGBT rights, the disjuncture between the national landscape and their campuses' climates was often quite jarring and seemed to demand a response. As a straight student at Goshen named Angela related to me, society seemed to have moved so far on LGBT rights that her own school's position on hiring LGBT individuals was a source of embarrassment for her. Her tone as compared to Colin's is particularly striking:

R: I had a picture of me and a bunch of my friends at Goshen wearing these shirts that asked, "Where's my GLBTQ Prof?", and I was almost embarrassed to put it on Facebook, because it's embarrassing for me for my friends at school to know I'm at a school where this is even a conversation. None of my friends back home are religious, and my hometown is just so accepting, and so I feel like I get some judgment from them for going to a school that is so behind the times, that is stuck in the past. The vast majority of young people, even young Republicans, support same-sex marriage, and most of us know people who are gay. Why is this even an issue?

This is more than simply a (perhaps well-worn) story of Christian institutions resisting progressive trends in national politics, however. As I discuss in the sections below, LGBT movements have also rapidly been making inroads within higher education and Christian denominations themselves, creating pressures that Christian universities could not as easily dismiss.

LGBT ACTIVISM ACROSS U.S. SCHOOLS

As the LGBT rights movement made advances across local, state, and national governments, a separate revolution was taking place inside U.S. schools. In 1967, as Beemyn (2003) discusses in his historical account of early LGBTQ activism in colleges, the first gay rights group on a

college campus was founded at Columbia University. Known as the Student Homophile League, the organization was directly inspired by the national homophile movement and especially the Mattachine Society (pp. 206-207). As Beemyn (2003) notes, the organization's charter was nearly revoked following a front-page *New York Times* article about the group's approval; but although the university was "inundated with outraged letters," and although leaders ranging from the dean of the college to the director of counseling came out in opposition to the group, "the strong support of the league's advisor, the university chaplain, apparently prevented Columbia officials from revoking the group's charter" (p. 207). By 1968, students at Cornell University and New York University formed their own chapters of the Student Homophile League (pp. 210, 217)

Organizations such as the Student Homophile League attracted a high proportion of heterosexual students. This was partially by design, as universities required that new student organizations list the names of potential officers on their application, and heterosexual students sometimes stepped up to provide cover for closeted gay and lesbian students (p. 213). Nevertheless, as the emerging gay liberation movement placed increasing emphasis on the importance of "coming out," some of these organizations began to experience inner turmoil. For example, some members of Cornell's Student Homophile decided to partner with the New Left organization Students for a Democratic Society so that they could hold more public events on campus, and the group eventually changed its name to the Gay Liberation Front in 1970 (p. 218). The organization even sponsored one of the first "gay student sit-ins" at a local bar that had decided to kick out its gay clientele (p. 221).

By 1971, Beemyn (2003) reports that the visibility of organizations such as the Student Homophile League and the Gay Liberation Front inspired the formation of gay student groups at

nearly 175 other colleges and universities in the U.S. (p. 222). Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of these organizations soon became the subject of lawsuits. A student group known as the Society for Homosexual Freedom filed one of the earliest lawsuits after Sacramento State College denied their application for recognition in 1970 (Reichard 2010, p. 633). As Reichard (2010) reports, “Judge William Gallagher’s (a Republican) decision in favor of the SHF was... the first to use free speech and association grounds to extend legal protection to gay and lesbian student organizations... That precedent, and the constitutional arguments used, enabled other gay and lesbian student organizations to rebut efforts at preventing their organizing on campus” (p. 333). In the 1970s alone, similar lawsuits were filed in states such as Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Texas (p. 637).

While students at public universities were successful in using lawsuits to win recognition for LGBT groups on their campuses, students at religious colleges and universities found that the first amendment’s religious protections generally trumped the first amendment’s free speech rights. In 1980, in one of the most high profile court cases involving a religious university, students sued Georgetown University (a Catholic institution) for refusing to recognize their organization on religious grounds. The students pointed to a similar case in which the Supreme Court ruled that Bob Jones University could not discriminate on the basis of race. Nevertheless, a court ruled that ““there is no similar national policy compelling government intervention in matters relating to sexual orientation”” (p. 19). This policy continues to stand today, as President Obama’s recent executive order barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation provides an exemption to religious employers who contract with the federal government (Zoll 2014).

Although U.S. middle schools and high schools were much slower in granting approval to LGBT student groups, by the 1980s some schools became more welcoming of LGBT students. As both Miceli (2005) and Fetner and Kush (2008) discuss in their historical accounts of Gay-Straight Alliances, LGBT high school groups first emerged in the 1980s in California and Massachusetts, two states that have long been known for their social liberalism. Specifically, in 1984, the Los Angeles Unified School District launched an anti-bullying and lesbian and gay support group named Project 10, named for the theory associated with sex researcher Alfred Kinsey that 10% of the population is mostly or exclusively homosexual. Miceli (2005) notes that “this was the first ever in-school support group offered to LGBT students at a public high school” (p. 21). Perhaps more significantly, two well-known and prestigious high schools in Massachusetts, Concord Academy and Phillips Academy, launched the nation’s first GSAs (p. 27). As Miceli (2005) notes, the GSAs were different than the Project 10 clubs in that they not only provided safe space for lesbian and gay students but also supported political projects aimed at “cultural and structural change” by lesbian and gay students and their allies (p. 27).

National organizations soon formed to support the emergence of GSAs and GSA-like groups in other states. Because the AIDS pandemic had provided opportunities for conservatives to demonize gays and lesbians as deviant, many national leaders saw GSAs as an issue that could put a new face on gay and lesbian rights. In 1994, the faculty adviser to the Concord Academy GSA group, Kevin Jennings, formed the Gay, Lesbian, Independent School Teachers Network (GLISTN), which was later renamed the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) (Miceli 2005, p. 32). Furthermore, in San Francisco in 1998, an LGBTQ community activist named Carolyn Laub formed the Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) (Miceli 2005, p. 35). These organizations distributed information on “best practices” formulated by the early

GSA and GSA-like organizations; for example, GLSEN offered a “How to Start a Gay-Straight Alliance” manual (Fetner and Kush 2008, p. 116). The GSA Network also provided leadership training to students interested in establishing GSAs and facilitated networks between GSAs in each state (Fetner and Kush 2008, p. 116).

Perhaps most importantly, organizations such as GLSEN and GSA Network provided legal help to students facing opposition to GSAs in their high schools and communities. A federal law passed in 1984, known as the Equal Access Act, mandates that schools that choose to provide resources for extra-curricular activities must make those resources available for all extra-curricular activities. The law was originally intended to protect religious student groups that were being denied recognition by public schools, but the language of the law protects student groups formed around any purposes (Miceli 2005, p. 39). GSAs invoked the Equal Access Act when petitioning to have their organizations recognized, but right-wing religious groups began to mobilize in opposition to GSAs, especially in more conservative states (see Fetner 2008). In response, a school district in Salt Lake City decided to disband all school activities rather than approve a GSA. GLSEN, as well as ACLU and other LGBTQ and civil liberties organizations, filed a lawsuit against the school district, and Utah courts eventually ruled that the school district must approve the GSA (Miceli 2005, p. 39). Following this court decision, most school districts have begun to approve GSAs when petitioned.

The emphasis on such legal successes is not to imply that LGBT students have always received a warm welcome in practice. Indeed, even despite laws protecting LGBT student groups, some middle and high school districts have still attempted to deny or delay their approval, and religious schools continue to be able to bar LGBT student groups and even expel

LGBT students. Furthermore, the late 2000s and early 2010s were notable for a tragic string of suicides by young gay men who faced bullying in schools (e.g., Hubbard 2011).

Overall, though, especially as state laws regarding same-sex marriage and non-discrimination rapidly changed in the late 2000s and early 2010s, students petitioning their schools for recognition of LGBT groups encountered increasing success. As of 2014, the Human Rights Campaign (2014b) lists nearly 1,000 colleges and universities in its directory of officially-recognized LGBT groups. Similarly, over 3,000 middle schools and high schools across the United States support officially-recognized GSAs (Fetner and Kush 2008). These LGBT groups can be found at schools in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

This rapid spread of LGBT student groups at colleges, universities, high schools, and middle schools in the U.S. had important implications for the growth of LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities. For example, the spread of LGBT student groups across colleges and universities undoubtedly created pressures on Christian university administrators to approve applications for LGBT student groups on campus or to include sexual orientation and gender identity in their nondiscrimination statements. As the results of chapter three imply, this is probably most true for administrators at more selective schools (which are attempting to imitate the most prestigious schools and thus move up the ranks), as well as for administrators at schools in more liberal states (where LGBT student movements first began and were most visible). Furthermore, the spread of LGBT student groups at middle schools and high schools meant that an increasing number of undergraduate students had attended middle schools and high schools with GSAs. As a Belmont student named Georgia told me, moving from a high school with a GSA to a university without one was shocking for her, and given her previous experience

in leadership of a high school GSA, she quickly moved to get an LGBT group started on her campus:

I: So why did you first become involved in efforts to start an LGBT group at Belmont?

R: I went to school in [blinded blue state], and was the head of my GSA there. I was very involved, and I was a peer educator when it came to safe sex and AIDS awareness. I was the head of other organizations actually. And I went to gay prom instead of regular prom. So I really missed having something like that. ... And I have this very long involvement with searching for LGBT rights at Belmont, starting from the first time I ever set foot on orientation. I went to an orientation session and asked if there was a Gay-Straight Alliance or anything like that. I got completely shot down – they told me, there will never be anything like that at Belmont, that is completely against our Christian morals. I was like, okay, a little bit shellshocked. After that, a couple people went up to me and said, dude that was totally rude. If you started a GSA, I'll have your back, I'll be supporting you all the way. And it was current students too, not just incoming freshman. So I started a Facebook group, saying I support the creation of a GSA at Belmont, and that's where it all started for me.

Indeed, as chapter four will show, high school GSAs created an important pathway to participation in LGBT groups at Christian universities.

LGBT ACTIVISM WITHIN CHRISTIANITY

While public high schools, colleges, and universities in the U.S. have been relatively quick to embrace LGBT students, religious sects and denominations in the U.S. have in many cases positioned themselves as the LGBT movement's foremost detractors. As noted in previous

sections, while a few progressive ministers aligned themselves with the growing gay and lesbian movement in the 1960s, the opposition of ministers associated with conservative and even some mainline denominations overshadowed pro-LGBT religious advocacy by the 1970s (Fetner 2008). Still, LGBT people and their advocates have been working in and outside of institutions for the past few decades to create change within Christian denominations.

One early strategy by pro-LGBT religious activists was to create alternative religious institutions that would be accepting of LGBT people. Most notably, a minister named Troy Perry, who had been “expelled from two different Pentecostal denominations due to his homosexuality,” founded what he called the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Los Angeles in 1968, a city where the gay and lesbian population was increasingly visible (Kane 2013, p. 138; also see Wilcox 2001). The church soon inspired the foundation of other pro-LGBT churches under the umbrella of The United Federation of Metropolitan Community Churches beginning in 1970 (Kane 2013, p. 138). As Kane (2013) recounts, most MCC members did not become Christians through MCC churches but rather “switched” from churches associated with other denominations that were less accepting (p. 142). The growth of the church was remarkable: “In 1973, there were 38 MCC congregations across 21 states. By 2000, there were 203 congregations... and every state had at least one MCC congregation at some point” (p. 147).

Other kinds of alternative institutions took hold with the rise of internet, as LGBT-identified Christians who were often isolated (and closeted) in their own church communities formed their own “safe spaces” online. The most successful venture was the Gay Christian Network (gaychristian.net), founded in 2001 and now home to over 20,000 members (Gay Christian Network 2013).

While the MCC and Gay Christian Network have provided safe havens for LGBT-identified Christians and their allies, the strategy of creating alternative institutions also had its limits: namely, the anti-LGBT messages delivered from pulpits of other Christian denominations nationwide were going unchallenged, and most Christian denominations continued to discriminate against LGBT individuals as members and clergy. Indeed, denominations like the MCC were denied membership even in the relatively progressive National Council of Churches (Religious News Service 1992).

As another means of countering ongoing discrimination against LGBT individuals in Christian denominations, some pro-LGBT religious activists have founded social movement organizations and related advocacy organizations engaged in direct action and awareness-raising around LGBT issues within Christianity in general. One early and notable organization, Soulforce, was founded in 1998 by Mel White, a former ghostwriter for fundamentalist leaders including Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, and Pat Robertson. The name of the organization came from a body of nonviolent teachings by Mahatma Gandhi, referring to the practice of passive resistance. Indeed, the organization quickly gained a reputation for direct actions, such as a 2000 protest outside the United Methodist Church's Methodist General Conference, which had recently defrocked Rev. Jimmy Creech for performing a ceremony for a same-sex couple. This early protest attracted civil rights luminaries including the Rev. James Lawson (known for organizing nonviolence workshops during the 1960 Nashville sit-in campaigns), Rodney Powell (a participant in the 1960 Nashville sit-in campaigns), Arun Gandhi (grandson of Mahatma Gandhi), and Yolanda King (the child of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

Particularly relevant to this study, beginning in 2006 Soulforce began to organize Equality Rides, modeled after the civil rights-era Freedom Rides, to Christian colleges and

universities that discriminated against LGBT students (see Powell 2011). The organization arrived at a list of target colleges each year and notified them of their plans to visit. Some colleges agreed to allow the organization on campus, sometimes co-sponsoring townhall sessions or debates about LGBT issues. Other colleges formally barred the organization from their campuses and arrested members when they attempted to cross onto their property. In both cases, the organization seemed to spark a largely absent debate over LGBT issues on conservative campuses, and occasionally, the group inspired formal changes in policy (Comer 2007).

Other more action-oriented organizations also joined Soulforce in seeking reforms within existing denominations. In 2005, Rev. Creech, along with Mitchell Gold (co-founder of the furniture design company Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams), founded another notable organization known as Faith in America. The organization, whose board members also include Powell, Williams, and former New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey, specializes in countering “religion-based bigotry and prejudice” through books, rapid response e-mails, and media outreach (Faith in America 2014). More recently, in 2013, a young gay evangelical student at Harvard founded the organization The Reformation Project, which holds conferences to train LGBT people and their allies to advocate for LGBT equality specifically in more conservative churches and communities (Vines 2013).

Perhaps just as importantly as these interfaith organizations, many Christian denominations have attracted their own LGBT activist and educational organizations. An incomplete list of these organizations include A Common Bond (Jehovah’s Witness), Affirmation (The Mormon Church), Axios (Eastern Orthodox, Byzantine Rite, and Eastern Catholic Christians), Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (American Baptist Churches USA and other mainline Baptist denominations), Brethren Mennonite Council (Church

of the Brethren), Changing Attitude (Anglican Church), Courage (Roman Catholic Church), Dignity USA (Roman Catholic Church), Emergence International (Christian Scientists), Evangelicals Concerned, Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (Quakers), GLAD Alliance (Disciples of Christ), Integrity USA (Episcopal Church in the United States of America), Lutherans Concerned/North America (Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church), Many Voices: A Black Church Movement for Gay & Transgender Justice, Methodists in New Directions (United Methodist Church USA), More Light Presbyterians (Presbyterian Church USA), Nazarene Ally (Church of the Nazarene), New Ways Ministries (Roman Catholic Church), Pink Menno (Mennonite Church USA), Reconciling Ministries Network (United Methodist Church USA), Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International (Seventh-Day Adventists), and the UCC Coalition (United Church of Christ) (see Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss 2012 for an analysis of many of these organizations).

With these combined pressures, mainline Protestant denominations especially have started becoming more inclusive of LGBT members and clergy. One of the earliest mainline denominations to open itself up to LGBT individuals was the Episcopal Church USA, which resolved in 1976 that “it is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God and have a full and equal claim... upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church” (Integrity USA 2014). This was followed by resolutions in 1994 barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation during the ordination process and in 2009 setting the Church down the path of recognizing same-sex unions (Integrity USA 2014). Not far behind the Episcopal Church was the United Church of Christ, which in 1985 passed a resolution encouraging openness to gay, lesbian, and bisexual clergy and members (it added

transgender persons to the statement in 2003), and which in 2005 encouraged marriage rights for same-sex couples (Open and Affirming Coalition 2014).

Especially as more and more states have legalized same-sex marriage, several other mainline Protestant denominations have joined the Episcopal Church USA and the United Church of Christ in opening their doors to LGBT members and clergy. In 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted in favor of the ordination of non-celibate gay, lesbian, and bisexual ministers, though it does not yet officially provide rites for same-sex unions (Kwon 2009). In 2010, the Presbyterian Church USA similarly voted to authorize the ordination of non-celibate gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (Kwon 2010), and by 2014, the Church also voted to allow pastors to officiate same-sex weddings in those states where it was legal (Ford 2014). Finally, in 2013, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) voted to affirm the “faith, baptism, and spiritual gifts of all Christians regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity,” thus authorizing churches to allow LGBT persons to become members and clergy (Martinez 2013).

The growing openness by mainline Protestant denominations allowed many students to envision opportunities for LGBT organizing on their religious campuses. For example, one student at Loyola named Elizabeth who attended one of these mainline Protestant denominations said her home church was known as “the gay church” and exposed her to knowledge about the LGBT community that she then communicated to others at Loyola:

R: My parents were always super cool about everything, for the most part, and yeah, growing up, I was always in a super liberal environment. My church was affiliated with [a mainline Protestant denomination] but was basically what most people would consider non-denominational – we had people who identified as atheist, agnostic, Jewish – it was crazy all over the place, and people referred to us as the gay church. So I just grew up

with that – actually one of the people we’re having for Out in the Workplace is a woman from my church who had one of the first same-sex ceremonies in my church, so I invited her to speak. So I kind of already had that supportive environment in my church, and my parents were still supportive even though at my high school nobody else was. ... And then coming here, I felt there were probably students maybe not from as an extreme of a background as me, and who probably weren’t – didn’t feel safe coming out in high school or whatever and were just really sheltered or were from rural Ohio and had no clue – like what Stonewall is. I wanted to provide that kind of grounding.

Despite the movement by these churches to welcome and affirm LGBT members and clergy, it remains true that some mainline Protestant denominations continue to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Most notably, the largest mainline Protestant denomination in the U.S., the United Methodist Church, while stating that LGBT individuals should be welcome in churches’ pews, continues to label homosexuality as a sin, bars openly gay individuals (though not transgender individuals) from ordination, and prevents ministers from performing same-sex unions (Human Rights Campaign 2014a). Furthermore, the landscape for LGBT individuals outside mainline Protestant churches remains bleak. Evangelical Protestant churches (including the Southern Baptist Convention, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Church of the Nazarene, the Assemblies of God, and most non-denominational churches) remain opposed to any form of LGBT rights, and often fiercely so (Human Rights Campaign 2014a). Historically black Protestant churches (such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ) and other denominations emerging out of the Christian tradition (including the Mormon Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church) have also opposed

ordination for LGBT members or the recognition of same-sex marriage (Human Rights Campaign 2014a).

Finally, the Roman Catholic Church deserves particular attention, given that it is by far the largest religious body in the U.S. (with over 60 million members). Although the Church officially welcomes celibate gay, lesbian, and bisexual members, a catechism states that “homosexual acts [are] acts of grave depravity,” and “under no circumstances can they be approved” (Human Rights Campaign 2014a). Accordingly, the church strongly opposes same-sex marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. While recent statements by the Pope have softened the Church’s image on LGBT rights – he told one reporter, “If a person is gay and seeks God and has good will, who am I to judge him?” (Donadio 2013) – the Church has not issued any formal changes in doctrine.

These divisions among Christian denominations have created room for many Christian universities to continue to oppose LGBT-inclusive policies on campus. Indeed, as chapter three will show, denominational affiliations heavily drive Christian universities’ stances toward LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies. Nevertheless, because even those churches that opposed LGBT rights were often changing the tone on which they spoke about LGBT issues, students have still found new opportunities to debate LGBT issues. For example, when asked why she thinks her campus has become more open to dialogue on LGBT issues, a Catholic student named Chelsea pointed to recent remarks by Pope Francis:

R: I would say I have definitely witnessed an increase in dialogue around LGBT issues since I’ve been here... And I think especially now with Pope Francis kind of being this new voice and stuff like that, I think people are sort of recognizing – I hate the, don’t hate the sinner, hate the sin – I think that saying itself is wrong – but I think at least people are

coming to realize that they can't, they shouldn't be persecuting, they shouldn't be pushing people away that, even if they don't agree, they sort of have to accept them for who they are, we're all sort of brothers and sisters you know.

CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving landscape for sexual minorities in the U.S. – and especially due to the twin pressures created by LGBT groups in U.S. schools and LGBT reform organizations in U.S. churches – students who a few years ago might have found themselves completely isolated on campus are now perceiving opportunities to mobilize for LGBT inclusion on their campuses. Students seeking to launch LGBT groups on Christian campuses can now count on a large national network of LGBT organizations for support, and public opinion seems to back their cause.

The next chapter provides further context into the specific LGBT groups and Christian campuses I study here. Specifically, I assess the spread of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination policies across all Christian colleges and universities in the U.S., which has created pressure on many campus administrators to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere for LGBT students on campuses.

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CHAPTER 3

RECONCILING RELIGION AND LGBT RIGHTS: CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES, THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS, AND LGBT INCLUSION

As the previous chapter showed, rapid advances by the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) movement in the United States have forced Christian denominations to grapple with questions about the morality of same-sex relationships and the inclusion of LGBT individuals as members and clergy (Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss 2012). While most Christian denominations continue to condemn same-sex relationships, and while public opinion polling shows that most Christians continue to disapprove of same-sex marriage (Public Religion Research Institute 2014), several mainline Protestant denominations have made headlines over the past few years for their decisions to accept LGBT individuals as members and allow clergy to officiate same-sex wedding ceremonies (Human Rights Campaign 2015). Furthermore, religious bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church have recently changed their tone, if not their teachings, on LGBT issues (Donado 2013).

The increasing openness of some Christian denominations to LGBT rights is also apparent in the changes taking place at Christian colleges and universities across the United States. Supported by rapid demographic changes that have made young people (ages 18-29) highly supportive of LGBT rights (Public Religion Research Institute 2014), students at a growing number of religiously-affiliated schools have petitioned administrators to recognize LGBT groups and adopt non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., Coley 2014; McEntarfer 2011). While some schools continue to oppose

such groups and policies, an increasing number of Christian colleges and universities has now approved LGBT student groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation (if not gender identity).

In this chapter, in an effort to provide further context into debates over LGBT rights on Christian college and university campuses, I address the following question: why are some Christian colleges and universities in the United States now supporting LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies while other Christian colleges and universities continue to resist them? The most intuitive answer might point to the *liberal* or *conservative beliefs* of Christian colleges' and universities' associated denominations – specifically, Christian colleges and universities that are tied to denominations that support same-sex relationships might be expected to support LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies, while Christian schools affiliated with denominations that view same-sex relationships as “sinful” would be expected to resist LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies. While such an answer is intuitive, I find that, surprisingly, most Christian colleges and universities that support LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies are tied to denominations that view same-sex relationships as “sinful.”

To theorize why some Christian colleges and universities support LGBT rights while other Christian schools resist them, I instead turn to recent insights on religion and social change, especially from literature on religion and the “culture wars,” about denominations' *individualist* and *communal orientations* (e.g., Kniss 2003; Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss 2012). Some denominations have historically exhibited individualist orientations, focusing most of their teachings on personal piety and morality. Other denominations exhibit communal orientations, and while they do not neglect issues of personal piety and morality, these denominations emphasize social justice. These *theological orientations* might potentially explain variations in Christian colleges

and universities' support for LGBT rights, such that Christian colleges and universities associated with denominations that exhibit communal orientations will support LGBT student groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, even when controlling for their denominations' views on the morality of same-sex relationships.

I assess such explanations by analyzing a unique database of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies across all Christian colleges and universities in the United States. As I will show, several measures of schools' theological orientations (a school's denominational affiliation, the interaction between a school's denominational affiliation and the percent of religion majors at a school, and a state's denominational composition) are associated with the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements at Christian colleges and universities. I find much less support for the idea that denominations' liberal or conservative teachings on same-sex relationships explain schools' stances on LGBT rights.

As I argue, the findings hold implications for understanding the changing role of religion in the "culture wars," especially debates over LGBT rights. They also hold important implications for the small but growing literature on LGBT-inclusive schools (Fetner and Kush 2008, Fine 2012, Kane 2013a), which has thus far limited its scope to an analysis of LGBT groups (rather than non-discrimination policies), and which has failed to interrogate the role of religion in LGBT-inclusive schools. I expand on these arguments below, but first I review existing research on both LGBT-inclusive schools and religion and social change, derive theoretical expectations and hypotheses for the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements at Christian colleges and universities, and discuss my data and analytic approach.

THEORIZING THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SCHOOL ADOPTION OF LGBT GROUPS AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

Why do some Christian colleges and universities in the United States support LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies while other Christian colleges and universities resist them? In addressing this question, an important first step would be to consider past explanations of LGBT-inclusive schools. Surprisingly, only a few existing studies have analyzed the factors associated with LGBT-inclusive schools (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013a), but they do suggest that certain institutional characteristics, student body characteristics, and socio-political contexts play a role in the adoption of LGBT groups and related phenomena such as LGBT centers (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013a). For example, in terms of schools' institutional characteristics, Kane (2013a) points to literature that shows that selective schools and wealthier schools tend to be both more liberal in their beliefs and in a better financial position to support efforts to promote LGBT inclusion, and she indeed finds that higher acceptance rates and higher endowment are positively associated with the adoption of LGBT groups in colleges and universities (though see Fine 2012). Similarly, drawing on the theory that “communities with more resources—including economic assets, human resources, knowledge, and allies—will be more successful at creating organizations” (Kane 2013a:834), Fetner and Kush (2008) and Fine (2012) find that student body size is positively associated with the adoption of LGBT groups and LGBT centers in U.S. schools, and Fetner and Kush (2008) and Kane (2013a) find that the number of students receiving free lunches or student loans is negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups in U.S. schools. (These studies produce mixed findings about the role of racial and gender composition in the adoption of LGBT groups.) Finally, drawing on the theory that efforts to promote social change will be more likely to

succeed when the political and cultural context is favorable to such causes, studies find that location in states that voted for Democratic Presidential candidates (Fine 2012), location in non-rural areas (Fetner and Kush 2008; though see Fine 2012, Kane 2013a), and location outside the south (Fine 2012) all predict the presence of LGBT groups.

While these past studies provide helpful insights into possible predictors of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, their applicability to the particular sample examined in this study – LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at Christian colleges and universities – is uncertain. For example, Fetner and Kush (2008) examine LGBT groups at U.S. high schools, not colleges and universities, while Fine (2012) studies LGBT resource centers at U.S. colleges and universities (a form of official institutional support for LGBT students that is distinct from LGBT student groups). Kane (2013a) does examine LGBT student groups at colleges and universities, but her sample is limited to the state of North Carolina. Importantly, previous scholars have said little about the potential role of religion in facilitating or impeding the spread of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies, other than to point out that religious schools are less inclusive of LGBT students (Kane 2013a) – a finding that does little to explain variation among religious schools.

In the absence of existing research and theory on religion and LGBT-inclusive schools, I thus turn to insights from literature on religion and social change, especially literature that examines religion and the so-called “culture wars” in the U.S. (Hunter 1991). Because this literature examines divisions both between and within religious groups over a full range of social issues (including LGBT rights), the literature provides potential insights on how religion might be linked to variation in support for LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies within the specific empirical context of Christian colleges and universities.

By far, the most popular explanation for variations in religious positions on social issues such as LGBT rights centers on *conservative* and *liberal* divisions within religion. For example, Wuthnow (1988, 1989) argues that Christians in the U.S. are increasingly divided by conservative versus liberal religious beliefs. Christians who hold conservative religious beliefs (self-described evangelicals and fundamentalists) – and who express a belief in the authority of scriptures and church leaders – are more likely to oppose abortion rights, no-fault divorce laws, and LGBT rights and thus align with the Republican Party. Christians who hold liberal religious beliefs – and who adhere to a modernist reading of the scriptures – tend to espouse progressive views on social issues and thus align with the Democratic Party. This divide is similar to the one Hunter (1991) focuses on in his book *Culture Wars*, which posits the division of Americans into an *orthodox camp* (including fundamentalist Christians, conservative Catholics, and Orthodox Jews) that submits to “an external, definable, and transcendent authority” and a *progressive camp* that agrees with “prevailing assumptions of contemporary life” (44-45).

A large body of research certainly supports the idea of a division of Christians along conservative and liberal lines, including through the close alignment of certain religious groups with the conservative political party (the Republican Party) in the U.S., and to a lesser extent the alignment of other religious groups with the liberal political party (the Democratic Party) in the U.S. For example, Wilcox (1991) recounts the “Moral Majority” campaign launched by many “religious right” groups (especially evangelicals) in the late 1970s through the 1980s to promote Republican candidates who supported traditional views of family life. Focusing specifically on LGBT rights, Fetner (2008) discusses the alliance between “religious right” groups and Republicans to support ballot initiatives that would roll back non-discrimination ordinances in the 1970s and 1980s.

Although such explanations of a widely-felt polarization within and between religious denominations correspond to the conventional wisdom of a split between liberals and conservatives in the U.S., some scholars question whether persons of faith can be so easily placed into liberal and conservative camps. For example, drawing on the work of Bellah et al. (1985), who focus attention on a broader split between individualists (who adhere to ideals of “utilitarian individualism”) and communitarians (who adhere to ideals of “civic republicanism”) within the U.S., Kniss (2003) urges attention to individualist and communal theological orientations within religion.¹ Specifically, while he acknowledges that religious groups are split in terms of their conservative versus liberal readings of scriptures, Kniss (2003) argues that religious groups are also divided in terms of their individualist versus communal theological orientations. Some denominations adopt an *individualist* orientation, believing that churches should focus on reforming individuals, such as by opposing practices (including homosexuality) that threaten their moral purity. Other denominations offer a *communal* orientation, holding that churches should focus on reforming wider communities, including by bringing about a more socially and economically just society.

While not all studies have employed this exact language of individualist and communal orientations, and while few studies link such orientations to positions on LGBT rights specifically, many studies do support the idea that denominations’ emphasis on personal piety versus social justice predict their stances on various social debates. In his seminal article on the role of religion in civil rights debates, for example, Gary Marx (1967) examines data from a

¹ I use the terms “individualist” and “communal” rather than related terms such as “libertarian” and “communitarian,” because those latter terms generally conflate a focus on individuals vs. communities with conservative vs. liberal social beliefs. Specifically, the term libertarian often implies that those who are focused on the plights of individuals also hold liberal social beliefs, and the term communitarian implies that those who are focused on reforming wider communities also hold conservative social beliefs, whereas I wish to avoid these assumptions.

nationwide survey of African-Americans in 1964 and reports on a general “incompatibility between piety and protest” in support of civil rights (69). This is because many denominations (which we might label as individualist) seek to “solace the individual” and “divert concern away from efforts at collective social change which might be brought about by man” (67).

Nevertheless, Marx does find support for civil rights among individuals in denominations following a “social gospel” (or communal) tradition, which focus not only on what Martin Luther King called the “souls of men” but also “the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them” (quoted in Marx 1978:71).

Similarly, within the sociology of religion, more recent research on the black church (e.g., Barnes 2004, 2005; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990) has commonly made a distinction between individualist or “priestly” orientations in religion (such as attendance to the “spiritual/religious needs of members”) and communal or “prophetic” functions of religion (such as the promotion of community empowerment). For example, Barnes (2004) shows that black churches specializing in communal or “prophetic” functions are more strongly involved in providing social services to their wider communities than black churches focused on individualist or “priestly” functions (202). (She does show that one practice of individualist congregations – the provision of religious programs – is positively and significantly correlated with service provision.)

Extant research on social movements also supports the link between communal orientations and support for social justice – if not because scholars have explicitly tested the role of theological orientation in support for various kinds of social change, but because case studies are so heavily biased toward denominations with communal orientations as compared to

denominations with individualist orientations. Indeed, social movement scholarship has overwhelmingly been concentrated on communalistic denominations such as black Protestant churches and colleges (e.g., work on the civil rights movement by Morris 1986; Johnny Williams 2002; Rhys Williams 2002), mainline Protestant denominations (e.g., work on LGBT movements by White 2015 and on peace and economic justice movements by Coy, Maney, and Woehrle 2008; Snarr 2011; Wood 2002; Wuthnow and Evans 2002), and the Catholic Church (e.g., other work on peace and economic justice movements by Smith 1991; Nepstad 2004; Palacios 2007), all of which have a strong history of social teachings and an emphasis on social justice. Much less work has examined individualist denominations, such as evangelical Protestant denominations, except to note these denominations' involvement in mobilization around issues of personal piety (e.g., Rhys Williams 2002; Williams and Blackburn 1996).

To acknowledge that individualist and communal orientations divide religious groups is not to argue that conservative versus liberal readings of scriptures do not also divide religious groups. However, it does call into question the presupposition that denominations with certain conservative (or liberal) teachings will necessarily seek to impose those teachings on their wider communities. Rather, thinking of how conservative versus liberal theological teachings may intersect with individualist versus communal orientations makes it possible to imagine how those who read scriptures as condemning certain moral practices might still tolerate those moral practices in their wider communities in the interest of ensuring universal "rights." There is substantial evidence that such a phenomenon exists. For example, on the issue of abortion, U.S. political history is rife with examples of Christian (especially Catholic) politicians who believe that abortion is morally wrong but still support the legalization of abortion. Perhaps more pertinently, denominations such as the United Methodist Church have adopted resolutions

advocating for a federal-level Employment Non-Discrimination Act even as they condemn same-sex relationships as “sinful” (Human Rights Campaign 2015).

In this chapter, I advance the notion that Christian colleges and universities’ individualist or communal orientations will explain their positions on LGBT student groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, even when controlling for their denominations’ conservative or liberal teachings on LGBT issues. In other words, while many Christian colleges and universities are affiliated with denominations that condemn homosexuality (e.g., black Protestant schools, Catholic schools, and some mainline Protestant schools), I expect that certain religious traditions’ history of social justice teachings will lead those schools to support the rights of all students, LGBT students included. Conversely, other Christian colleges and universities’ association with denominations that have historically focused on issues of individual morality and piety (e.g., evangelical Protestant schools and non-denominational schools) will lead those schools to oppose LGBT rights. Importantly, I measure the presence of schools’ *theological orientations* at multiple levels, such that I not only build on and extend previous literature on LGBT groups in schools, but I also provide theoretical robustness checks for the argument outlined in this chapter.

Religion and institutional context. I first seek to examine whether affiliation with denominations exhibiting certain theological orientations is associated with the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at Christian colleges and universities. Given the theory that denominations with individualist orientations will be less receptive to LGBT rights, I expect that schools belonging to such denominations will be less inclusive of LGBT students:

Hypothesis 1. Affiliation with denominations exhibiting individualist orientations will be negatively associated with the existence of LGBT groups, non-discrimination policies

inclusive of sexual orientation, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity.

Religion and student body characteristics. I next assess the possibility that the percent of religious studies and theology majors is linked to the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at Christian colleges and universities. Specifically, I expect that students will face steeper opposition for LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at schools with higher percentages of religious studies majors. This is not only because students in such majors may be less exposed to social justice issues, but also because colleges specializing in religious studies are more likely to be associated with individualist denominations that seek to shelter students from worldly concerns (e.g., Ringenberg 2006, chapter 5):

Hypothesis 2a. A higher percent of religious studies majors will be negatively associated with the existence of LGBT groups, non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity.

To explicitly test this latter possibility – that schools with high percentages of religious studies majors will oppose LGBT inclusion particularly because of their affiliation with individualist denominations – I include an interaction term for denominational affiliation and percent of religious studies students, which I expect to be negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination policies:

Hypothesis 2b. The interaction between affiliation with denominations with individualist theological orientations and the percent of religious studies students will be negatively associated with the existence of LGBT groups, non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity.

Religion and socio-political context. Finally, I assess whether the religious composition of the state in which a Christian college or university is embedded is linked to the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies on campus. Especially because Christian colleges and universities (all of which are private) often rely on financial support from residents of or churches in their wider communities, a higher percent of state residents belonging to denominations exhibiting individualist orientations might indicate religious campuses' opposition to LGBT rights, due to compositional and contextual influences. I thus propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. A higher percent of state residents who are members of denominations exhibiting individualist orientations will be negatively associated with the existence of LGBT groups, non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity.

DATA AND METHODS

Population of Interest

To examine Christian colleges and universities' inclusiveness of LGBT students, I generated a list of Christian colleges and universities in the United States using the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS 2014). I adopted an inclusive definition of "Christian," comprising any sects or denominations that self-identify as Christian and/or emerged out of Christian theological traditions. Importantly, the list of Christian colleges and universities includes only those schools that are actively affiliated with religious denominations; it does not include colleges and universities that historically associated themselves with Christian denominations but have since broken off their ties. The list is also

limited to those schools that offer undergraduate programs and thus excludes schools that only provide post-graduate degrees (e.g., in medicine). The final list includes 682 Christian colleges and universities.

Dependent Variables

To assess the degree to which Christian colleges and universities are inclusive of LGBT students, I employ three dependent variables: the presence of LGBT groups, the presence of non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation, and the presence of non-discrimination statements inclusive of gender identity. For the first of these dependent variables, I gathered data on which Christian colleges and universities had officially recognized LGBT groups as of the summer of 2013. Specifically, I visited each college's and university's website, located their clubs and organizations page, and identified GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances) or other clubs related to sexual or gender identity. If an LGBT group was not listed on the student clubs and organizations page, I then conducted secondary searches on Google using the college's or university's name and then search terms such as "Gay-Straight Alliance," "Gay," and "LGBT." If these searches brought me to documentation that a college or university had an officially-recognized GSA, I recorded a "1" for the variable; if these searches yielded no positive evidence that a college or university had an officially recognized Gay-Straight Alliance, I recorded a "0" for the variable. Overall, 307 of the 682 schools (about 45%) contained officially-recognized LGBT groups.

For my second and third dependent variables, I gathered data on which Christian colleges and universities had adopted non-discrimination statements inclusive of "sexual orientation" (or related terms such as "sexual preference") and/or "gender identity" (or related terms such as

“gender expression”). Specifically, in each school’s most recent student handbook, I searched for terms such as “discrimination,” “non-discrimination,” “sexual,” and “gender.” If a non-discrimination statement was not included in the student handbook, or if the non-discrimination statements were not inclusive of “sexual orientation” and/or “gender identity,” I then conducted secondary searches on Google using the schools’ names and the aforementioned search terms, which often brought me to admissions pages that listed the schools’ non-discrimination policies for students. If I found evidence that the school had a non-discrimination statement inclusive of “sexual orientation” and/or “gender identity,” I recorded a “1” for one or both of these variables; otherwise, I recorded a “0.” Overall, 375 of the 682 schools contained non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation (about 55%), while only 70 of the 682 schools contained non-discrimination statements inclusive of gender identity (about 10%).

Independent Variables

To measure the religious characteristics of Christian colleges and universities that might predict inclusion of LGBT students, I first included an institutional context variable indicating the individualist or communal orientation of each school’s affiliated denomination. To construct this variable, I first obtained information on religious affiliation from the IPEDS (2014) website. I then coded these data further according to classifications contained in Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss (2012). Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss (2012:68) label all black Protestant denominations (e.g., National Baptist Convention and African Methodist Episcopal Church), mainline Protestant denominations (e.g., Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church), and the Roman Catholic Church as exhibiting a communal orientation. By contrast, Fuist, Stoll,

and Kniss (2012:68) consider evangelical Protestant denominations (e.g., Assemblies of God, Churches of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, and Southern Baptist Convention) to possess individualist orientations. The authors do not explicitly consider non-denominational Protestant churches, but I code these as also possessing individualist orientations, as their doctrines generally align with evangelical Protestant denominations. I recorded a “1” for individualist denominations and a “0” for communal denominations to facilitate the interpretability of the interaction term that contains this variable and the percent of religion majors at a school.

I next included a variable capturing a religious aspect of each school’s student body – specifically, the percent of religion majors on campus. I constructed this variable by dividing the total number of religious studies majors and theology majors on campus by the total number of degrees conferred during the 2012-2013 school year at each school, using information from each college’s listing on IPEDS (2014).

Finally, to capture a religious aspect of a school’s socio-political context, I included a variable indicating the percent of residents in each state that belong to individualist or communalistic denominations. Specifically, I obtained information on a school’s location from the IPEDS (2014) website before gathering corresponding state-level denominational membership data from the ASARB’s Association of Religion Data Archives (2015). These archives report the number of residents belonging to “Evangelical Protestant” (including non-denominational) churches – a category that overlaps with the individualist category – which I then divided by the total state population.

The variables listed above allow me to test my theory that individualist versus communal orientations predict schools’ opposition or support of LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination policies. However, to measure an important alternative explanation – that

conservative versus liberal teachings on LGBT issues predict schools' opposition or support of LGBT rights – I include a variable indicating whether each school's affiliated denomination considers same-sex relationships to be “sinful,” drawing on information from the Human Rights Campaign's (2015) database of faith positions on LGBT issues. Schools affiliated with denominations that consider same-sex relationships to be “sinful” were coded as “conservative” (“1”), and schools affiliated with denominations that do not consider same-sex relationships to be “sinful” were coded as “liberal” (“0”). Note that I focus on denominations' teachings on same-sex relationships because not all denominations have clear teachings on gender identity.

Control Variables

I also included several control variables at the levels of the institution, student body, and socio-political context, as contained in past studies on the presence of LGBT groups in schools (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013a). For measures of each school's institutional context, I include variables on school selectivity and endowment, drawing on information on the IPEDS (2014) website about the percent of students accepted to the school during the 2012-2013 admissions cycle, as well as information from FindTheBest on endowment per student (FindTheBest 2014).

For measures of student body characteristics, I included variables for the number of students at the school, the percent of non-white students at the school, the percent of women at the school, and the percent of students on loans. Each of these variables draws on IPEDS' (2014) data from the 2012-2013 school year, with the exception of the percent of students on student loans, which is based on data from the 2011-2012 school year (the most current year available).

Finally, for measures of each school's socio-political context, I included a variable on a state's percent vote for President Obama in the 2012 election cycle (based on data from *The New York Times* 2012), as well as a dichotomous variable indicating each school's location in the south vs. non-south (using the U.S. Bureau of the Census' classification of southern states). Finally, I drew on IPEDS' (2014) classifications on the type of area in which a school is located for a dichotomous variable on rurality.

Analytic Strategy

To assess predictors of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at Christian colleges and universities, I provide both descriptive statistics and results from multivariate logistic regressions. The descriptive statistics compare schools with LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies to schools without such groups or policies in terms of each of the independent variables related to theological orientations (but not holding any other variables constant). I indicate statistically significant differences between schools with LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies and schools without such groups and policies using chi-square tests (for tests of proportions) and t-tests (for tests of means). The multivariate logistic regression analyses provide the logged odds of a Christian college or university having an LGBT group, a non-discrimination policy inclusive of sexual orientation, or a non-discrimination policy inclusive of gender identity. Logistic regression is most suitable since each of the dependent variables is dichotomous. The variables in the logistic regression analyses are standardized, such that the coefficients measure the change in predicted probabilities associated with a one-standard deviation change in the predictor variables.

Because Christian colleges and universities are grouped across common geographic units (states) and denominations, I also assessed potential threats to statistical independence posed by correlated data (which, if present, could result in deflated standard errors and inflated statistical significance). Specifically, I calculated intraclass correlation (ICC) coefficients that indicate the proportion of total variance in LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies explained by clustering. I found that taking the state in which a Christian college or university is located into account explained little of the overall variance in LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies. Specifically, I uncovered ICCs of 0.07 for GSAs and 0.04 for non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, indicating that 7% of the total variation in GSAs and 4% of the total variation in non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation is explained by clustering at the state level. In contrast, I found that the denomination with which a Christian college or university is affiliated generally explains a significant amount of variation in LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies – i.e., I uncovered ICCs of 0.43 and 0.55 for GSAs and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, respectively. (No significant intraclass correlation existed for models predicting non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity.) To adjust for correlation among schools affiliated with the same denomination, I thus employ cluster robust standard errors (by denomination).

RESULTS

Bivariate Analyses

Table 3-1 compares schools with LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies to schools without such groups and policies in terms of each variable related to religions' theological

Table 3-1. Descriptive Statistics for LGBT Groups and Non-Discrimination Policies at Christian Universities

	LGBT Groups		Sexual Orientation		Gender Identity		
	All	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Affiliation with Denomination with Individualist Orientations	36.22	4.56	62.13***	6.67	72.31***	7.14	39.54***
Religion Majors (ave.)	11.84	1.11	20.68***	1.90	24.05***	1.79	13.02***
State Adherents of Denominations with Individualist Orientations (ave.)	19.80	16.60	22.41***	18.06	21.91***	17.03	20.11***

N=682; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

orientations (but not holding other variables constant). The results show clear patterns in terms of schools' affiliation with individualist denominations. Specifically, among the schools that officially approve LGBT student groups, only a small minority (under 5%) are affiliated with individualist denominations, whereas the majority of schools without LGBT groups are associated with individualist denominations. Similarly, among schools that have adopted non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, only a few (around 7% each) are affiliated with individualist denominations. These results provide support for hypothesis 1. The results also reveal clear patterns in terms of the percent of religious majors at a school. Fewer than 2% of students at schools with LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements major in religion, whereas a significant minority of students at schools without LGBT groups (around 21%), non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation (around 24%), and non-discrimination statements inclusive of gender identity (around 13%) major in religion, providing support to hypothesis 2. Finally, the results show that schools with LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements are located in states with a lower percent of adherents to individualist denominations (16-18%) compared to schools without such groups and policies (20-22%), providing initial support to hypothesis 3.

Logistic Regression Analyses

In the next few tables, I present logistic regression results for each of the dependent variables (presence of LGBT groups, presence of non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation, and presence of non-discrimination statements inclusive of gender identity). Table 3-2 displays the results of the logistic regression analysis for the presence of LGBT groups. Model 1 represents a base model that excludes the primary religion variables of interest; the measure of model fit (Nagelkerke) is around 0.31. The remaining models introduce the religion variables *seriatim*. Model 2 shows that affiliation with an individualist denomination is significantly and negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups, in line with Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, Model 3 shows that the percent of religion majors at a school is significantly and negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups, providing support to Hypothesis 2a, and Model 4 shows that the interaction between affiliation with individualist denominations and the percent of religion majors at a school is significantly and negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups, providing support to Hypothesis 2b. Importantly, the models containing these variables improve substantially on the base model, growing the Nagelkerke measure to 0.57 in model 2 and model 3 and to 0.65 in model 4. However, while model 5 shows that the percent of state adherents in individualist denominations is significantly and negatively associated with the presence of LGBT groups, this variable only slightly improves upon the base model (0.33 versus the initial 0.3). Overall, the fit for the combined model (Model 6) is substantial, with the Nagelkerke indicator approaching 0.66, and notably the variable assessing the alternative explanation (that affiliation with a denomination that condemns same-sex relationships will reduce the presence of LGBT groups) is not significant.

Table 3-2. Logistic Regression Models for LGBT Groups at Christian Universities

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>	
	(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)	
<u>Religion Variables</u>												
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination			-3.572 ***				-6.048 ***				-6.024 ***	
			0.393				1.610				1.721	
% Religion Majors					-11.531 ***		-6.923 ***				-7.003 ***	
					2.094		1.550				1.592	
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination x % Religion Majors							-8.510 *				-8.764 *	
							3.853				3.939	
% State Adherents of Individualist Denominations									-0.607 ***		-0.396 *	
									0.155		0.178	
Affiliation with Conservative Denomination											-0.267	
											0.400	
<u>Institutional Characteristics</u>												
Endowment (FTE)	1.306 **		0.767 **		1.154 **		0.959 ***		1.334 **		0.942 ***	
	0.492		0.293		0.336		0.210		0.490		0.228	
% Acceptance	-0.015		0.046		0.059		0.035		-0.019		0.039	
	0.148		0.229		0.227		0.266		0.158		0.263	
<u>Student Body Characteristics</u>												
Number of Students	0.503		0.552 ***		0.289		0.417 *		0.557 **		0.461 **	
	0.259		0.163		0.213		0.211		0.202		0.148	
% Non-White	-0.273 *		-0.507 ***		-0.489 **		-0.588 ***		-0.251 *		-0.553 **	
	0.107		0.142		0.171		0.184		0.104		0.180	
% Women	0.395 *		0.048		-0.217		-0.245		0.381 *		-0.251	
	0.164		0.134		0.115		0.139		0.165		0.128	
% Student Loans	0.476 ***		0.453 ***		0.378 *		0.337 *		0.475 ***		0.317 *	
	0.116		0.113		0.152		0.151		0.117		0.158	
<u>Contextual Characteristics</u>												
% State Vote for Obama	0.376 ***		0.418 ***		0.501 ***		0.531 ***		0.084		0.342 *	
	0.087		0.090		0.124		0.140		0.099		0.138	
Non-South	0.309		-0.124		0.073		-0.196		-0.245		-0.538	
	0.339		0.224		0.348		0.233		0.397		0.349	
Non-Rural	0.389		0.716 **		0.921 ***		1.004 **		0.378		1.052 **	
	0.256		0.247		0.262		0.328		0.248		0.348	
<u>Constant</u>	-0.657		0.222		-5.152 ***		-2.647 **		-0.318		-2.602 *	
	0.511		0.405		1.104		0.885		0.533		1.085	
Chi-Square	177.45 ***		377.23 ***		375.97 ***		454.96 ***		190.14 ***		459.02 ***	
Nagelkerke	0.306		0.568		0.567		0.651		0.325		0.655	

Note: N=682; standardized coefficients with standard errors clustered by denomination; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Many of the control variables were also significant in Table 3-2, and for ease of reference I refer only to the combined model. Model 6 shows that schools with higher endowments, more students, fewer non-white students, and more students on loans are more supportive of LGBT student groups. Furthermore, the state vote for Obama and location in a non-rural area are both positively and significantly related to the presence of LGBT student groups. Each of these findings is consistent with previous literature, with the exception of the finding on student loans (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013a). However, some variables that were significant predictors of LGBT student groups in past studies are not significant here, most notably the selectivity of a school and the percent of women in the student body.

Table 3-3 provides logistic regression results for non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation. Model 2 shows that affiliation with an individualist denomination is significantly and negatively associated with a non-discrimination policy inclusive of sexual orientation, providing more support for Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, the variable for the percent of religion majors at a school and the term that interacts affiliation with an individualist denomination with the percent of religion majors at a school are both significant and negatively associated with this non-discrimination policy in Models 3 and 4, providing further support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b. (Note that the percent of religion majors does become insignificant in the presence of both the interaction term and the other religion variables in the combined model.) Finally, Model 5 shows that while a higher percent of state residents belonging to individualist denominations is negatively associated with the presence of non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation, in line with Hypothesis 3, the “value-added” in terms of model fit is again low, and this variable drops in significance in the combined model (Model 6). Together, these religion variables significantly boost the overall fit of the model (from 0.19 in the base

Table 3-3. Logistic Regression Models for Non-Discrimination Statements with Sexual Orientation at Christian Universities

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>	
	(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)		(se)	
<u>Religion Variables</u>												
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination			-3.504 ***				-4.031 ***				-3.842 ***	
			0.327				0.578				0.606	
% Religion Majors					-3.198 *		-0.818				-0.832	
					1.491		0.540				0.581	
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination x % Religion Majors							-3.172 *				-3.071 *	
							1.334				1.293	
% State Adherents of Individualist Denominations									-0.449 ***		-0.098	
									0.133		0.191	
Affiliation with Conservative Denomination											-0.680	
											0.468	
<u>Institutional Characteristics</u>												
Endowment (FTE)	0.698		0.194		0.401		0.125		0.702		0.073	
	0.482		0.227		0.335		0.215		0.486		0.217	
% Acceptance	-0.025		0.062		0.096		0.092		-0.034		0.118	
	0.063		0.133		0.078		0.132		0.065		0.132	
<u>Student Body Characteristics</u>												
Number of Students	0.340		0.366 **		0.087		0.238		0.389 *		0.268 *	
	0.205		0.141		0.120		0.122		0.188		0.126	
% Non-White	0.182		0.107		0.173		0.110		0.204		0.151	
	0.137		0.143		0.138		0.151		0.138		0.147	
% Women	0.517 ***		0.164		0.030		-0.036		0.501 ***		-0.025	
	0.131		0.149		0.091		0.090		0.133		0.091	
% Student Loans	0.400 ***		0.332 ***		0.236		0.239 *		0.399 ***		0.214	
	0.106		0.097		0.123		0.111		0.102		0.116	
<u>Contextual Characteristics</u>												
% State Vote for Obama	0.212 **		0.257 *		0.298 ***		0.310 **		-0.015		0.270	
	0.081		0.104		0.079		0.107		0.093		0.148	
Non-South	0.148		-0.466		0.059		-0.473		-0.268		-0.545	
	0.337		0.267		0.357		0.282		0.403		0.329	
Non-Rural	-0.125		-0.078		0.101		0.034		-0.140		0.125	
	0.191		0.150		0.163		0.163		0.183		0.162	
<u>Constant</u>	0.254		1.727 ***		-0.710		1.411 ***		0.524 *		1.205 **	
	0.458		0.255		0.684		0.317		0.476		0.427	
Chi-Squared	106.54 ***		371.78 ***		236.69 ***		406.83 ***		114.39 ***		412.00 ***	
Nagelkerke	0.193		0.562		0.392		0.601		0.207		0.607	

Note: N=682; standardized coefficients with standard errors clustered by denomination; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

model to 0.61 in the combined model), and importantly, the alternative explanation that denominations' conservative stances on same-sex relationships might be linked to schools' support for inclusive non-discrimination policies is not supported in the combined model.

Compared to the models for LGBT group presence, control variables related to other institutional, student body, and socio-political characteristics that might explain the presence of non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation are not as robust to the various specifications provided in Table 3-3. In fact, with the exception of the student body size, all control variables that were significant in the combined model in Table 3-2 are reduced to insignificance in the combined model (Model 6) of Table 3-3. This suggests that past studies' explanations of LGBT groups may not be as easily portable to the study of inclusive non-discrimination policies.

Finally, Table 3-4 provides results of logistic regression analyses for non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in Model 2, affiliation with an individualist denomination is once again a significant and negative predictor of the inclusive non-discrimination policy, providing more support for hypothesis 1. As Model 3 shows, the variable for percent of religion majors is also a significant and negative predictor of non-discrimination policies inclusive of gender identity, providing support for hypothesis 2a. However, in contrast to Table 3-3, the interaction between affiliation with an individualist denomination and the percent of religion majors at a school is not a significant predictor in any model, providing no support for hypothesis 2b. This is perhaps due to the fewer schools that support trans-inclusive policies and thus the fewer degrees of freedom in these models. The variable indicating the percent of state adherents of individualist denominations is also insignificant in reduced and combined models, providing no support for hypothesis 3.

Table 3-4. Logistic Regression Models for Non-Discrimination Statements with Gender Identity at Christian Universities

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	(se)	(se)	(se)	(se)	(se)	(se)
<u>Religion Variables</u>						
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination		-1.973 ***		-1.467 *		-1.295 *
		0.594		0.590		0.616
% Religion Majors			-2.376 **	-1.235 *		-1.233 *
			0.863	0.587		0.605
Affiliation with Individualist Denomination x % Religion Majors				0.121		0.081
				0.747		0.767
% State Adherents of Individualist Denominations					-0.301	-0.209
					0.172	0.197
Affiliation with Conservative Denomination						-0.506
						0.288
<u>Institutional Characteristics</u>						
Endowment (FTE)	0.245 *	0.142	0.208	0.141	0.240 *	0.123
	0.115	0.099	0.118	0.108	0.111	0.123
% Acceptance	-0.019	0.011	0.036	0.030	-0.028	0.051
	0.104	0.114	0.121	0.120	0.105	0.124
<u>Student Body Characteristics</u>						
Number of Students	0.312 ***	0.320 ***	0.253 **	0.280 **	0.335 ***	0.316 ***
	0.089	0.092	0.091	0.096	0.095	0.090
% Non-White	0.059	0.027	0.057	0.039	0.076	0.092
	0.118	0.107	0.120	0.109	0.118	0.105
% Women	0.188 *	0.035	-0.029	-0.038	0.183	-0.034
	0.093	0.078	0.093	0.085	0.094	0.090
% Student Loans	0.162	0.128	0.108	0.080	0.151	0.056
	0.130	0.124	0.139	0.128	0.126	0.123
<u>Contextual Characteristics</u>						
% State Vote for Obama	0.345 *	0.295	0.353 *	0.309	0.222	0.251
	0.170	0.166	0.179	0.171	0.187	0.194
Non-South	-0.242	-0.405	-0.328	-0.410	-0.522	-0.581
	0.267	0.246	0.254	0.245	0.331	0.310
Non-Rural	0.382	0.431	0.509	0.475	0.364	0.549
	0.349	0.340	0.342	0.347	0.349	0.372
<u>Constant</u>	-2.467 ***	-1.983 ***	-3.256 ***	-2.489 ***	-2.295 ***	-2.622 ***
	0.439	0.368	0.505	0.382	0.440	0.416
Chi-Squared	30.22 ***	55.00 ***	48.07 ***	59.41 ***	31.78 ***	62.09 ***
Nagelkerke	0.090	0.160	0.141	0.172	0.094	0.180

Note: N=682; standardized coefficients with standard errors clustered by denomination; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Among the remaining control variables, the number of students at a school is positive and significant in the combined model (Model 6), but the remaining variables are again insignificant in the combined model (and indeed in most reduced models). It is important to note that the indicator for model fit in the combined model (Model 6) is only 0.18, compared to 0.09 in the base model. Thus, the presence of policies inclusive of gender identity may be better explained by idiosyncrasies of each of the individual schools rather than any patterns apparent in the indicators employed here.

Multilevel Analyses: A Robustness Check

To assess the robustness of these results, I utilized multilevel models with colleges nested within denominations (not shown here) as another way to correct for correlation among schools affiliated with the same denomination. I uncovered few differences between the logistic regression and the multilevel models. In terms of the religion variables, the only change was that the variable for the proportion of theology students at a school became significant in the combined model predicting the presence of non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation, such that it is now a significant predictor for all three dependent variables. In terms of the control variables, the variable indicating the state vote for Obama became insignificant in the combined models predicting the presence of LGBT groups and the presence of non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation. In general, then, the core findings of the paper remain supported across the different modeling procedures.

DISCUSSION

Why are some Christian colleges and universities more receptive to LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies than others? Some of the results reported above are consistent with past literature on approval of LGBT groups in U.S. schools (Fetner and Kush 2008; Fine 2012; Kane 2013a): Christian colleges and universities with higher endowments, larger student bodies, fewer non-white students, presence in states with higher support for President Obama, and presence in non-rural areas are more open to LGBT groups. However, few of the factors identified in past studies are linked to Christian colleges and universities' adoption of non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, past studies on LGBT-inclusive schools mostly assume that religion is a barrier to LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies, leaving us without an understanding of why some Christian schools are open to such groups and policies while others are not.

Building on recent insights on religion and social change, especially insights on religion and the “culture wars” (e.g., Kniss 2003; Fuist, Stoll, and Kniss 2012), I provide strong evidence to support the theory that the individualist orientations of certain denominations impede the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies, while the communal orientations of other denominations facilitate the approval of such groups and policies. For example, I show that schools affiliated with individualist denominations are less supportive of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies than schools affiliated with communalistic denominations. Furthermore, I show that the percent of religion majors at the school is generally a significant, negative predictor of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, and this seems due in part to the large presence of religion majors at many schools affiliated with individualist denominations. Finally, I find limited evidence for a negative

effect of a state's percent of adherents to individualist denominations on the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation (but not gender identity).

While these variables indicate strong support for the role of denominations' theological orientations in the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements at Christian colleges and universities, it is again important to consider alternative explanations. In particular, many past studies on religion and the "culture wars" link conservative versus liberal divides within religion to stances on LGBT rights. To assess this explanation, in the analyses above I included a variable indicating whether a school's denomination viewed same-sex relationships as "sinful" – a variable that effectively re-groups Black Protestant denominations, certain mainline Protestant denominations (such as the United Methodist Church), and the Roman Catholic Church into the side that includes evangelical Protestant denominations. Yet as I showed, this variable was not a significant predictor of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies at Christian colleges and universities, at least when controlling for schools' association with individualist denominations. In a reduced model, not shown here, a variable indicating whether a denomination labeled same-sex relationships as "sinful" reached significance at the 0.05 level for the presence of LGBT groups, but the Nagelkerke indicator of model fit changed only slightly from 0.31 to 0.34. Similarly, in reduced models, the variable was a significant predictor of non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity at the 0.05 and .01 levels, but with lower overall model fits of 0.27 and 0.11, respectively. In other models not shown here, I also assessed a possible interaction between a denomination's conservative position on same-sex relationships and the percent of religion majors at a school. However, this interaction failed to reach significance in both combined and reduced models.

One might wonder why a denomination's stance on the morality of same-sex relationships proves so inconsequential in explaining the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements at Christian colleges and universities. For further help, it is worth considering statistics on those colleges and universities affiliated with communalistic denominations that nevertheless view same-sex relationships as "sinful." The United Methodist Church, a communalistic denomination that officially condemns same-sex relationships, is affiliated with 84 of the 682 schools in my sample, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation can be found at 79 of them – that is, 94% of all United Methodist schools. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church, a religious group that has a well-developed body of social justice teachings (e.g., liberation theology) but that is well-known for its conservative stances on sexuality, is associated with 189 of the 682 schools in my sample, and non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation have been adopted at 145 (or 77%) of them. This includes all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities but is certainly not limited to them. Finally, only 10 schools in the sample actively affiliate with historically black denominations, and half of them support non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation. (Most HBCUs in my sample are affiliated with historically-white mainline Protestant denominations that support inclusive non-discrimination statements at high rates.) Together, it is worth noting that these denominations – which label same-sex relationships as sinful – are associated with the majority (229 of 375) of Christian colleges and universities with non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation. As I argue again, then, it is not denominations' stances on same-sex relationships that best explains schools' support for LGBT groups and inclusive non-discrimination statements, but rather certain denominations' communal orientations.

Indeed, the individualist versus communal divide may very well extend to the very heart of these Christian colleges and universities' missions. Christian schools associated with individualist denominations are much more likely to see themselves as serving students who actively identify as Christians (Ringenberg 2006), and thus most would have no qualms about excluding students who do not actively agree with their own beliefs and missions. Christian schools associated with communalistic denominations, on the other hand, will generally view themselves as serving broader communities (Ringenberg 2006); while they are generally no less religious in the sense that most will have a chapel, hire campus ministers, require students to take one or more religion classes, and actively promote their religious identification, they carry no expectation that all their students (or even all their faculty) actively identify as Christian. Thus, schools associated with communalistic denominations would be much more willing to support LGBT groups and adopt non-discrimination statements even if their denominations condemn same-sex relationships.

CONCLUSION

As attitudes toward LGBT rights rapidly change, Christian denominations across the United States are increasingly reconsidering their teachings and policies on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Past studies have examined Christian congregations' increasing openness to LGBT members (Adler 2012; Kane 2013b), but this chapter is one of the first studies to examine Christian colleges and universities' inclusiveness of LGBT students. In showing that, contrary to common perceptions, the majority of Christian colleges and universities have adopted non-discrimination statements inclusive of sexual orientation, and just

under half of Christian colleges and universities have approved LGBT groups, this chapter provides new evidence into the LGBT movement's inroads into religious communities.

The findings in this chapter make several contributions to existing scholarly literature, as well as point to directions for future research. For example, in terms of existing literature on LGBT-inclusive schools, studies that predict the presence of LGBT groups at the college level are still quite rare and are sometimes restricted in geographic scope (Kane 2013a; Fine 2012); studies of non-discrimination policies in schools are even sparser. Furthermore, existing studies on LGBT-inclusive schools have seldom interrogated the role of religion in the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination statements. By analyzing a wide range of LGBT-inclusive policies, and by demonstrating the importance of religion to the adoption of these policies, this chapter provides an empirical and theoretical extension to previous studies of LGBT-inclusive schools. At the same time, the results point to the need for further research on LGBT-inclusive schools. For example, while I draw on data on the presence of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies as indicators of LGBT inclusivity, these data tell only part of the story of the "campus climate" for LGBT students at Christian colleges and universities. Future research might examine outcomes such as students' perceptions of school safety for LGBT students or the size of LGBT student groups. Also, while this analysis deployed several variables related to denominations' individualist versus communal orientations, future research might further interrogate the role of religion in the adoption of LGBT-inclusive policies in schools, including the role of students' religious attitudes (e.g., students' communal orientations or stances on homosexuality) and students' religious practices (e.g., whether students are required to attend chapels, whether students regularly attend church, and which kinds of churches students attend).

Because this chapter uses cross-sectional data, it is limited in its ability to establish causality. Thus, research on LGBT-inclusive schools might also benefit from longitudinal data on the adoption of LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies. While the causal ordering of most independent variables in this study can be assumed (e.g., I uncovered very little evidence of schools changing between this-worldly and other-worldly religious affiliations over the past several years, and most schools that emphasize or require religious studies have done so since their founding), future studies might unpack the complex association between the rapid change in attitudes toward LGBT rights and the growth in LGBT groups and non-discrimination policies.

Finally, this chapter contributes to the broad literature on religion and social change, especially religion and the “culture wars.” Scholarly and popular wisdom suggest that religious debates over LGBT rights can be explained by liberal versus conservative divides. Building on recent insights from Kniss (2003), I argue instead that denominations’ positions on LGBT rights are best understood when one also takes into account their individualist versus communal orientations. While not disputing that left / right distinctions can partly explain religious debates, this perspective adds nuance to traditional understandings of the so-called “culture wars,” showing that denominations that have developed a language of “rights” may choose to extend those rights even to those with whom they disagree. Future research might analyze the role of individualist versus communal orientations in other social and cultural debates, as well as examine LGBT inclusion in other religious domains – for example, in places of worship or workplaces affiliated with other religions. Understanding the possibility for religion to facilitate LGBT inclusion is important, given that conservative religious attitudes continue to serve as a source of bigotry toward LGBT individuals (Whitley 2009) and given that religion is still so commonly invoked to oppose LGBT rights.

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CHAPTER 4

PATHWAYS TO ACTIVISM: COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND PARTICIPATION IN LGBT RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM

Given that LGBT movements have long been characterized by their celebration of diversity (Armstrong 2002), it is perhaps unsurprising that research on LGBT movements has shed light on the diversity of activist groups. For instance, research on LGBT movements has shown activist groups take diverse forms in their efforts to target not only the state but also seek cultural change (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008). Research on LGBT movements has similarly shown that activist groups maintain diverse means of achieving their goals by working not only to generate material resources and disseminate collective action frames but also to reconfigure collective identities (Taylor and Whittier 1992) and stimulate emotions (Gould 2009). As I argue in this chapter, attention to LGBT movements can also reveal important insights into the diversity of participants in activist groups. Specifically, turning to this dissertation's central focus on participation in activist groups, I argue that LGBT movements can challenge scholars' notion of "activist" as a singular, unchanging construct and reveal the multiplicity of motives and means associated with participation in activist groups (see also Isaac et al. forthcoming).

For years, research on why and how individuals join activist groups has focused on identifying a single, consistent set of factors associated with individual participation in activist groups. Scholars interested in the "why" of participation have generally highlighted participants' socialization into the values, tactics, and goals of an activist group, which generally contributes to their "attitudinal affinity" with an activist group (McAdam 1986). Furthermore, scholars

interested in the “how” of participation have often pointed to individuals’ prior involvement in activist groups, which provides them with personal ties or organizational linkages that might “pull” individuals into other activist groups (the idea of “micro-structural availability”) (McAdam 1986). Finally, scholars have argued that participants generally lack pre-existing family and work commitments that might detract from individuals’ participation (the idea of “biographical availability”) (McAdam 1986).

While scholars have amassed a large body of research on “micro-mobilization,” the literature has several shortcomings that suggest that the search for a single, consistent set of factors associated with participation in activist groups is misguided. First, existing research on micro-mobilization is rife with inconsistencies and contradictions regarding the factors necessary or sufficient for participation. For instance, while attitudinal affinity was long considered to be necessary for participation (e.g., the Freedom Summer voter registration drive studied by McAdam 1986), some recent studies show that attitudinal affinity is sometimes an outcome rather than a prerequisite of participation (e.g., the religious pro-life movements studied by Munson 2008).

Second, much of the existing literature has ignored between-group variation in paths to participation – that is, the idea that different social movements might have qualitatively distinct pathways of participation. For example, scholars have sometimes assumed that processes of micro-mobilization in activist groups seeking political changes will be similar to activist groups seeking cultural and lifestyle changes (see critique by Jasper 1997). Yet, while it may indeed make sense that factors like attitudinal affinity are a “prerequisite” for activist groups targeting outside groups like the government (e.g., the Freedom Summer movement studied by McAdam 1986), it should not be surprising that factors like attitudinal affinity could also be an “outcome”

of activist groups focused on transforming the lifestyles of participants (e.g., religious movements studied by Munson 2008; Davis and Robinson 2012; Snow et al. 1980, 1986).

Finally, most existing scholarship ignores within-group variation in paths to participation in activist groups, and thus ignores the possibility that several qualitatively distinct paths to activism might exist within the same activist group. Several recent studies point out that a single movement may simultaneously contain participants who exhibit attitudinal affinity, biographical availability, and micro-structural availability and participants who lack those characteristics (e.g., Bosi 2012; Bosi and Della Porta 2012; Isaac et al. forthcoming; Viterna 2006). Considering again the example of attitudinal affinity, these scholars have pointed out that participants who are already passionate about a cause may seek out movements on their own without prior ties to those movements. In comparison, individuals who are more ambivalent toward a cause may indeed require personal ties or organizational linkages that work to recruit into the movement.

Taken together, these critiques suggest the need for a fundamental re-orientation in scholarship on micro-mobilization, an approach that takes seriously the particularity of the activist group under study in an attempt to make sense of the diversity in participants. I take up at that task in this chapter, examining the possibility of multiple pathways to participation in LGBT activist groups at four Christian colleges and universities in the United States. Taking seriously LGBT movements' historical emphases on collective identity, I theorize that multiple pathways to participation in these LGBT activist groups cohere around participants' most salient collective identities, especially "activist identities," "value identities," and "solidary identities." Drawing on a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) of the pathways followed by the 65 interview respondents, I show that those participants who have salient "activist identities" share many of the characteristics of "activists" portrayed in prior studies. However, many other participants

carry salient “value identities” (based on religious beliefs) or “solidary identities” (based on their sexual and/or gender identities), and their biographies tend to contradict previous research on micro-mobilization. Specifically, many of the participants were socialized into values contrary to participation in activist groups, some participants lack attitudinal affinity with the activist groups, and few participants actually have preexisting personal ties to the activist groups. Before elaborating on these results, I expand on previous scholarship on micro-mobilization, outline my own theory on micro-mobilization, and discuss my approach to data collection and analysis.

PREVIOUS THEORIES OF MICRO-MOBILIZATION

The question of why and how individuals come to participate in activist groups has inspired a significant amount of research, mostly within the area of social movement studies. I first discuss research on early life course (e.g., childhood and youth) influences on activist group participation, especially the role of socialization and prior movement participation on future movement participation. I then discuss research examining characteristics of individuals at the time of micro-mobilization, including the role of “attitudinal affinity,” “micro-structural availability,” and “biographical availability.” Finally, I review the limited amount of research on macro-level influences on micro-mobilization. I focus the discussion on whether existing research has established that any single factor is either “necessary” or “sufficient” for participation in activist groups. I argue that, while scholarship has effectively identified characteristics that distinguish activists from non-activists, these characteristics do not explain variation among participants across a wide range of activist groups.

Early life course influences on micro-mobilization

Those studies that have examined early life course influences on micro-mobilization generally focus on the impact of *socialization* and *prior movement participation*. Relatively few studies closely examine how individuals are *socialized* into values and beliefs conducive to participation in activist groups during their childhood and adolescent years (see Bosi 2012; Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988; Nepstad 2004; Viterna 2006).

Nevertheless, socialization is especially important insofar as it serves as a source of attitudinal affinity with activist groups (discussed below). For instance, in one of the most comprehensive studies, Klatch (1999) shows that most participants in the right-wing Young Americans for Freedom and the left-wing Students for a Democratic Society were socialized into political and religious beliefs conducive to participation in these social movements by their family members, by members of their community, by influential teachers in elementary through high school, by their churches, and through independent reading.

While most other studies also show that eventual participants are socialized into values conducive to participation in activist groups, these studies also reveal notable inconsistencies in certain participants' biographies. For example, in Klatch's (1999) study, the libertarian faction within Young Americans for Freedom had largely rejected the religious beliefs of their parents. Thus, while socialization may distinguish most participants from non-participants, it does not always seem to be "necessary" for participation in activist groups. Furthermore, given the large number of individuals that sympathize with any given cause, it would certainly not seem to be "sufficient" for social movement participation.

Delving further to explore pre-movement influences on social movement participation, other scholars have examined the role of *prior movement participation* in micro-mobilization

(see Bosi 2012; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Klatch 1999; Isaac et al. forthcoming; McAdam 1986; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991; Viterna 2006). Prior movement participation can be especially important insofar as it reinforces values conducive to movement participation and embeds individuals in personal and organizational networks that can pull them into social movements. As one example, in their study of participants in sanctuary activism, Wiltfang and McAdam (1991) find that prior activism is linked to future activism, in part because it makes individuals more willing to take on the objective costs and especially the perceived risks of activism.

Despite the demonstrated link between prior and future activist group participation, these studies only beg the question of how and why individuals became involved in these prior activist groups. Thus, prior activist group participation could not logically be “necessary” for participation in all activist groups. Furthermore, studies such as Isaac et al. (forthcoming) show that prior activism is not always associated with sustained involvement in social movements over the life course, meaning that prior activism may not be “sufficient” for individuals’ mobilization into other social movements. (They do show that “movement schooling” in the form of enrollment in nonviolence workshops is a powerful predictor of participation in activist groups over the life course.)

Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization

By far the largest body of research on participation in activist groups examines the characteristics of individuals at the time of micro-mobilization, especially *attitudinal affinity*, *micro-structural availability*, and *biographical availability*. Most studies show that individuals who choose to join an activist group agree with the values, tactics, and goals of that group and thus exhibit what McAdam (1986) terms *attitudinal affinity* (see Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Cohn et al. 1993;

Corrigan-Brown 2011; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; Schussman and Soule 2005). In other words, quite a few studies show that attitudinal affinity is “necessary” for participation in activist groups. A few scholars have also argued that attitudinal affinity can itself be “sufficient” for participation in some activist groups. For example, Jasper and Poulsen (1995) find that the animal rights movement has been able to recruit members by initiating “moral shocks” – e.g., by disseminating information or pictures to strangers that incite anger and outrage and lead them to join the movement (p. 23). Similarly, in a study of whistleblowers, Jasper (1997) finds that many individuals experience a moral clash with the principles of their workplaces, leading them to voluntarily initiate contact with social movements (p. 142).

Although the importance of attitudinal affinity is affirmed in most studies of micro-mobilization, there is some evidence that attitudinal affinity may not be “necessary” for participation in all activist groups. For example, a study of participants in pro-life organizations by Munson (2008) shows that “attitudinal affinity” may not be required for participation, because many new members of pro-life organizations initially identify as pro-choice or at least claim to be ambivalent about abortion rights. Furthermore, most of those studies that do argue that attitudinal affinity is “necessary” for participation in activist groups also argue that attitudinal affinity is not singularly “sufficient” for participation in activist groups. For example, in their study of peace protests in the Netherlands, Klandermans and Oegema (1987) argue that because the “mobilization potential” (that is, the segment of the population that agrees with the means and goals of a social movement) is so large, yet the number of participants is so small, attitudinal affinity is not sufficient for micro-mobilization. Thus, while it is likely that attitudinal affinity is

a part of the modal pathway to participation in activist groups, it may not be sufficient or even necessary for all participants in most activist groups.

Studies of micro-mobilization also argue that most individuals who join social movements are embedded in organizational and/or personal networks that “pull” them into the movement – that is, these individuals exhibit *micro-structural availability* (McAdam 1986). The importance of organizations to micro-mobilization has been confirmed by many studies (see Bosi 2012; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Schussman and Soule 2005; Viterna 2006). For instance, in his study of applicants to the 1964 Freedom Summer project, McAdam (1986) finds that individuals who participate in existing organizations were much more likely to actually participate in Freedom Summer than individuals who did not participate in existing organizations, even when controlling for factors such as biographical availability and embeddedness in personal networks. Organizational membership seems to lead to membership in activist groups because organizations further socialize individuals into values that are conducive to participation (Bosi 2012; Klatch 1999; Viterna 2006) and, perhaps most importantly, circulate opportunities to join activist groups (Bosi 2012; Fernandez and McAdam 1988; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klatch 1999; Nepstad and Smith 1999; Schussman and Soule 2005; Viterna 2006).

Most studies also show that personal networks are crucial for micro-mobilization (see Bosi 2012; Dixon and Roscigno 2003; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Nepstad and Smith 1999; Snow et al. 1980; Viterna 2006). McAdam’s (1986) study of Freedom Summer applicants shows that embeddedness in personal networks is the most significant predictor of actual participation in Freedom Summer. Personal ties may be important because, like organizational networks, they

serve to reinforce attitudinal affinity (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Other scholars have argued that, like organizational networks, social networks provide ways for social movements to get the word out about opportunities to participate in activist groups (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). Finally, still other scholars argue that personal networks are particularly important (and unique from organizational affiliations) because they offer “solidary incentives,” or the opportunity to gain new friendships or reinforce existing friendships and relationships (Jasper 1997).

These studies notwithstanding, there is also evidence that micro-structural availability is not “necessary” for participation in all activist groups. For example, the aforementioned studies on participants in animal rights and religious movements have shown that the recruitment of strangers who are not otherwise embedded in personal and organizational networks supportive to social movements can be effective (Snow et al. 1980, 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997). Even a large-scale study of participation across a variety of activist groups found that a significant minority of individuals “participate in protest despite never being asked to do so” (Schussman and Soule 2005, p. 1098). Finally, given that most of these studies show that personal and organizational networks both rest upon and contribute to attitudinal affinity, micro-structural availability is likely not “sufficient” for participation in activist groups.

One other individual attribute relevant to micro-mobilization is the role of individual constraints on decisions to participate in activist groups – that is, the role of *biographical availability* (McAdam 1986). In particular, many studies have theorized that young people, childless people, unmarried people, and part-time or unemployed people will have more time to participate in activist groups than older people, parents, married people, and fully employed people (e.g., Snow et al. 1980; McAdam 1986). However, this area of research has produced highly contradictory findings. For instance, while McAdam (1986) introduced the term

“biographical availability” in his study of applicants to Freedom Summer, he found that the “sum of personal constraints” made “no significant contribution to likelihood of participation” in Freedom Summer when controlling for other variables (p. 85). Other scholars have found that middle-aged individuals are more likely to participate in certain activist groups than younger people (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Cohn et al. 1993; Nepstad and Smith 1999), that individuals who are fully employed or in time-intensive occupations are more likely to participate in activist groups than under-employed individuals (Corrigan-Brown-2011; Nepstad and Smith 1999), and even that parents are more likely to participate in activist groups than childless individuals (Corrigan-Brown 2011; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991).

In attempting to make sense of these contradictory findings, scholars have pointed out that individuals’ personal resources can offset potential constraints on participation in activist groups. As Nepstad and Smith (1999) discuss, while older people or individuals in time-intensive occupations may have less time to participate in activist groups, the skills and experience these individuals gained in prior activist groups likely helped to offset barriers to participation in activist groups. Other studies have similarly shown that prior activism (Wiltfang and McAdam 1991) and knowledge and skills more generally (Corrigan-Brown 2011; Schussman and Soule 2005) are linked to participation in activist groups even given the presence of barriers to participation. In general, then, it seems unlikely that full biographical availability is “necessary” - - and it is certainly not “sufficient” -- for most participants in most activist groups.

Contextual influences on micro-mobilization

While most studies on participation in activist groups focus on the characteristics of individuals prior to or at the time of micro-mobilization, it should also be noted that a few recent studies

have begun to offer alternative *macro-level* explanations of micro-mobilization – that is, explanations of how the characteristics of the surrounding environment (e.g., a neighborhood, city, university, or even a country) influence individuals’ decisions to join activist groups (Biggs 2006; Bosi 2012; Cable, Walsh, and Warland 1998; Viterna 2006). A few of these studies posit that the presence of some type of “breakdown” in the social order or “repression” of potential participants contributes to micro-mobilization. For example, a study by Cable, Walsh, and Warland (1988) finds that individuals in two communities decided to participate in anti-nuclear activism mostly because their communities were located near the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, despite having conservative attitudes, despite having many personal constraints, and despite previously having no formal ties to anti-nuclear activists. Furthermore, studies of armed activism by Viterna (2006) and Bosi (2012) both show that some groups of individuals decided to take up arms mostly because their communities had been bombarded with violence, and despite having no history in political organizations and sometimes having major biographical constraints.

Nevertheless, a recent study on the civil right movement sit-ins by Biggs (2006) shows that students in counties with a lower degree of racial oppression, and students in schools that were not controlled by state governments (i.e., private schools), were more likely to join protests than students in counties with higher degrees of racial oppression or students in public schools. These contradictory findings on the effect of repression on micro-mobilization echo contradictory findings on the effect of repression on social movement emergence in general (see discussion by Hess and Martin 2006 and Isaac and Christiansen 2002), and thus more research is necessary to determine the macro-level factors that might be “necessary” or “sufficient” for micro-mobilization.

THEORIZING MULTIPLE PATHWAYS OF MICRO-MOBILIZATION

To date, most scholarship on micro-mobilization has attempted to identify predictors of participation that apply to all participants in all activist groups (though see studies by Bosi 2012; Bosi and Della Porta 2012; Isaac et al. forthcoming; Viterna 2006). This scholarly pursuit is premised on the idea that scholarship on micro-mobilization should seek to distinguish participants from non-participants. Yet, as shown above, there are problems with this approach – no single factor related to micro-mobilization has been shown to be necessary or sufficient for all participants or for all movements, and indeed some factors that seem to facilitate participation in some social movement families seem to impede participation in other social movement families.

Given the significant limitations of existing scholarship on micro-mobilization, I employ a different approach to studying social movement participation, examining the possibility of multiple pathways of activist group participation in a way that takes into account the uniqueness of the social movement under study. Specifically, LGBT movements' emphases on collective identity, I theorize that multiple pathways of participation are especially linked to differences in participants' collective identity. I first review the limited literature on collective identity and participation in activist groups before providing hypotheses on the link between collective identity and multiple pathways to participation in the case employed here.

Collective identity and micro-mobilization

A growing body of scholarship in social movement studies examines issues surrounding collective identity, which Polletta and Jasper (2001) define as “an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” (p. 285). Scholars have identified several levels or categories of collective identity. First, many

participants adopt an “activist identity” that is tied to a broad commitment to political, social, or economic justice (Corrigan-Brown 2011). Next, many participants adopt a “value identity” based on a more narrowly defined set of commitments, such as commitment to a particular religion (Corrigan-Brown 2011). Finally, participants may adopt a “solidary identity” that is linked to a specific social location, such as along the lines of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation (Gamson 1991). These identities are not mutually exclusive. For instance, an individual could identify as an activist (activist identity), a Christian (a value identity), and gay (a solidary identity) simultaneously. However, these identities are often more or less salient, and the salience of collective identity has implications for one’s participation in activist groups (Stryker 2000).

A few previous scholars, working within the literature on “biographical consequences of social movements,” have linked these categories of activist, value, and solidary identities to variations in activist group participation over the life course. In one study, Corrigan-Brown (2011) studies why some individuals continue to join activist groups over time while others do not. Examining the United Farm Workers, Catholic Workers, Concerned Women for America, and a homeowners association, she shows that individuals in these groups who carried “activist identities” (and to a lesser extent “value identities”) tended to persist in activist groups over time, because they tended to be motivated by broader critiques of society and were never completely satisfied with the state of society, even if some gains were made by their group. However, individuals who carried more narrowly tailored identities such as solidary or organizational identities were much less likely to continue joining activist groups, often because goals of their organizations were achieved.

A study by Fendrich (1993) arrives at similar findings. In a 10-year follow-up study with participants in the civil rights movement, he finds that while the majority of white participants

joined other activist groups and participated in protests following their participation in the civil rights movement, a minority of black participants continued to participate in protests following their participation in the civil rights movement. To explain these results, Fendrich argues that black activists were primarily motivated to achieve gains for their group, and once these gains were achieved, they became less likely to persist in activist groups over time (p. 146). In other words, these individuals were motivated by their “solidary identity.” In comparison, Fendrich argues that white activists “had nothing to gain materially, individually, or collectively, from their participation,” but were rather motivated by an “other-oriented humanism... They were primed to become involved in any social movements that held some promise of moving the society in more equalitarian, democratic and socialistic directions” (p. 147). In other words, these individuals were carriers of “activist identities” or “value identities.” Because they had not succeeded in moving society in these directions, they continued to persist in activist groups over the time.

Importantly, though, these studies on collective identity and activist group participation do not assume collective identity is itself “sufficient” for social movement participation. Rather, such studies seem to show that other factors that have been linked to participation in activist groups (e.g., attitudes, prior participation, social ties, organizational memberships, and experiences with repression) work to make collective identities more or less salient. For instance, Klatch (1999) shows that participants’ political identities reflected political attitudes that were in turn shaped by their families, schools, and churches (though, as noted, she also found exceptions). In their study on Freedom Summer applicants, McAdam and Paulsen (1993) find that a “strong subjective identification with a particular identity” only exists when it is “reinforced by organizational or individual ties” (p. 659). Corrigan-Brown (2011) finds that prior

involvement in activist organizations fosters an “activist identity.” Finally, Klatch (1999) finds that participants in activist groups adopt more radical and politicized identities when they experience repression or when they experience disillusionment with progress. Thus, if collective identity proves to be an important component of micro-mobilization, it is likely that it will work alongside other factors to produce individuals’ willingness and ability to participate.

Expectations on collective identity and micro-mobilization

Based on these findings on the role of collective identity in activists’ persistence through activist groups, it seems possible that collective identity might also play a role in differences in participants’ decisions to join activist groups. This is because many modern-day causes such as LGBT movements are explicitly organized around identities. Furthermore, one’s collective identity has significant implications for one’s political and religious attitudes (given the well-known phenomenon of “cleavages” in political and religious beliefs) and personal networks (given tendencies toward homophily), all factors that have been shown to play roles in activist group participation.

In the case of this study I expect that, first, those members of LGBT groups whose most salient identities are “activist identities” (most likely, those individuals who are motivated by ideologies in favor of social justice) will most resemble the traditional profile of activist group participants (see Table 4-1). Specifically, they will likely have been socialized in more liberal religious and political attitudes and will have participated in activist groups in the past. They will have been pulled into LGBT activism because of their disappointment with the treatment of LGBT individuals at the school, which violated their ideological convictions in favor of social justice. However, they will not require prior personal ties to the activist group.

TABLE 4-1. CATEGORIES OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND THEIR ASSOCIATED MICRO-MOBILIZATION PATHWAYS

<i>Collective Identity</i>	<i>Pathways</i>
<i>Activist Identity</i> based on a broad ideological commitment to political, social, or economic justice	<p><i>Early life course influences:</i> Socialization into liberal religious and political attitudes; prior participation in activist groups</p> <p><i>Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization:</i> Attitudinal affinity with LGBT movements</p>
<i>Value Identity</i> based on a more narrowly defined set of principles or standards, such as those defined by a particular religion	<p><i>Early life course influences:</i> Socialization into conservative religious and political attitudes; no prior participation in activist groups</p> <p><i>Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization:</i> Personal ties to other participants or attitudinal affinity with LGBT movements</p>
<i>Solidary Identity</i> based on a specific social position, such as sexual orientation and/or gender identity	<p><i>Early life course influences:</i> May or may not have been socialized into liberal religious and political attitudes; may or may not have prior participation in activist groups; some past experience with repression</p> <p><i>Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization:</i> Attitudinal affinity with LGBT movements</p>

Next, I expect that those members of LGBT groups whose most salient identities are “value identities” (most likely, those individuals who are motivated by religious values) will bear little resemblance to the traditional profile of participants in activist groups. Specifically, they

will have been socialized into more conservative religious attitudes and have no prior experience in activist organizations. However, because they are beginning to come to terms with their own attitudes on religion and sexuality, or because they have come to know others who identify as LGBT and who have invited them to a group, they will decide to join the LGBT group.

Finally, I expect that those members of LGBT groups whose most salient identities are “solidary identities” (most likely, those individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) may also bear little resemblance to the traditional profile of activist groups participants. Specifically, they may have been socialized into more conservative religious attitudes and may not have participated in prior activist organizations. However, following a self-realization of their own sexual identity and possibly experiences with repression and harassment on the basis of their sexual identity, they will have come to agree with the cause of LGBT rights and thus decide to join the LGBT group.

These expectations are based on insights from existing theories of micro-mobilization about the potential role of participants’ beliefs and attitudes, previous experience, social and organization networks, and experiences of repression. Nevertheless, I do not expect that factors such as participants’ “biographical availability” will play a significant role in their participation, because I expect most individuals at these schools to look relatively similar in their basic demographic profile (e.g., age, employment status, marital status, number of children, and so on).

DATA AND METHODS

To assess the potential link between collective identity and multiple pathways to participation in activist groups, I analyze the biographies of my 65 interview respondents in LGBT groups at

Loyola University Chicago, Goshen College, Catholic University, and Belmont University, schools that vary in terms of their presence in a “red” or “blue” state or district and their affiliation with an individualist or communalist religious tradition (see chapter one). Particularly relevant to this chapter, I draw heavily from responses to the first section of my interview schedule, in which I asked participants about the circumstances surrounding their initial participation, including how and when they found out about the group; why they participated in the group; what they initially expected from the group; whether they personally identified as activists, people of faith, sexual minorities, or transgender; whether they had any work or family responsibilities at the time they joined the organization; whether they told friends or family members they were joining the organization; and whether they feared backlash in response to their joining the organization. I also draw from responses to a second set of questions that examined participants’ lives before they joined the group, including whether their family, church, and/or school was accepting of sexual minorities and transgender individuals, as well as whether they had previously been involved in LGBTQ groups or other social movement groups.

I coded each interview through a dual-process coding strategy involving both deductive and inductive coding. In a deductive process of coding, I drew on insights from past literature on activist group participation to identify variables relevant to micro-mobilization (e.g., socialization, prior participation, attitudinal affinity, biographical availability, micro-structural availability, collective identity), and I recorded any information revealed in the interviews that was relevant to these factors using a spreadsheet. I then analyzed information gained especially from the deductive coding using crisp-set QCA (Ragin 1987). Crisp-set QCA uses the logic of binary Boolean algebra to make causal inferences based on samples that can be small-n. QCA is

a particularly valuable method for this project given the goal of understanding the multiple, conjunctural pathways related to participation in social movements.

Given my theory that multiple, conjunctural pathways to participation in LGBT groups are associated with collective identity, I employed three different “outcome variables”: a) holding a salient “activist” identity; b) holding a salient “religious” identity; and c) holding a salient “sexual identity” and/or “gender identity.”² For the purpose of this analysis, these categories are mutually exclusive, such that only one identity could be deemed most salient for a participant. I determined salience not only by examining whether the participant responded “yes” or “no” to direct questions about whether they held these identities, but also according to their responses to open-ended questions about their motives and expectations for participation. For instance, in response to the open-ended question about why individuals decided to join the LGBT group, some individuals immediately replied that they joined because they were gay or lesbian; other individuals responded that they wanted to explore questions surrounding sexuality and their own Christian faith; and still other individuals responded that they joined because of their commitment to social justice.

Guided by previous theories on social movement participation, I employed three “explanatory variables” related to characteristics of individuals prior to their coming to college (socialization into the values of the movement by family, schools, or churches; prior participation in a social movement; and upbringing in a “blue” state or district). I also employed five “explanatory variables” related to characteristics of individuals at the time they joined the movement (attitudinal affinity with the movement; the presence of work or family

² Although I use the language of “outcome variables” from QCA, I am mostly interested in whether certain combinations of variables are systematically linked to variations in collective identity, and I remain open to the possibility that participants’ collective identities (the “outcome variable”) influence the pathways captured by the “explanatory variables.”

TABLE 4-2. VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Outcome Variables	Definition	Prop.
<i>Activist Identity</i>	Respondent reported identifying as an "activist" at the time of joining the group AND either did not identify as a "person of faith" or LGBT at the time of joining the group or indicated that the "activist identity" was most salient (Yes=1, No=0)	0.31
<i>Value Identity</i>	Respondent reported identifying as a "person of faith" at the time of joining the group AND either did not identify as an "activist" or LGBT at the time of joining the group or indicated that their "value identity" was most salient (Yes=1, No=0)	0.14
<i>Solidary Identity</i>	Respondent reported identifying as LGBT at the time of joining the group AND either did not identify as an "activist" or "person of faith" at the time of joining the group or indicated that their "solidary identity" was most salient (Yes=1, No=0)	0.55
Explanatory Variables		
<i>Socialization</i>	Respondent was raised by parents supportive of LGBT rights OR attended a school supportive of LGBT students OR attended a church supportive of LGBT members (Yes=1, No=0)	0.69
<i>Prior Activism</i>	Respondent indicated prior involvement in any activist organization (Yes=1, No=0)	0.62
<i>Blue State Home</i>	Respondent was raised in a state that voted for Democratic Presidential nominee while respondent was in high school (Yes=1, No=0)	0.60
<i>Affinity</i>	Respondent indicated support for LGBT rights (Yes=1, No=0)	0.91
<i>Availability</i>	Respondent reported an absence of family responsibilities (defined as being married, raising children, or caring for a sick family member) AND an absence of work responsibilities (defined as paid part-time or full-time work) (Yes=1, No=0)	0.45
<i>Ties</i>	Respondent reported knowing someone in the LGBT group (Yes=1, No=0)	0.34
<i>Blue State School</i>	Respondent attended a school located in a state/district that voted for Barack Obama in 2012 (Yes=1, No=0)	0.43
<i>Supportive School</i>	Respondent attended a school with either an officially-approved LGBT student group OR a non-discrimination statement inclusive of sexual orientation or gender identity (Yes=1, No=0)	0.52

responsibilities that might affect biographical availability; personal ties to other individuals in the movement; attendance at a college with policies supportive of LGBT students; and attendance at a college in a “blue state”). I further define and operationalize these outcome and explanatory variables in Table 4-2.

For each results table, I initially estimated the models related to individuals’ characteristics prior to college and once they came to college in separate panels, because scholars have shown that QCA can only effectively handle a limited number of explanatory variables (generally, 5 or less). As Amenta and Poulsen (1994) put it, “In QCA, combinations of dichotomous variables grow exponentially from a base of two, and thus a large number of independent conditions makes QCA unwieldy and decreases the likelihood that any given combination will have an empirical referent or will be theoretically interpretable” (p. 23). I then used the five variables that most commonly appeared in causal configurations (socialization, prior participation, attitudinal affinity, biographical availability, and personal ties – i.e., excluding contextual variables) in a final “combined model.” As I show, the QCA results do reveal common configurations of variables that are unique to the activist, religious, and sexual or gender identities examined here; nevertheless, there is also some complexity within the pathways of individuals carrying each of the three salient identities.

In a second approach to coding, I assigned codes inductively to interview quotes related to activist group participation using ATLAS.ti. Using a “grounded theory approach,” I sorted and clustered these coded interview quotes to identify emerging themes. This approach to coding was useful both for cross-checking the results of the QCA and for understanding processes related to activist group participation not emphasized in prior theories and thus not effectively captured or

analyzed in the QCA. I present interview quotes alongside the QCA results below both to shed light on the QCA results and to further unpack the complexity in participants' biographies.

PATHWAYS OF POLITICIZED PARTICIPANTS

As expected, a significant minority (31%) of the participants in LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities maintained “activist identities.” Below, I discuss the characteristics of these participants before they joined the groups and at the time they joined the groups, showing that these individuals shared many of the characteristic of activist group participants identified in past literature.

TABLE 4-3. QCA PATHS OF PARTICIPANTS WITH SALIENT “ACTIVIST” IDENTITIES

Panel A. <u>Pre-Movement Influences Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
SOCIALIZATION*PRIOR	1.00
(Common Configuration: SOCIALIZATION*PRIOR)	
Panel B. <u>Micro-mobilization Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
AFFINITY*ties*availability +	0.20
AFFINITY*availability*blue-state-school +	0.15
AFFINITY*supportive-school*BLUE-STATE-SCHOOL+	0.20
AFFINITY*SUPPORTIVE-SCHOOL*blue-state-school	0.45
(Common Configuration: AFFINITY)	
Panel C. <u>Combined Model</u> (Without Contextual Variables)	<u>Prop.</u>
SOCIALIZATION*PRIOR*AFFINITY	1.00
(Common Configuration: SOCIALIZATION*PRIOR*AFFINITY)	

Note: Capitalized variables imply presence of condition, while lower-case variables imply absence of condition.

Early life course influences

The results of the QCA analysis for participants holding salient “politicized identities” are shown in Table 4-3. Capitalized variables indicate that the presence of a certain condition is necessary for politicized participants to join activist groups; conversely, lowercase variables indicate that the absence of a certain condition is necessary for politicized participants to join LGBT groups. When a variable is completely missing from a particular pathway, that means that the presence or absence of that variable is irrelevant to an individual’s decision to join an LGBT group.

Panel A shows the “pre-movement” influences that lead politicized participants to join LGBT groups, and the panel indicates that all politicized participants have been socialized into values conducive to participation in these LGBT groups through their families, churches, and/or schools during their childhood and adolescent years. Notably, some of these individuals had grown up in households where their parents or guardians themselves had been heavily involved in LGBT religious activism. For instance, Angela (all names are pseudonyms), a participant in the Open Letter movement at Goshen College, describes how one of her family members had been advocating for full LGBT inclusion within the Mennonite Church for many years:

I: Did you have any previous exposure to or involvement in LGBT activism prior to coming to Goshen?

R: Oh yeah. So my church... is right outside [blinded], and we went through a process to discern what our policy on LGBT membership and participation would be in the 1980s I think, the early 1980s, and since then we’ve had an official welcoming statement. And about 10 years ago that became an issue with our regional conference, when we sent a

delegate who was gay and in a relationship with his partner who goes to our church as well. After a lot of discussion on that they decided to discipline our congregation and take our voting rights away at the conference level, and that led to a lot of, kind of, frustration, in our church. And my [family member] is the pastor, and so I was always aware, since age 5 – I guess she got involved when I was 5 – about her views and activism on LGBT rights, and I remember going to meetings pre-ordination where they would ask questions to see whether she was fit to be ordained, and one of the questions was, what are your views on LGBT rights? And she was very honest, she said she was for inclusion and that sort of thing. And they did let her be ordained, but it was kind of a tense thing in that process. So I knew about that at the time, and since then have known about this and the dialogue on inclusion is very frequent at my church, especially since this discipline is currently in effect....

Over the past few years, Angela indicated this family member had continued her activism on LGBT issues, such as by officiating weddings for same-sex couples and helping to draft or sign letters in favor of LGBT-inclusive policy changes within the Mennonite Church USA. While few participants' family members were as actively involved in LGBT religious activism as Angela's, at least six other individuals reported that their parents had also been involved in LGBT activism within their religious communities and had encouraged their early participation in LGBT activism.

Beyond showing that all those with salient "activist" identities are socialized into inclusive values, the QCA results in Panel A of Table 4-3 show that all participants with "activist identities" also had prior experience in LGBT or other activist groups prior to their becoming

involved in an LGBT group at their Christian college or universities. Especially for the straight individuals who comprised the majority of “politicized participants,” these early experiences often constituted what they called their “ally stories.” For instance, Kylie, another student at Goshen, related the story of how and why she became involved in LGBT activism in high school:

I: When you first got involved with the Open Letter movement would you say you would have identified as an activist or is that not a term or word you would have thought of yourself as or referred to yourself as?

R: Yeah I definitely – well first off I’m definitely an ally, and I think you can be an ally and you don’t have to be an activist, and I think that’s an important distinction. But I’m definitely an activist, I’ve always been really passionate about the issue. In high school, I wrote papers and gave speeches about LGBTQ issues – it was important to me. I was involved in Pink Menno – maybe you heard about that. That was my first Mennonite convention, when that started, and I was already becoming involved in that.

I: Why would you say you’re so passionate about these issues?

R: Yeah, well this would be considered my ally story I suppose. My family is pretty liberal, so it was never a problem in my family, and it wasn’t actually a problem in my church.

I: Was it a Mennonite church?

R: Yeah, I went to a Mennonite church, and we have LGBTQ members, and that's a whole 'nother story, that progression in my church. So I remember the first time I ever wrote about it was freshman year of high school, and I was like, this is so dumb, why do we not allow people to get married, I don't understand. And then I had – my best friend came out my sophomore year – and he came from a more conservative family, not Mennonite, but a more conservative family – he suffered from depression and he had thoughts of suicide.... and it became personal to me. And at the next convention, Pink Menno became a big thing, and I became really passionate, thinking about this friend and how important he was to me.... And I remember sitting in a delegate meeting, because I was part of some youth delegate thing where we were allowed to sit at the table for a day. And I was there when they first started talking about the issue of same-sex relationships and everything. And I was there with all of these adults – and I was only 17. But I told them my story about my friend, and I said, you know, I understand this is a theological issue and there are these things, but I was like, this is my friend. And it's so important – I don't care what we do, but these people need to know that they're loved. And that was my first time ever speaking out in the Mennonite church about that, it was that moment. And the delegate people talked to me later at my table. And some of them disagreed with the theology, but really were receptive to that story. And that's when I started to understand that stories are the key to really driving these things. And I've been telling these stories ever since.

Certainly, some of the individuals who followed the pathways of politicized participants also identified as sexual minorities themselves. However, these individuals first started speaking out on issues related to LGBT rights and became involved in LGBT activism prior to their coming out process, indicating that deeply-held political values were likely most salient in their decisions to become involved in LGBT activism. For instance, a student at Catholic named Jess related a similar story of beginning to speak out in favor of LGBT equality and other social justice causes as early as fifth grade, long before she became aware of her sexual orientation. However, she didn't begin to identify as a sexual minority until relatively late in her college career:

I: Why did you become involved in CUAllies [at Catholic]?

R... I guess my initial thing as to why I wanted to join, I had just always sort of been fired up about the issue of equality, I still remember debating it with my religion teacher in fifth grade, like that was the first time I had a debate.

I: Fifth grade? Wow.

R: Yeah, fifth grade, because she brought up how Disney World has gay day and how she refuses to go to Disney World, and I was in fifth grade and I was a precocious little kid [laughs] so I decided to fight with her about it. So it has just always been an issue that I'd been passionate about it, and especially, coming here on campus, I was just curious. And then the nature of it being unofficial kind of made it attractive in a sense as to sort of

why, to figure out more about it, I think that was probably my initial desire to want to become a part of the group.

I: What made you so passionate about the issue of equality? Especially as early as fifth grade?

R: Well – in many ways I've always been passionate about social justice, and I have been involved in various social justice groups, human rights causes.... It's one of the reasons I came to DC - you know, I went to like three protests my first weekend here just because I could.... But I mean, it's a question that I've been reflecting on a lot lately. Because I just got my first girlfriend like six months ago and so, even when I first became involved in CUAllies, it never crossed my mind as to whether or not I was or wasn't, but I guess maybe, I don't know, I guess just the fact that it kind of resounded in me at such a young age, maybe it really was a sign [laughs]. But I think maybe when it comes down to it, again, it's just basic human rights, and that's something that, I don't know, my parents always raised my sisters and I to think for ourselves and to always kind of care for others and to be self-aware as to where we stand in relation to others, so I think just seeing there was a large group of people being persecuted just really pissed me off [laughs]. You know, I may have not understood it all in fifth grade, but I recognized the wrong in it, and so I identified with that.

Some of the students following the pathways of politicized participants were also active members of their local churches. Once again, however, there were many clues that these

individuals' political values were more salient than their religious values per se. For instance, a few individuals who were actively involved in religious communities (particularly Quaker and Mennonite communities) actually personally identified as atheists or agnostics and said that they were involved in these religious communities mostly because they provided outlets for involvement in social justice activism. Even when they identified as LGBT or religious, then, respondents in this group reported that socialization into progressive values and participation in prior activist groups shaped "activist identities" that they carried with them into LGBT groups.

Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization

Panel B of Table 4-3 identifies the characteristics of politicized participants at the time they joined the LGBT groups themselves. Although there are four separate combinations of variables that politicized participants could be associated with, "affinity" is listed as a necessary condition for all pathways that politicized participants follow into LGBT activist groups. However, the depth of their attitudinal affinity is not easily conveyed through a QCA analysis alone. While individuals following the pathways of sexual minorities similarly exhibit attitudinal affinity with the cause of LGBT rights, activists' attitudinal affinity is generally steeped in over-arching ideologies of social justice. For instance, Paul, a straight leader in one of the LGBT advocacy groups at Goshen, discussed how his LGBT activism fit in with his philosophy of nonviolence:

I: Why did you become involved in LGBT advocacy at Goshen?

R: A lot of it stems from my commitment to nonviolence. Even back in high school, I was involved in animal rights activism, because I thought nonviolence should be

extended to all life, to animals. I've been a vegetarian for eight years.... Abortion is another issue for me - I believe all life is sacred. And while I also believe in individual liberty – take trimester abortions, for instance, I would not be for that. I would say, let's exercise a lot of other options before you consider that... War is another issue. Goshen is very socially conscious and justice oriented, it has a PAX club – the peace club – that I've been involved in. War isn't an answer to our problems. Like with terrorism, we think, if we go and kill terrorists, if we target people and send drones to different countries and bomb houses, that terrorism will deplete. But all of the data shows that, no, with all of the terrorists we hit, we're inciting X number of casualties, and creating 20 new terrorists. It's insane... I believe my work on LGBT rights is an extension of my work for nonviolence. As I've listened to stories about people who have been marginalized, especially by the church, I don't -- I want to help heal the church. The church should not be causing people to kill themselves, period, no matter what, even if you think people are sinning, you don't want people to kill themselves because of their actions. If I can help counter that, great.

As another example, Erica, a participant in the Open Letter movement at Goshen, articulated her belief in LGBT rights as part of her pursuit of an anarchist society characterized by complete equality:

I: How would you describe your political beliefs?

R: Well, I identify as a communal anarchist, which is pretty – there’s not that many of them. My understanding of what anarchism is, [is] complete equality. A completely equal society – no hierarchy at all – which I think is really, really important in any decision-making. And as far as how to establish anarchy - I think the way our world is set up right now, with nations and countries, doesn’t make sense, especially when looking at the changes we need, such as with environmental issues. I don’t necessarily agree with the idea of a nation, so smaller communities would be more beneficial to the world and individuals. And so communal anarchism would be that – an equal society organized by small communities. And my involvement in groups working toward equality on the basis of sexual orientation, or gender identity, is part of my-obviously, my goal of an equal society.

Interestingly, while individuals with “activist identities” share most of the characteristics of social movement participants identified in past literature – specifically, they had been socialized into values conducive to participation, had participated in prior activist groups, and exhibited attitudinal affinity with the LGBT rights movement – they often lacked personal ties to the LGBT group at their Christian college or university. In fact, as the QCA results in Panel B of Table 4-3 show, personal ties were a necessary condition in only one of the four micro-mobilization pathways, and that pathway shows that *absence* of personal ties is *necessary* for participation in LGBT activism. Furthermore, as Table 4 shows, the variable for biographical availability was present in only two of the four pathways for participants’ characteristics at the time of micro-mobilization, those pathways again indicate that the *absence* of biographical availability is *necessary* for social movement participation. It seems that activists’ deep

ideological characteristics, shaped through socialization and prior movement participation, were enough to draw them into LGBT activism.

Contextual influences

The results on macro-level effects on participation are similarly inconclusive. As the QCA results in Panels A and B of Table 4-3 show, neither a supportive state (while at home or at school) nor a supportive school seems to be required for individuals to follow the pathway of politicized participants. The variable for a “blue home state” is not part of the single pre-movement pathway of politicized participants. There are four pathways related to these participants’ characteristics at the time of micro-mobilization, and although two of the pathways show that being at a school that is located in a blue state or being at a school that has pro-LGBT policies seems to be necessary for micro-mobilization, another pathway shows that being at a school that is located in a red state seems to be necessary for micro-mobilization. Thus, politicized participants seem to be present in environments that are both hostile and receptive to LGBT individuals.

Although these results show that a supportive school or state environment may not have an effect on the mere presence of politicized participants in LGBT groups, it should be noted that there were indeed significant variations between schools in the proportion of politicized participants. Indeed, while politicized participants were in the minority of my sample at Loyola, Catholic, and Belmont – schools that were either located in liberal cities/states or that maintained inclusive non-discrimination policies - politicized participants were in the majority of my sample (9 or 12 respondents) at Goshen, a school that is located in a red state and draws students from a mix of red and blue states. It seems that micro-level, pre-movement influences mostly explain

this disparity – because most Goshen students had been raised in activist families, and because Goshen advertises itself as a “social justice college,” students tended to self-select into this college with the expectation that they would become involved in social justice activism.

Summary

Overall, given the mixed results for these contextual variables, the most straightforward way to understand the pathways of politicized participants can be found in Panel C of Table 4-3 (which excludes contextual variables). Specifically, as that panel summarizes, all of the politicized participants in my sample were socialized into values conducive to LGBT activism, previously participated in social justice groups, and agreed with the values of the LGBT groups they joined.

PATHWAYS OF RELIGIOUS PARTICIPANTS

A second group of participants in LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities (14% of all respondents) held salient “religious identities.” As I show, these participants were much different than the individuals usually identified in the micro-mobilization literature in terms of both their early upbringings and their characteristics at the time of micro-mobilization. Nevertheless, they were still a significant part of their groups, with these participants helping to found the activist groups present in at least two of the colleges and universities studied here.

Early life course influences

As the QCA results in Panel A of Table 4-4 show, in stark contrast to participants with salient “activist identities,” those following the pathways of religious individuals were not socialized into progressive worldviews; rather, they had quite conservative upbringings. For example, Eric,

a student at Catholic University, described the influence of his Catholic parents and church on his own religious beliefs:

TABLE 4-4. QCA PATHS OF PARTICIPANTS WITH SALIENT “RELIGIOUS” IDENTITIES

<u>Panel A. Pre-Movement Influences Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
socialization*prior	1.00
(Common Configuration: socialization*prior)	
<u>Panel B. Micro-mobilization Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
AFFINITY*ties*availability*supportive-school +	0.22
affinity*TIES*availability*blue-state-school +	0.44
TIES*AVAILABILITY*supportive-school*BLUE-STATE-SCHOOL	0.33
(Common Configuration: none)	
<u>Panel C. Combined Model (Without Contextual Variables)</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
socialization*prior*AFFINITY*ties*availability +	0.22
socialization*prior*affinity*TIES +	0.44
socialization*prior*TIES*AVAILABILITY	0.33
(Common Configuration: socialization*prior)	

Note: Capitalized variables imply presence of condition, while lower-case variables imply absence of condition.

I: When you first got involved, how would you have described your religious views?

R: Well, I grew up old school Catholic. One of my [family members] is a Bishop in [blinded], so my family is very super religious, you know, I used to go to daily mass. And as far as what the Church teaches - I really do believe that the Church – you know, the

one that has been around 2,000 years, the Catholic Church – it really moves in the wisdom and tradition of those 2,000 years. I really do believe that the Catholic Church was founded, institutionalized, by Christ, with the keys to the kingdom being given to St. Peter and stuff like that. So you know, I generally considered myself and still do consider myself to be socially conservative, I'm very pro-life.... And as far as what the Catholic Church teaches on homosexuality – I was raised to believe homosexuality was a sin. And this is the one issue where I now have a little thing, a small disagreement with the Church – but it's the kind of thing where I'm not going to throw away my entire faith over one issue, that sort of thing. It's not like the whole thing is spinning on this one point.

All other eventual participants with salient religious identities similarly reported conservative upbringings. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that none of these individuals had been engaged in LGBT groups or any other kind of social justice groups prior to their joining an LGBT group at their Christian college or university. In fact, three individuals with salient religious identities described pursuing ex-gay therapy prior to their joining an LGBT organization. For example, a Catholic University student named Ashley (introduced in chapter one), who became involved in CUAllies as a graduate student, had identified as a fundamentalist Christian for much of her earlier life, which led her to pursue re-orientation therapy:

I: When you first became involved with CUAllies, would you have described yourself as an activist, or is that not really a term you thought of yourself as or referred to yourself as?

R: No, I would not. I mean now I do, because of this experience, but no, I am – I was raised in this conservative Catholic family, it took me until I was 28 years old to come out of the closet, and then the very next year I move away to Washington DC to do graduate work, so no, I had nothing – I had no interest in activism, no background in it, nothing. So this was a big step for me.

I: And when you said you had no background in activism, that includes – had you ever been involved in an LGBT group in the past?

R: No, no, no. I think – I think if I had been anything, I would have been someone who, in the past, would have been writing letters opposing such groups at Christian universities.

I: When you say in the past, does that include undergrad?

R: Yes, I became a fundamentalist Christian when I was 19, and I was kind of in that mindset for probably the next 8 years. And that includes re-orientation therapy and all that horrible stuff.

As she went on to discuss, overcoming this conservative mindset required her to work for years to research alternative perspectives on religion and sexuality and to come to terms with her own sexual identity, a re-socialization process that is rarely examined in the literature on activist group participation. (Certainly, studies such as McAdam 1988 and Isaac et al. forthcoming have

demonstrated some changes in activists' attitudes, emotions, or dispositions toward activism once they join the group, but rarely have studies uncovered evidence of a complete turnaround in beliefs.) I thus now turn to the question of how and why such participants were eventually able to become involved in LGBT activism.

Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization

As the QCA results in Panel B of Table 4-4 indicate, by the time they arrived at their respective colleges and universities, a few of the particularly religious individuals experienced a change of attitudes toward LGBT rights, which was generally caused by an awareness of and acceptance of their own desires for same-sex relationships. However, in contrast to those activists whose commitment to LGBT rights stemmed from an overarching ideology of social justice, these individuals generally rationalized their acceptance of homosexuality within their existing religious belief structures. For instance, Eric, one of the students from Catholic who eventually served in leadership, expanded on how he had come to reconcile his sexuality with his conservative religious beliefs:

I: When you first got involved, how would you have articulated your own perspective on the relationship between the Catholic faith and homosexuality?

R: Well, at that time I read a lot, I used to write a lot, just trying to – I like have these idea books, where I write my thoughts out, I got very used to doing that to flesh out my thought processes and the theology behind it.... So, you've got to understand the Catholic Church's take on sexuality is that it's only for procreation, right? So that's why

homosexual acts are inherently disorderly. And that's where the whole contraception stuff comes into play too, that when you're using contraception, you're engaging in sexual acts that aren't procreating in that sense. And so it's a disordered use of the human function sort of thing. So with homosexuality, it can't be procreative. Well, that's kind of where my thoughts – at least my own development and search for truths came into play, that procreation isn't necessarily just procreation in a physical sense, you can be procreative in a sense that a sexual relationship could draw 2 people closer together in a way that would make them more – well, life-giving is another translation, another term often used in Catholic Church – you can have a sexual relationship that is life-giving that is not, that doesn't physically bring about children, but can bring a couple closer to raise children, you know?

Similarly, a student at Goshen named Ron, who also served in leadership, articulated how he came to terms with his sexuality within the framework of the Mennonite faith:

I: You mentioned developing a spirituality of sexuality, a theology of sexuality – how would you articulate that?

R: I guess one of the biggest, one of the things at the core of my understanding of religion and sexuality that I have to keep reaffirming for myself, as you hear so much condemnation and very closed-minded understandings of – closed-minded, legalistic understandings of scripture and sex – is holding on to the idea of sexuality as a good gift, a God-given good gift. And something that is an inextricable part of who we are and how

we were created. And – I wish I had the quote with me – but I read something from another gay Mennonite who is maybe half a generation older than me, and he talks about gay sexuality being a gift that we can use to help build the kingdom of God. Yeah, that’s kind of a radical thing to say, but I like what that communicates, as being something we have to connect deeply with other people, or another person, and in so doing, that deep connection helps to further the work of the kingdom of God, that is connecting us with other people and then connecting us to God. That’s a part of where I’m coming from.

Other individuals with particularly salient religious identities had not necessarily harmonized their religious faith with their own sexual orientation and/or view on LGBT rights by the time they began participating in the movement. Rather, these individuals began participating because they were directly recruited by another member of the LGBT group who knew about their struggles coming to terms with their sexual identity or who otherwise thought they would benefit from the group. Indeed, as Panel B of Table 4-4 shows, the presence of personal ties is necessary for participation when attitudinal affinity is lacking. For instance, a straight student from Belmont named Isabel, who generally places herself on the right side of the political spectrum, describes being coaxed by an existing member to join the group:

I: How and when did you first learn about the group?

R: I have, um, a large number of friends who don’t really know each other. And I’d heard of the group through many people, not usually not in the best context, especially because it met, and meets, in University Ministries. Many of my friends don’t think Bridge

Builders should be associated with a Christian ministry. And then a few of my other friends had told me about this group, and how cool it was. So I had heard several things about it, but very small, very low on my radar. Then one day one of my friends said, you're coming with me. And I said ohh, I am? Um, okay, I guess! And so I went, and I've been involved ever since then.

Isabel later told me that the group has helped her formulate a deeper understanding of issues around sexual identity, one that she has shared with other friends and family members. Nevertheless, she still has some uncertainty about LGBT-identified individuals, given a "lasting prejudice" that is difficult to overcome:

I: So when you first joined the organization, what did you personally think would come about as a result of your participation?

R: I had no idea. I was kind of expecting to walk into the room and it would be the weirdest of weards. Which it is, but in a good way. I was expecting it to be much scarier people, I guess, which is that sort of lasting prejudice that I had and I'll probably continue to hold on to for quite some time, which is what I was taught, which is that if you're gay, you're probably, probably messed up [laughs]. Which is actually pretty hard to let go of and realize that's what you're thinking. Because someone says, I'm bi, and the first thing I go to in my brain is, oh my goodness, something terrible has happened to you. And it still takes me a little bit to sort of walk back.

Another student named Beth, who attended Belmont, similarly joined an LGBT group because of the influence of another member, and joined in part because she had reached a “very stressful and depressing part” of her life:

I: How and when did you first learn about Bridge Builders?

R: Well I’m really good friends with [blinded]. I have been since before my freshman year when I visited, and he was [involved in the group] here, and I knew he was gay, so he was the only person though that I was really friends with who went to Bridge Builders – I think maybe when I got there, there were some people I had seen around, but he was the only person I actually knew who went. So I remember – I think I casually asked, oh yeah when do you guys meet? And he said, 4:30. I first started going to meetings in the beginning of the spring semester of my sophomore year. And I started going to meetings mostly because, um, at that point I was kind of in a very stressful and depressing part of my journey, I was kind of tired of feeling isolated, I think during that time period I felt extremely isolated, what was going on in my life, what was going in my head, and things I wanted to talk about, my ideas, my interests, were disconnected from most of the people in my life, and I didn’t feel comfortable talking about that. So I think I just reached a point of frustration, and I said okay, I think it could be good, I think it could be good for me, so I started going to meetings.

As Beth soon elaborated, her struggles centered on the tensions she felt between her own same-sex attractions and her identity as a conservative Christian; specifically, she believed that homosexuality is a sin:

I: You said you were at a point of frustration, and depression, in your life – what were you referring to?

R: Well, I don't think that the Bible condones homosexual relationships and homosexual acts. And I believe that as a Christian, God has called me to not act on my feelings on attracting toward the same sex. I became a Christian when I was 13 years old, and the year I became a Christian, I started at the beginning of the Bible and I read through it. It took me more than a year, but I very distinctly reading and thinking, oh, I didn't know the Bible said that, I guess that's what I believe. And of course I've heard a lot of discussion on the topic from a lot of different sides theologically since then, but in terms of my opinions theologically, I would say that I am influenced not so much by what I've heard differently on homosexual relationships, but rather how I see in the Bible that a covenant relationship between marriage between a man and a woman is not only, like, very explicit in the text regarding humans but also symbolically, since marriage is not only about human relationships but also a reflection of Christ's relationship with the church body.

At the point of our interview – some three years after she initially began participating in the group -- Beth indicated that she continued to believe homosexuality is a sin and that she generally opposed LGBT rights (which the organization advocates for). Nevertheless, she does

self-identify as “queer,” in part because she believes that many people already have pre-conceived, negative notions about individuals identifying as “gay or “lesbian,” and the word “queer” provides her an opportunity to explain these beliefs in greater depth. As she put it, she believes “my life, and my person, is an embodiment of that term.” She has also served in the leadership of the organization.

As a final example, Timothy, a straight student at Catholic University, first arrived at the school with plans to serve in ministry, and he quickly became involved in a variety of groups affiliated with the school’s Campus Ministry. Another student recruited Timothy to be one of the leaders of the fledgling organization CUAllies because he believed Timothy could help craft religious messaging for the group. Nevertheless, he had somewhat ambivalent or indifferent views on same-sex relationships and recalls writing an essay about why gays and lesbians should not be allowed to marry while in high school. He evolved in his views on LGBT rights only after becoming a leader in the group and experiencing firsthand the difficulties associated with being perceived as gay on campus:

R: ...I first became involved after being approached by [another leader] who knew of my reputation as a leader in other clubs on campus.... And then once it became public that I was leading the CUAllies group, I got several Facebook messages congratulating me on coming out. I got an offer from a high school friend whose roommate wanted to be set up with me. I got a reputation on campus as being an openly gay man. And I also got a couple instances where I lost friends who thought I was gay. Like, they just either stopped responding to contact or, I had one person who said, I can’t be friends with you

anymore, because you're a homosexual, and I was, uh, like... okay, I don't even know what to do with that.

I: Did you respond to them and tell them that you were straight?

R: I did, but then they were like, how can you be in that group? They couldn't understand why some straight guy – they couldn't understand a lot of things I think. So I got some of the negative things. I had a couple instances on campuses where things were yelled at me by drunk people – slurs – and I was just like... actually, the first time it took me a while to realize that it was directed toward me, and I sort of looked around, and I was like, man, why would you say that?, and then they were looking at me, and I was like, me? And then the other thing that happened, besides the public, is privately people began to share things with me – share their experiences on campus. I got to see - sort of an underworld. [pauses] That's a terrible term. But a subculture of, either people who were out and struggling, or people who weren't out and thought they couldn't come out on campus. And hearing all these stories, I was like... you know, that transformed me. Because first of all, I got the briefest glimpse of what it might be like to be gay on this campus, good and bad. And also, I began to hear all of these personal stories. And I was like, huh, there's a lot here. And there's a lot of people who are also upset about the Catholic Church's stance, and who are allies or whatever they are, who stopped going to Mass and get angry with God and develop all of these other spiritual problems, which is something that really interests me, that prevents them from developing healthy relationships with God and participating in the Catholic community. So sort of those 2 things ignited me to

go, you know, this is a real issue. This is actually a real issue. And one thing that also changed, is for about the first 6 months, I would go, no no no, I'm straight, don't worry. But I sort of realized the privilege in that comment, or that the inherent message was, I may want the gays to have rights, but I'm not – don't worry, because you can trust me, because I'm a – and then I realized, man, that's a terrible message. Starting then I didn't correct people ever... So part of the becoming receptive to this was also an internal struggle of looking at my own privileges, my own prejudices, the socialized homophobia that I had and had to confront. And once I was really able to – and I still think it's there, it's not like I'm perfect- but it became a lot easier to become receptive to the cause, because I was comfortable challenging myself and being challenged. So that all sort of came together once I began participating in the group.

In terms of another characteristic of individuals relevant to micro-mobilization (biographical availability), of the three pathways for religiously-oriented individuals at the time of micro-mobilization, two indicate that an *absence* of biographical availability is *necessary* for their participation in the group. Nevertheless, the remaining pathway does show that the presence of biographical availability is necessary for participation for some individuals (alongside personal ties). This result seems to indicate that while biographical availability does not make a difference for those individuals already in agreement on a given issue, it may make the difference for those individuals who are ambivalent about an issue but are being recruited into a cause.

Contextual influences

Finally, as the QCA results in Panels A and B of Table 4-4 show, neither a supportive state (while at home or at school) nor a supportive school seems to be required for individuals to follow the pathway of religiously-oriented participants. Growing up in a red or blue state is not part of the single pre-movement pathway for religiously-oriented participants. While there are three micro-mobilization pathways followed by religious participants, two show that being at a school that is located in a red state or that is not supportive of LGBT students is necessary for mobilization into social movements, while the third shows that being at a school that is supportive of LGBT students is necessary for mobilization into social movements.

However, it should be noted that there is again significant variation between schools in the proportion of religiously-oriented participants in the LGBT groups. Indeed, only two of the schools seemed to have a significant presence of religiously-oriented participants (based on both their presence in my sample and participants' perceptions of the make-up of their groups). The first is Belmont, which is located in a red state, draws students primarily from red states, and was unsupportive of LGBT students prior to 2011 but supportive of LGBT students beginning in 2011. The second is Catholic, which is located in the very "blue" District of Columbia, draws students primarily from blue states, and has been unsupportive of LGBT students. Given the lack of any clear pattern in macro-level characteristics, micro-level, pre-movement influences may again best explain the systematic variations in the proportion of religious participants at these schools. Specifically, because these individuals had all been raised in conservative environments, and because Belmont and Catholic had conservative religious identities, religiously-oriented participants may have self-selected into these schools.

Summary

Again, given the mixed results for the contextual variables, Panel C of Table 4-4 provides a combined model that excludes contextual variables (blue state home, blue state school, supportive school) and includes the variables that most commonly appeared in previous solutions (socialization, prior activism, affinity, availability, and ties). As the panel summarizes, none of the participants with salient religious identities were socialized into values conducive to movement participation, and none of the participants previously participated in social justice activism. Those religious participants who did exhibit attitudinal affinity by the time they joined their campus LGBT groups did not have ties to the group and were not biographically available; however, those religious participants who either lacked attitudinal affinity or did not require attitudinal affinity needed to be biographically available and/or to have ties to the group.

PATHWAYS OF SEXUAL MINORITIES

A final group of participants in LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities maintained salient identities as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and these individuals comprised the majority (55%) of my overall sample. Although they were also active participants in LGBT groups at their school, and generally played some role in founding the LGBT groups at each of the schools, their pathways also seem to contradict at least some previous research on participants in activist groups.

Early life course influences

In general, the experiences of participants with salient sexual identities fall somewhere between those of activists and religiously-oriented participants. As the QCA results in Panel A of Table 4-5 show, similar to “activists,” some of these individuals had experienced socialization into values that were conducive to participation in activist groups, and this was a necessary path to their eventual participation. Nevertheless, this socialization was not as extensive as that reported by

TABLE 4-5. QCA PATHS OF PARTICIPANTS WITH SALIENT “SEXUAL” IDENTITIES

<u>Panel A. Pre-Movement Influences Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
SOCIALIZATION +	0.69
prior +	0.22
blue-state-home	0.08
(Common Configuration: none)	
<u>Panel B. Micro-mobilization Model</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
AFFINITY*ties*availability +	0.36
AFFINITY*TIES*supportive-school +	0.19
AFFINITY*ties*SUPPORTIVE-SCHOOL +	0.39
AFFINITY*ties*blue-state-school	0.06
(Common Configuration: AFFINITY)	
<u>Panel C. Combined Model (Without Contextual Variables)</u>	<u>Prop.</u>
SOCIALIZATION*AFFINITY*ties +	0.42
SOCIALIZATION*AFFINITY*availability +	0.11
AFFINITY*ties*availability +	0.25
socialization*prior*AFFINITY	0.22
(Common Configuration: AFFINITY)	

Note: Capitalized variables imply presence of condition, while lower-case variables imply absence of condition. Proportions may not add up to 1 due to rounding.

politicized participants – for instance, none of these individuals reported having parents who were involved in LGBT activism. Furthermore, this socialization was not necessarily accompanied by prior involvement in activist groups, and those who had participated in LGBT activism had generally only done so sporadically or for a short period of time. For example, a student at Loyola named Elizabeth reported that she was raised by accepting parents and also attended an unusually welcoming church. She did attempt to organize a “Day of Silence” (in recognition of bullied LGBT students) at her school, but her conservative school was resistant to this cause:

I: Did you ever attempt to organize an LGBT organization at your high school?

R: No, I went to this strict Opus Dei high school... [Opus Dei] is less than 1% of the church, they're all tea party, pretty much all of them. They're the people in the Da Vinci Code, except they don't go around killing people... It was sort of this weird thing where – you couldn't really come out at my high school or you'd get expelled. There was one girl who was outed, against her intention, and the principal sat her down and said, Okay [blinded], we like boys and we're friends with girls or we don't go to this school, okay? And like, basically said you're straight, and okay great, go back to class now. If I hear about this again, you're expelled. So stuff like that. Eventually, I did try to organize a Day of Silence to build support for LGBT students at the school. But I got sent to the principal for doing it, and I said, you really can't take a position to support kids to the point of suicide? You're being ridiculous. So in general, at my high school, I had to keep my mouth shut about everything, and I wasn't allowed to like, ever tell anyone anything.

For other sexual minorities, similarly to religiously-oriented participants, a lack of prior activist group participation was actually necessary for their eventual participation, and this lack of prior participation may or may not have been accompanied by socialization into values conducive for their eventual participation. Indeed, participation in LGBT activist groups was almost unthinkable for many of these participants, because they had grown up in environments that so heavily repressed sexual minorities. As one example, Sarah, a student at Belmont, was raised by a family that supported her sexual identity. However, she had witnessed violence and other bullying behaviors against sexual minorities in her small southern town, which meant she completely shied away from any formal activism on LGBT issues growing up:

I: How accepting would you say your high school was of LGBTQ people?

R: On a scale of 1 to 10, like negative 10. [laughs]

I: Why do you say that?

R: Um, I come from [blinded city in the south]. [Blinded] is not very – they're still working on some race problems that they have. It's better, but they're not even to that point yet. When it comes to, [sigh], homosexuality, [it] doesn't exist, basically. I had a friend who was, he moved into town, and he was, he was bi. He wasn't – he was gender nonconforming I guess. He, um – it was so bad. He had knives pulled on him. And he got beat up. And one of the worst parts is the principal, they took one of the guys who beat him up, and he shook his hand. He like pretended to get on to him but then shook his

hand. So, yeah, it's really bad, it's really bad. And another friend... she had to stop going to school because she like came out, and she got bullied so bad that she had to become homeschooled. And it was from the teachers too, not just the students. And the school board told her that she was living in sin, and she shouldn't be rubbing it into everyone's faces.

I: And this is a public school board?

R: This is the public school board. So that's where I come from.

Similarly, another student at Belmont, Curtis, was raised by parents who were cautious and somewhat concerned about his sexual identity. He reports that he encountered bullying in high school, which forced him to become homeschooled until he entered college:

I: And how accepting would you say your high school was of LGBTQ people, if at all?

R: Um, not very accepting at all. 9th through 11th grade I went to a private school, but 12th grade I was homeschooled because I had problems in my private school, actually. I was bullied and harassed a lot in high school because of my sexuality. And these were people who were supposedly my friends who told me they would support me if I came out and then they turned on me.

Curtis then discusses facing the same type of bullying at Belmont before an LGBT group had formed on campus:

I: Have you seen or experienced any bullying or harassment at Belmont?

R: Oh yes, I've experienced first hand on campus people being really rude and nasty to gay people. I was recipient to that freshman year. The person that lived next door to me harassed me pretty much every day the whole year, calling me a fag and all kinds of other things, drawing penises and other crude pictures on a whiteboard that was on my door, all kinds of things, and it was just... you know, it was college, and it was time for people to grow up. And apparently they had not done that.

While these sexual minorities' pathways reflected religious participants' pathways in that they lacked any prior activist group participation, few of these participants' pre-movement views were as conservative as the religious participants' backgrounds. In particular, none of these individuals reported pursuing reparative therapy to attempt to change their sexual identity.

Individual attributes at the time of micro-mobilization

Some of the individuals with salient sexual identities had early life course experiences similar to (if not as deep as) those of activists; other individuals with salient sexual identities had pre-movement experiences not much different than those of religiously-oriented participants. Nevertheless, as Panel B of Table 4-5 shows, this group of individuals coheres not only around their identity as sexual minorities but also their attitudinal affinity with the LGBTQ rights

movement by the time they actually joined an LGBTQ group. This attitudinal affinity did not generally stem from an overarching political ideology, such as a commitment to nonviolence or anarchism. Rather, their attitudinal affinity stemmed from a basic self-interest, such as a desire to build a support group for their marginalized identity, a desire to build community with other like-minded individuals, and a desire to promote members' mental health. For instance, Lily, a student at Loyola, expressed her motivation for joining Advocate in terms of her desire to make new friends:

I: Why did you initially become involved in Advocate?

R: I definitely wanted to make new friends -- that's something I was really excited about. At my high school, when I came out as bi, it was like -- it wasn't like I was shamed for it, but it was a big deal. Not big, but just, people didn't know what to do with it. But I hoped, coming here, that I could find more people in the queer community and generally in the LGBTQIA+ -- there's too many letters. But yeah, I was hoping to find a social thing and hopefully again become more involved in the community, this was something that never happened at my high school, and I was really hoping I could have that kind of impact here.

Furthermore, because several participants had lacked any prior involvement on LGBT activism and had sometimes been socialized into more conservative values that were not conducive to social movement participation, their eventual attitudinal affinity with the movement came only after a laborious process of re-socialization. However, unlike some religious-oriented

participants, they went through this re-socialization process before they actually joined an LGBT organization. For instance, Carlisle, a student who attended Loyola as both an undergraduate and graduate student, joined Advocate after rethinking nearly all of his beliefs and moving from a Catholic to an atheist identity:

I: You said you were in seminary while you were in undergrad at Loyola – would you have identified as a person of faith? Did you have a Catholic background?

R: Well, it began that way, for sure. I grew up Roman Catholic and that was a big part of my own development as a child. My mom and my father were Catholic and things like that, so that was a big part of our life growing up. It certainly was in the seminary too, but I started to question a lot of things near the end, about many different things. I had taken a philosophy course on the late Nietzsche. I don't know if you're familiar with him at all, but he was a philosopher, he was very anti-Catholic, anti-Christian, but more importantly he was very anti-dogmatic philosophy. Dogmatic philosophy is very typical, as far as I know, of all religions, or most of them, and it's basically about this unchanging source or fountain of truth, you know, this is it, this is the one thing that's right or correct, you can't question it, you can't alter it. So basically, my thing was, if I'm going to go on to a major graduate-level seminary, my last semester at Loyola, second semester senior year, will be my last chance to take a non-Catholic philosopher, so I wanted to go all out, and I took Nietzsche. And Nietzsche was probably as far away from religion as you could get. So yeah, I read *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Genealogy of Morals*, and a couple others, for the class, and those changed my life. They're great books, I highly recommend them,

certainly – something to put on your list to read. ... As simple as it sounds, in *Beyond Good and Evil* section nine, he talks about putting your own stamp on this chaos, and questioning the world around you, and not accepting things as they are, and it sounds very basic and very simple, but that was the first time in my life I felt a true sense of permission to do that, and I was equipped with an undergrad education at that point, I knew the words and meanings to actually do that in a meaningful way, and that started me down a path of questioning a lot of things about my faith. And I now actually identify as an atheist. And that also laid the groundwork for me no longer staying in seminary... And I then started significantly questioning everything else. And I mean everything – my taste in music, my political affiliation, my religious views, my sexual orientation, my gender identity, I questioned all of that. And that was the starting point of all that, that's when I first started to discern more closely my own sexual orientation. And after that I came out to myself and fully started to come out to others. And like I said, I started attending Advocate's support group, and that was a huge resource for providing support resources and also finding community. You know, knowing you're not alone and there are others out there.

While many other sexual minorities describe a similar shift from Christian beliefs to an agnostic or atheist identity prior to joining an LGBT group, this is not to suggest that all sexual minorities completely abandoned a religious identity. Those students who had attended more liberal churches were more likely to retain a religious identity even after coming out as LGBT. Furthermore, as I describe in my work on Belmont (Coley 2014a), it was not uncommon for formerly religious students to return to a religious identity after they began to participate in an

LGBT group and recognized that LGBT and religious identities could be reconciled.

Nevertheless, especially at the time of micro-mobilization, a self-interest related to sexual identity was the primary motivation for these students' participation.

Perhaps the most interesting finding in regards to the participation of sexual minorities is that, despite the fact that so many of these individuals joined an LGBT group to find support and build community, an *absence* of pre-existing ties to the LGBT group was *necessary* for actual participation in three of the four micro-mobilization pathways of sexual minorities (see Panel B of Table 4-5). Indeed, the vast majority of participants reported that they joined the LGBT group without any personal invitation and on their own initiative. For instance, Ruth describes examining Belmont's calendar of activities and deciding to go to a Bridge Builders meeting despite not knowing anyone there:

I: I'd like you to think back to the first time you joined the organization. Would you tell me when and how you first found out about Bridge Builders?

R: Sure. It was sometime February 2010, I guess, and I was just looking on our school calendar for stuff to do. Like at Belmont we had these things called convocation where we had to go to so many lectures and activities to graduate, so I was looking for stuff to do. And then something caught my eye, it was like, "Bridge Builders Interest Meeting #2," or you know whatever. So I was like, whoa what's this? So I kind of read the little blurb about it, and it says it was people who are interested in forming a group about sexuality, and at that point I was pretty interested in discussing and exploring this topic, so I was like why not. And I went to the interest meeting, it was, I guess it was interesting

to say the least, because I guess I hadn't realized how big of a deal it was going to turn out to be. I was like oh it's just people who want to have a discussion, there's nothing wrong with having intellectual dialogue, and so I ended up going and talking with people and ended up realizing it was not as simple as I thought it was gonna be, it was gonna be pretty intense and complicated. I was just like, this is something I really believe in, so sign me up.

Damon, a student at Loyola, describes attending the annual organization fair at Loyola as a freshman and similarly signing up without knowing anyone in the organization:

I: How and when did you first find out about Advocate?

R: During freshman year, they have a big org fair where all of the organizations are, and I saw these rainbows and balloons and I was kind of like – I wonder what this is. I signed up for a lot of different organizations, but Advocate is the one I ended up staying in, because I thought the social aspect of it was really important, especially when you're a freshman and want to make friends that are like you. So I think that's kind of what got me into it.... I went to high school in [blinded state] – all of my friends were not out, so it was kind of weird, but when I got here in college, a lot of people were already out....

I: Did you know – was the organization fair the first time you heard about Advocate, had anyone invited you to the Advocate booth?

R: No, I didn't know anyone, that was the first time I'd ever heard of Advocate. I didn't even visit Loyola before I came here – I'm a first generation – my family moved from [blinded country], and I'm the only one who went to school here, so I kind of didn't know how it all worked, and we didn't realize you could visit schools before coming. So I didn't visit, and I didn't really know about the gay culture at Loyola or in Chicago in general. So when I came to Loyola, and when I came to the org fair, I was really surprised by it, and thought, oh, okay. And so yeah, that was the first time I'd heard of it.

Notably, biographical availability was only a part of one of the four micro-mobilization pathways and two of the four combined pathways. In these pathways, it is again the *absence* of biographical availability that is *necessary* for the micro-mobilization of sexual minorities (Panel B of Table 4-5). Once again, these results seem to indicate that biographical availability is not necessary if participants are already motivated for their cause.

Contextual influences

Finally, in Panels A and B of Table 4-5, the QCA results show no clear pattern with regard to the potential role of state or school context on the participation of individuals with salient sexual identities in LGBT groups. In the three pathways for pre-movement influences, only one pathway contains a variable for home state, and that pathway indicates that growing up in a red state is necessary for movement participation. In the four pathways for micro-mobilization, one model indicates that attending a supportive school is necessary for movement participation, while two other models indicate that attending a non-supportive school or going to school in a red state might be necessary for movement participation. Indeed, regardless of whether they had

policies supportive of or repressive of LGBT individuals, and regardless of whether they were located in liberal or conservative states, each school in the study did seem to attract a healthy proportion of participants with salient sexual identities. It is true that I did not identify or interview transgender individuals at two of the schools studied here; this may indeed be the result of individuals' fear of repression in response to their coming out as transgender at their school, but it may also be because transgender individuals chose not to attend these schools. Thus, more research is needed to understand the link between macro-level contexts and micro-mobilization experiences of transgender individuals.

Summary

Panel C of Table 4-5 summarizes that attitudinal affinity is the one attribute that all LGBT participants have in common when they join LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities. While prior socialization into the movement was necessary for some of these participants, the absence of prior movement participation, ties, and availability were commonly part of the pathways of participants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The question of why and how individuals come to join activist groups has inspired a long line of research, particularly within social movement studies. Generally, this literature has shown that the characteristics of individuals prior to their participation in an activist group (e.g., their early life course socialization and prior activist group participation), as well as the characteristics of individuals at the time of micro-mobilization (e.g., their attitudinal affinity, micro-structural availability, and biographical availability), explain why and how certain individuals become

involved in activist groups. Nevertheless, the dominant line of scholarly inquiry, which seeks to establish the characteristics that distinguish participants from non-participants, has often obscured the complexity of social movement participants both within activist groups and between social movement families. Specifically, this line of scholarship has often failed to grapple with the conjunctural complexity and historical contingency of activist group participation.

In an attempt to address these shortcomings, this study builds a theory of multiple, conjuncturally complex paths to participation in activist groups. Specifically, in LGBT movements that have long emphasized concerns over collective identity, I have argued that multiple paths to participation can be linked to individuals' most salient identities, whether "activist identities," "value identities" (on the basis of religion) or "solidary identities" (on the basis of sexual identity and/or gender identity).

The results indeed demonstrate that attributes such as pre-movement socialization, prior movement participation, attitudinal affinity, and personal ties matter differently according to individuals' most salient identities. First, those participants with salient "activist identities" were socialized in values conducive to participation in activist groups, participated in prior activist organizations, and exhibited attitudinal affinity with the cause of LGBT rights. However, personal ties to an activist group were not necessary for their involvement in that group. Next, participants with religiously-based "value identities" were socialized by families, schools, and churches that generally opposed the cause of LGBT rights, and they had not participated in prior activist organizations. These participants came to join an LGBT group either because they had eventually arrived at "attitudinal affinity" with the cause of LGBT rights or had been recruited into the organization. Finally, the pre-movement backgrounds of participants with "solidary

identities” based on sexual and/or gender identity fell somewhere between participants with activist or value identities in that they may have been socialized into values conducive to LGBT activism but often did not have prior participation in activist groups. Nevertheless, these individuals are all similar in that they possessed “attitudinal affinity” by the time they joined an LGBT group, with or without personal ties to that group.

While these results are in many ways unique to the LGBT organizations at religious colleges and universities studied here, the theoretical contribution on the potential role of collective identity in activist group participation provides some basis for generalizability. Specifically, activist, value, or solidarity identities could plausibly be linked to multiple pathways of participation in other social movements, especially those that emphasize identity politics. Indeed, this study builds on at least two prior studies (Corrigall-Brown 2011; Fendrich 1993) that provide some evidence that activist, value, and solidarity identities play some role in multiple trajectories of activist group participation throughout the life course.

This study makes contributions to theory on activist group participation in other ways as well. For instance, beyond linking collective identities to variations in early life course socialization, prior activist group participation, attitudinal affinity, and personal ties, the study generally fails to show much role for biographical availability in activist group participation. The exception is that the study shows biographical availability may play a role in the participation of those individuals who do not already exhibit “attitudinal affinity.” Especially because this finding contradicts at least one recent study that theorized that biographical availability operates primarily to increase individuals’ willingness to join an activist group and affinity with that activist group prior to their participation (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006), this finding points to a direction for further research on this concept. Nevertheless, it remains true that the role of

biographical availability may be highly contingent on the social movement family under study; in this case, biographical availability may not have played a significant role in these activist groups because most participants were at a very similar stage in their life course.

This study also contributes to theory on micro-mobilization by examining potential macro-effects on activist group participation. Unlike most previous studies of activist group participation, this study examines micro-mobilization at multiple sites, which provides the kind of analytical leverage useful for understanding contextual influences on micro-mobilization. The analysis suggests that the proportion of participants with salient activist and value identities does vary across sites, although this variation did not seem to be linked to the receptiveness of the school or state to LGBT groups. Rather, my reading of these participants' biographies suggests that the variation may be the result of self-selection into schools that have historically supported activist cultures and/or that have emphasized religiosity, and thus have drawn a disproportionate number of individuals who were socialized into activist identities or religiously-oriented identities. These findings make sense when considering that so many individuals join LGBT groups early in their freshman years, before their schools have had a chance to shape them. Nevertheless, these findings do not preclude the possibility that LGBT groups may be more or less effective in "producing" individuals with certain kinds of identities (i.e., in inducing certain kinds of biographical consequences) depending on the context under study.

The study's theoretical implications also extend beyond the area of micro-mobilization. As I show in chapter five, the variations in LGBT participants identified here can also be linked to variations in the types of LGBT activist organizations that exist. Specifically, participants with salient activist identities are drawn to LGBT organizations engaged in direct action, participants with salient religious identities are drawn to LGBT organizations engaged in educational work,

and participants with salient sexual and/or gender identities are drawn to LGBT organizations focused on community building.

Finally, as I show in chapter six, the three types of participants identified here all follow different biographical pathways following their participation in the movement. Specifically, participants with salient activist identities tend to pursue involvement in other social movement or political organizations following graduation, while participants with salient religious identities focus on applying the values of the movement within humanistic careers, and participants with salient sexual and/or gender identities focus on applying the values of the movement to their family lives.

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CHAPTER 5

DIVIDED OVER BELONGING: CULTURAL UNDERPINNINGS OF COMMITMENT TO LGBT RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM

Why do individuals commit to activist groups? Literature on participation in activist groups has often focused on the initial act of joining activist groups – micro-mobilization (see chapter four) – and the biographical consequences of activist groups (see chapter six). However, what happens to participants between these beginning points and later points is much less clear. Indeed, recent scholarship on activist groups points out that the number of individuals who may “dip their toe” into an existing activist group is much larger than the number of individuals who fully commit to an activist group and thus take on responsibilities or leadership positions in that group (Blee 2012).

Although a few scholars have addressed the question of commitment to activist groups (see especially Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1993, 1995; Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman 2003; Dorius and McCarthy 2011; Knoke 1981), these scholars mostly focus on how the rational choice calculations and meso-level constraints associated with decisions to initially join activist groups are in turn linked to decisions to commit to activist groups. What is missing is an understanding of how what happens once individuals actually join an activist group affects individuals’ commitment to that group. Specifically, current literature often neglects how the emerging dynamics between an individual and an activist group – the tensions or the sense of belonging experienced by an individual in an activist group – affect individuals’ levels of participation in that group.

In this chapter, I draw on my interview data with participants in LGBT groups at four Christian colleges and universities in the United States to explore the undertheorized cultural underpinnings of activist group commitment. LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities draw diverse participants and themselves come in a diversity of forms. I argue that *commitment is contingent on the correspondence between a participant's most salient collective identity and an organization's dominant group ethos*; alternatively, a lack of commitment is produced by a mismatch between collective identity and group ethos. Some individuals come to their universities with salient activist identities, and they become especially committed to LGBT groups with a direct action ethos – that is, groups that seek policy changes through more confrontational means. Other individuals who bring in salient value identities based on their religious beliefs are especially devoted to LGBT groups that exhibit an educational ethos and thus seek to talk about and raise awareness on LGBT issues. Finally, still other individuals who hold salient solidary identities based on their sexual and/or gender identities are most committed to groups that exhibit a solidarity ethos and thus seek to carve out a “safe space” for LGBT individuals.

Beyond showing that a correspondence between a participant's most salient collective identity and an LGBT organization's dominant group ethos produces commitment, my interview data also allow me to show precisely how collective identity and group ethos come to align. Especially at colleges and universities where several LGBT organizations are present, LGBT organizations tend to signal their group ethos and thus draw in participants through their branding or the nature of their activities. However, especially at schools where only a single LGBT organization is present, and where the identities of incoming participants may not align with the ethos of that organization, participants exhibit agency in transforming the character of

their organization. Specifically, through gradual cohort replacement or through direct takeovers, participants can effectively produce a fit between their identities and their organization's group ethos. I expand on this argument below, as well as its broader implications for literature on activist groups, but first I further discuss past literature on commitment to activist groups and discuss my data and analytic approach.

PREVIOUS EXPLANATIONS FOR COMMITMENT TO ACTIVIST GROUPS

As stated, while a large body of scholarship has examined the factors shaping decisions to join activist groups, much less is known about the factors shaping commitment to activist groups (though see literature review by Hunt and Benford 2004 and studies by Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1993, 1995; Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman 2003; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Dorius and McCarthy 2011; Downton and Wehr 1998; Isaac et al. forthcoming; Fisher and McInerney 2012; Knoke 1981; Nepstad 2004a, 2004b; Van Dyke and Dixon 2013). Indeed, Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) label this question a "black box in the social-movement and voluntary-association literatures" (p. 311).

One problem contributing to the lack of literature on commitment in activist groups is that there is little agreement about what commitment actually entails. Many scholars conflate "commitment" with concepts such as "persistence," defining "commitment" as the decision to participate in an activist group over time (e.g., Corrigan-Brown 2011; Downton and Wehr 1998; Fisher and McInerney 2012; Nepstad 2004a, 2004b; Van Dyke and Dixon 2013). However, other scholars define "commitment" as the level of time, energy, and activity one devotes to or expends on an activist group (e.g., Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1993, 1995; Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman 2003; Dorius and McCarthy 2011; Knoke

1981). While “commitment” and “persistence” are certainly related – Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker (1993, 1995) and Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) find that “commitment” measured as level of activity in an organization is correlated with “persistence” measured as years of membership in an organization – the two concepts are analytically distinct. I focus here on level of activity in an organization in part because many of my own respondents are in the early stages of their participation in activist groups, meaning data on their persistence in the groups are not yet available, and also because the nature of college-based activism is that participation in LGBT student groups has a natural end point – graduation.

In terms of existing scholarship on commitment measured as level of activity in an activist group, one set of theories emphasizes the role of rational choice calculations in commitment to activist groups. For example, many studies attempt to build on Olson’s (1965) work on the “collective action problem” by examining how participants’ beliefs and expectations about “collective benefits” (e.g., marriage rights won by LGBT movements) and “selective incentives” (e.g., skills gained or friends made through participation in LGBQ groups) can offset tendencies to be a “free rider” in activist groups (also see work by Oliver 1980; Klandermans 1984). For example, Barkan, Cohn, and their colleagues examine factors shaping commitment to the anti-hunger organization Bread for the World (measured by feelings of commitment in a 1993 article, by actual levels of overall activity in a 1995 article, and by actual levels of activity for distinct, specific tasks in a 2003 article). In each of their articles, the authors find that participants are more committed when they are motivated by “policy incentives” (a desire to change public policy) and “solidary incentives” (the expectation that they would make friends) and when they believed the organization was legitimate and effective in pursuing its goals (Barkan, Cohn, Whitaker 1993, 1995; Cohn, Barkan, Halteman 2003). Another group of

scholars, Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013), examine commitment to the environmental organization Sierra Club (measured as number of hours contributed each month to the organization) and find that those leaders who believed their participation in Sierra Club would influence public policy and lead to greater protections for the environment (both of which are anticipated collective benefits) were more committed to the organization.

Interestingly, these studies on how beliefs and expectations influence commitment to activist groups tend to downplay the role of ideology, emotions, collective identity, and other “cultural” aspects of social movement participation (Jasper 1997). Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker (1993, 1995) do find that Bread for the World participants were more committed when they believed that the causes of hunger were structural, when they held liberal political attitudes, and in some cases when they held liberal religious attitudes. When they analyzed a series of tasks in a movement separately, Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) find that acceptance of structural causes of hunger is correlated with involvement in three of six tasks, although variables such as liberal political attitudes, liberal religious attitudes, and general religiosity are linked to involvement in fewer than half of these tasks. However, Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013) do not examine the role of attitudes and dispositions in leaders’ commitment to Sierra Club. Furthermore, none of the studies that measure commitment as level of activity in an organization examine the role of collective identity in commitment.

Another rational choice theory of commitment to social movements emphasizes the role of “biographical availability” in participants’ levels of activity in a social movement group. The concept of “biographical availability,” or an “absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities” (McAdam 1986, p. 70), was originally offered in studies on decisions to

join activist groups. As Nepstad and Smith (1999) point out, this language about the “costs and risks” of participation similarly assumes the importance of rational choice calculations in activist group involvement. However, the concept has received little actual support in that literature (see chapter four) – for example, while McAdam (1986) coined the term “biographical availability,” his empirical test of this concept shows that the “sum of personal constraints” makes “no significant contribution to likelihood of participation” when controlling for other factors such as personal ties and organizational affiliations (p. 85). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that existing studies find little support for the role of biographical availability in commitment to activist groups. Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker (1993, 1995) and Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) find that variables such as marital status, age, and number of children have no effect on commitment to Bread for the World. Similarly, Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013) show that age and marital status play no role in the number of hours spent by leaders in Sierra Club, although full-time employment leads to a decrease of involvement in Sierra Club.

Apart from these rational choice theories, a second set of theories on commitment to activist groups points to the role of meso-level organizational characteristics and personal networks in participants’ levels of involvement in activist groups. Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013) examine how organizational characteristics of Sierra Club affect leaders’ commitment to Sierra Club. In one of their strongest findings, they show that leaders who spend a smaller proportion of time in meetings devote more time to the organization overall. Furthermore, they show that leaders devote more time to Sierra Club when their local organization has more members and when their teams work interdependently. Similarly, Dorius and McCarthy (2011) find that bureaucratically complex organizational structures detract from leadership effort, and Knoke (1981) shows that organizational centralization and hierarchy contributes to less

committed voluntary association members. Focusing more on personal networks, Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker (1993, 1995) and Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) find that Bread for the World members reported feeling or being more committed when they had made new friends through the organization, occasionally when they had relatives in the organization, and when they were active in other local organizations.

While the studies discussed above have been helpful in establishing commitment as an area of research in the scholarly study of activist groups, as well as in offering initial theories of commitment to activist groups, they also have a few shortcomings. For example, the few studies on commitment to activist groups have produced inconsistent findings in regard to the role of beliefs, biographical availability, and to a degree organizational constraints and personal networks in social movement commitment. Those studies emphasizing rational choice calculations are also quite similar to the factors that have been linked to decisions to initially join social movements, providing little basis to actually distinguish social movement participants and not taking into account what happens in groups once participants actually join. Finally, studies emphasizing meso-level constraints are quite mechanical and structural in nature, assuming participants in activist organizations exhibit little agency in transforming organizations that might not initially meet their needs. While Barkan, Cohn, and their colleagues' findings about the role of friendships in activist group commitment begin to hint at some of the dynamism that might be involved in activist groups, I argue that more research is need to understand precisely how and why personal relationships might matter for commitment.

BRINGING IDENTITY AND CULTURE INTO EXPLANATIONS OF COMMITMENT TO ACTIVIST GROUPS

In an attempt to move past the limitations of existing theories of commitment to activist groups, this chapter emphasizes the role of cultural concepts such as collective identity and group ethos in participants' levels of involvement in LGBT groups. Specifically, I theorize that *commitment to LGBT groups is contingent on the correspondence between a participant's most salient collective identity and an LGBT organization's dominant group ethos*. Below, I discuss how a consideration of collective identity and group ethos can help us move past shortcomings in previous literature on commitment to activist groups, and I outline specific expectations for the role of collective identity and group ethos in LGBT activism.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the concept of collective identity has had a productive career in the scholarly study of activist organizations, having been invoked to explain and otherwise understand movement emergence (e.g., Armstrong 2002), movement impacts (e.g., Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Bernstein and De La Cruz 2009), and micro-mobilization (chapter four). However, few researchers have explored the potential link between categories of collective identity (specifically, activist, value, and solidary identities) and variations in commitment to activist groups (though see Gamson 1991). The results from chapter four on the link between collective identity and micro-mobilization are particularly relevant for theorizing the potential link between collective identity and commitment, given that many of the factors that have been invoked to explain micro-mobilization (such as beliefs, biographical availability, and micro-structural availability) are the same as those used to understand commitment. Specifically, I showed that participants with salient "activist identities" had been socialized into attitudes conducive to participation in activist groups and had previously been involved in

activist groups, although they did not necessarily have prior connections with individuals in the LGBT group they joined and did not necessarily exhibit “biographical availability.” In stark contrast, participants with salient “value identities” (based on their religious beliefs) had been socialized into beliefs quite contrary to participation in activist groups and had no prior record of participation in activist groups; however, they were often recruited into an LGBT group by personal connections to that group and were sometimes “biographically available” to participate. Finally, participants with salient “solidary identities” (based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity) had usually been socialized into at least some values conducive to participation in activist groups but had not necessarily been involved in previous activist groups; like those with salient “activist identities,” their beliefs in the goals of the group rather than their personal connections to that group or their biographical availability seemed to explain their participation.

The link between collective identity and other individual- and meso-level predictors of participation in activist groups is important because it simultaneously helps explain the seeming inconsistencies in participants’ beliefs, biographical availability, and micro-structural availability, while also providing the variation necessary to explain within-group differences in patterns of joining activist groups. Nevertheless, it remains to be shown whether and how variations in collective identity might be linked to differences in commitment to activist groups. For example, might certain types of collective identity (activist, value, or solidary) simply be more conducive to commitment in activist groups than others? Or might the link between collective identity and some other variable that comes to the forefront once participants actually join an activist group produce social movement commitment? In this chapter, I argue for the latter possibility and argue that scholars must examine an additional concept rarely examined in the literature on activist groups – *group ethos*.

The concept of group ethos has its roots in the scholarship of Weber (2002 [1905]), who argued that the character of certain Protestant groups (as communicated through beliefs and embodied in practices) could be linked to the spread of capitalism. More recently, in his article “Belonging Before Believing,” Xu (2013) employed the concept of group ethos to explain why certain Chinese student groups joined the communist movement while others did not. Specifically, Xu argues that the alignment of student groups’ *ethical ethos* (which indicated a collective interest in self-transformation and moral cultivation) with the Bolshevik organizational culture (which similarly emphasized “ascetic self-discipline and subjugation of the self to collective ends,” p. 774) led Chinese student groups to join the communist movement, whereas “the absence of ethical activism, and the correlative mismatch in organizational ethos, was associated with a negative response to Communist recruitment efforts” (p. 773). I draw heavily on Xu’s (2013) conceptualization of group ethos (that is, the character of a group, as communicated through beliefs and embodied in practices) here. However, whereas Xu constructs his argument such that a meso-level variable (group ethos) must correspond with a macro-level variable (the communist movement culture) to explain a macro-level outcome (movement spillover), I am interested here in how the meso-level variable group ethos corresponds with an individual-level variable (collective identity) to produce an individual-level outcome (activist commitment). Furthermore, I apply Xu’s insights on group ethos to a very different context.

After inductively deriving three types of group ethos for LGBT organizations – a “direct action” ethos, an “educational” ethos, and a “solidarity” ethos” – I argue that variations in group ethos correspond to variations in collective identity (activist, value, and solidary identities) in ways that explain commitment to activist groups. First, I argue that a salient “activist identity” corresponds to a “direct action ethos,” such that individuals with well-developed activist

commitments will be most committed to LGBT groups engaged in direct action. Next, I argue that a salient “value identity” on the basis of religion corresponds to an “educational ethos,” such that individuals with expressed interests in formulating and sharing their value commitments will be committed to LGBT groups that do the same. Finally, I argue that a salient “solidary identity” on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity corresponds to a “solidarity ethos,” such that individuals with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender identities will be most committed to LGBT organizations that serve to connect similarly-identified individuals with each other. It also follows that a mismatch between each type of identity and the corresponding group ethos will decrease participants’ commitment to that LGBT group. Table 5-1 provides definitions for each of these group ethoses alongside the collective identities with which they align.

TABLE 5-1. CATEGORIES OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND THEIR
CORRESPONDING GROUP ETHOS

<i>Collective Identity</i>	<i>Group Ethos</i>
<i>Activist Identity</i> based on a broad ideological commitment to political, social, or economic justice	<i>Direct Action Group</i> that seeks structural or policy changes through more confrontational and extra-institutional forms of collective action
<i>Value Identity</i> based on a more narrowly defined set of principles or standards, such as those defined by a particular religion	<i>Educational Group</i> that establishes a shared set of values and raises consciousness about those values in a community through more conciliatory and institutional means
<i>Solidary Identity</i> based on a specific social position, such as sexual orientation and/or gender identity	<i>Solidarity Group</i> that facilitates personal development and growth by connecting similarly-identified individuals with one another in a safe space

By demonstrating that the correspondence between participants' collective identities and LGBT organizations' group ethos produces commitment to activist groups, I move beyond explanations of commitment to activist groups that rely on the concepts of beliefs about collective benefits and selective incentives, calculations about the costs and risks of participation (biographical availability), and meso-level constraints. As stated, these concepts are not well-suited to explain commitment to activist groups, given that existing research has produced inconsistent findings on these variables and given that they are many of the same concepts that have been linked to decisions to initially join activist groups. More pressingly, by demonstrating the importance of collective identity and group ethos to activist group commitment, I move beyond the often mechanistic portraits of previous studies of activist group commitment that emphasize participants' meso-level constraints. I thus resuscitate the role of culture in social movement commitment (Gamson 1991) in a way that parallels similar developments in studies of activist group emergence (e.g., Armstrong 2008), impacts (e.g., Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Bernstein and De La Cruz 2009), and micro-mobilization (chapter four).

DATA, METHODS, AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

To assess whether commitment to activist groups is contingent on a correspondence between a participant's most salient collective identity and an LGBT organization's dominant group ethos, I again draw on my interview data with 65 participants in LGBT groups at four Christian colleges and universities in the United States: Loyola University Chicago, Goshen College, Catholic University of America, and Belmont University. Crucially for this chapter, in building my interview sample, I sought out both current students and alumni with a wide range of "commitment" levels by circulating special calls for individuals who may have only participated

for a short length of time or who may have once been actively involved in the organization but had since dropped out of the group (along with those individuals who were more committed members of their group). The final sample at each university was generally evenly split between individuals who had served as leaders in the organizations and students who had merely participated as general members.

The interviews covered a range of questions related to social movement participation, including questions that assessed participants' most salient identities, the nature of the organization(s) that participants joined, and the participants' levels of activity in the organization(s).

There are multiple ways in which these interview data on commitment to LGBT groups could be analyzed. As a preliminary way to assess the potential link between collective identity, group ethos, and commitment to activist groups, I analyzed variables for participants' most salient collective identity, the group ethos of the organization to which they were most drawn, and these participants' level of commitment to this organization through a series of correlation matrices and contingency tables. In constructing the variable for participants' most salient collective identity, I first established whether respondents responded affirmatively when asked whether they identified as "activists," persons of faith," and/or members of the LGBT community. If respondents stated that they identified with more than one of these labels, I then coded their answers to open-ended questions about their motives and expectations for participation to establish which of these identities was most salient. (This variable comes from chapter four, where I showed how paths to activism systematically vary according to respondents' most salient identities – either an activist identity, a value identity based on religion, or a solidary identity based on sexual and/or gender identity.)

To construct the variable for group ethos, I inductively coded respondents' answers to an open-ended question that asked, "How would you describe [your organization] to someone who wasn't familiar with it?" I found that organizations tended to exhibit one of three group ethoses based on their stated missions and the nature of their activities: a direct action ethos, an educational ethos, or a solidarity ethos. In those cases where groups took on multiple (direct action, educational, or solidarity) functions, I also drew on data from questions that asked respondents to list specific activities that their group had been engaged in, which allowed me to assess the groups' priorities. To establish a consistent code for an organizations' group ethos, I cross-checked respondents' answers with others involved in the group during the same time.

TABLE 5-2. CORRELATION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND GROUP ETHOS

<u>Collective Identity</u>	<u>Group Ethos</u>		
	<i>Direct Action Group</i>	<i>Educational Group</i>	<i>Solidarity Group</i>
<i>Activist Identity</i>	0.65	-0.37	-0.30
<i>Religious Identity</i>	-0.31	0.55	-0.24
<i>Sexual Identity</i>	-0.38	-0.05	0.51

Table 5-2 provides a Spearman's correlation matrix for participants' collective identities and their organizations' group ethoses. The table shows a consistent correlation between certain collective identities and group ethoses. Specifically, while an activist identity is positively correlated with participation in a direct action group, it is negatively correlated with participation in educational and solidarity groups. Furthermore, while a religious identity is positively

correlated with participation in educational groups, it seems to detract from participation in direct action and solidarity groups. Finally, while a sexual identity is positively correlated with participation in solidarity groups, it is negatively associated with participation in direct action and educational groups. These findings align with the expectations outlined previously.

While the above correlation matrix illustrates that individuals with certain collective identities are drawn to LGBT organizations with certain group ethos, the table does not provide direct evidence that the organizations to which individuals are most drawn are the same as the organizations to which individuals are most committed. To illustrate the link between collective identity and group ethos with commitment, I next constructed a variable indicating whether individuals took on leadership responsibilities in their LGBT organization (based on a direct question about respondents' leadership positions). For organizations that had adopted a non-hierarchical leadership structure, I simply considered whether individuals had taken on responsibilities (such as organizing events, leading meetings) not shared by most of the general membership.

Table 5-3 is a contingency table indicating the proportion of respondents who had taken on leadership responsibilities by collective identity and group ethos. This table provides consistent evidence that individuals' willingness to serve in leadership is contingent on the correspondence between collective identity and group ethos. Specifically, a high proportion of respondents with activist identities involved in direct action groups (0.63) served as leaders of direct action groups. An even higher proportion of religiously-oriented respondents involved in educational groups (0.67) served as leaders, and a similarly high proportion of LGBT respondents involved in solidarity groups (0.73) took on leadership responsibilities. Those

individuals whose collective identities do not seem to correspond with their organizations' group ethoses seldom (and in some cases never) served as leaders.

TABLE 5-3. PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO TOOK ON LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES, BY COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND GROUP ETHOS

<u>Collective Identity</u>	<u>Group Ethos</u>		
	<i>Direct Action Group</i>	<i>Educational Group</i>	<i>Solidarity Group</i>
<i>Activist Identity</i>	0.63	0	0
<i>Religious Identity</i>	0	0.67	0
<i>Sexual Identity</i>	0.3	0.3	0.73

As a final preliminary way to examine whether a correspondence between collective identity and group ethos produces commitment to an LGBT organization, I constructed a variable based on a question that asked individuals how many hours per week they participated in an organization during the past year (or their last year in the organization). Certainly, these data should be viewed with some degree of skepticism; “time use” data is less reliable when the data are based on individuals’ recall rather than official records or time use diaries (e.g., Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves 1993; Brenner 2014). Nevertheless, as an indicator of how much individuals *perceived* themselves to have participated in the organization, the variable may still be instructive.

Table 5-4 provides the cross-tabulation for the number of hours individuals claim to have participated in their organization by collective identity and group ethos. Once again, individuals’ perceptions of their time commitment to the organization seem to be contingent on the

correspondence between collective identity and group ethos. Specifically, individuals with activist identities claimed to spend 6 hours per week in direct action groups, but only 2 hours in educational groups and 1 hour in solidarity groups. In contrast, individuals with salient religious identities seemed to devote 6 hours per week in educational groups, but 1 hour in direct action groups and 1 hour in solidarity groups. Finally, respondents with salient LGBT identities said they participated 5 hours per week in solidarity groups, but 3 hours in educational groups or direct action groups.

TABLE 5-4. MEAN HOURS PER WEEK RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATED IN ORGANIZATION, BY COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND GROUP ETHOS

<u>Collective Identity</u>	<u>Group Ethos</u>		
	<i>Direct Action Group</i>	<i>Educational Group</i>	<i>Solidarity Group</i>
<i>Activist Identity</i>	6	2	1
<i>Religious Identity</i>	1	6	1
<i>Sexual Identity</i>	3	3	5

While these quantitative data help illustrate the link between collective identity, group ethos, and commitment, and while these data provide a helpful birds-eye view of all respondent characteristics, the evidence provided above should be considered incomplete. Although the sample was constructed in a way that includes respondents with wide ranges of commitment levels, the sample inevitably misses the hundreds of individuals who pass through these groups from year to year, perhaps participating in a few meetings but ultimately failing to commit. As another way of analyzing these interview data on commitment to LGBT groups, then, I

inductively coded interview quotes using a “grounded theory approach” with an eye toward evidence on a wider range of participants.

In the following three sections, I provide qualitative evidence through profiles of school groups where (1) a correspondence between an activist identity and a direct action ethos produced commitment; (2) a correspondence between a religious identity and an educational ethos produced commitment; and (3) a correspondence between an LGBT identity and a solidarity ethos produced commitment. Specifically, in each section, I begin by providing evidence that a given school’s LGBT group exhibited a “direct action ethos,” an “educational ethos,” or a “solidarity ethos.” I then provide evidence that participants committed to LGBT groups with certain ethoses because of their salient “activist identities,” “value identities” (based on religion), or “solidarity identities” (based on sexual and/or gender identities). Crucially, this evidence not only includes self-reports from participants who felt that a correspondence between their identities and their organizations’ ethoses produced their commitment to organizations. Rather, the evidence also includes second-hand reports from participants who felt that the lack of correspondence between other individuals’ identities and these organizations’ ethoses produced a lack of commitment to these organizations; this evidence helps address the aforementioned bias in the interview sample. Furthermore, in an attempt to help eliminate alternative explanations, I include quotes from individuals who initially committed to an organization because of a correspondence between their identities and organizations’ ethos, but who later underwent a transformation in identities and subsequently pulled back from an organization.

I go beyond providing such qualitative evidence on the link between collective identity, group ethos, and commitment – evidence that supports the quantitative findings discussed above -- by also developing accounts of the *mechanisms* linking collective identity, group ethos, and

commitment. For example, I discuss the ways in which organizations' ethoses are conveyed to individuals with certain identities, from overt mission statements to subtle changes in pronunciation (see below). I also show how individuals with certain collective identities can in turn transform their organizations' ethos, through cohort replacement or takeovers. Alternatively, for participants whose identities do not mesh with a group and who feel outnumbered, individuals may drop out of LGBT activism completely or begin a new LGBT group. Overall, the qualitative evidence supports the idea that commitment rests on more than rational choice calculations or meso-level constraints and necessitates an individuals' perceived fit between their most salient identity and an organization's group ethos.

POLITICIZED PARTICIPANTS, DIRECT ACTION GROUPS, AND COMMITMENT

Those individuals who came to their universities with salient "activist identities" – that is, identities that are shaped by prior activist group involvement and socialization into values conducive to activism – were especially attracted to LGBT groups that exhibited a direct action ethos – that is, organizations that deploy more confrontational tactics such as protests, sit-ins, and petitions to achieve some type of change at their school or in the wider society. Direct action groups were present at each college or university either as an iteration of an existing organization (e.g., the Advocate group at Loyola from 2005-2010, the CUAllies group at Catholic from 2009-2011, and the Bridge Builders group at Belmont from 2009-2011) or as a dedicated organization (e.g., the Open Letter movement at Goshen). Here, I focus especially on the Advocate group at Loyola and the Open Letter movement at Goshen.

In some ways, these organizations' direct action forms were signaled by their official organizational names or mission statements. For example, to signal a shift from socializing and

community building to direct action campaigns, students at Loyola voted to change the name of their most prominent LGBT organization from “Rainbow Connection” to “Advocate.” However, these organizations’ “group ethos” should not necessarily be equated with their official organizational identities, especially as group members could interpret the same organizational name or mission statement to mean very different things (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003). Indeed, at Loyola, group members signaled their activist commitments not only through the title they gave their organization but also the way they *pronounced* the title of their organization. Specifically, beginning in 2005, when the LGBT group’s name changed from Rainbow Connection (a title that signaled a solidarity purpose) to Advocate, some group members consciously pronounced the group’s name as a verb (**ad-vuh-keyt**) rather than as a noun (**ad-vuh-kit**) to signal their commitment to taking action. A Loyola student named Colin (all names are pseudonyms) elaborates on the meaning of the group’s name and its pronunciation:

I: When did you attend Loyola, and when did you first get involved in Advocate or any other LGBT groups at Loyola?

R: I attended Loyola from 2003-2007, I graduated in 4 years. I got involved in Advocate (**ad-vuh-keyt**), which at the time was called Rainbow Connection, after the Muppet Show, but in 2005 we made the name change to Advocate.

I: Do you remember why the group changed its name?

R: I do. [Blinded leader], as well as myself, we just believed the name wasn't indicative of what we wanted to do with the organization. The Rainbow Connection group was really more of a cultural or minority group. It wasn't being taken seriously by other people in the school, and it wasn't indicative of the work that we wanted to do both on campus and off. So we went through a couple different name options, and Advocate was the one voted on by the organization at the time. And I remember there being a big debate about the difference between Advocate (**ad-vuh-keyt**) and Advocate (**ad-vuh-kit**), and the President at the time was set on being called Advocate (**ad-vuh-keyt**), so we'd be separate from the magazine, which has a more informational focus, and so it would be much more action oriented. I knew that people would eventually just call it whatever they wanted, but the President and other members at the time were very set on Advocate (**ad-vuh-keyt**).

In the above quote, Colin begins to hint at why the group changed its name from Rainbow Connection to Advocate and why group members pronounced that name in a certain way – the prior name did not reflect the group members' own desires for the group. Indeed, Colin and the other group leaders at the time very much saw themselves as activists; they were actively involved in other direct action groups and more formal Democratic politics in the Chicago area, and as a group they began to plug into marches and protests related to HIV/AIDS awareness, employment non-discrimination, and marriage equality. Colin reiterates this line of argument below, discussing how the name change “reflected the social representation of the organization - the interests of the members.” Nevertheless, he also discusses how this name change cut both ways: while the activist nature of the group in the mid-2000s pleased many of

the current members who were passionate about politics, dozens of students who expressed initial interest in the group eventually dropped out because the group did not fulfill their desires to simply meet up with other LGBTQ students:

I: So it really seems like your group took its branding very seriously – that you didn't want to be viewed as a cultural group, but rather as a group interested in advocating for certain causes.

R: Absolutely, and that's something that really stuck in our craw, to the 3 or 4 of us that took over, so to speak, we wanted to be political and PR driven. We saw ourselves as activists. We took ourselves seriously; yes, we wanted to be a fun organization, but we wanted to really accomplish big things and leave a legacy during our time there. To be completely honest our purpose and our drive to do so reflected the social representation of the organization – the interests of the members. And actually during the end of our time there, we took a little bit of a row after we were told our group just wasn't much fun, and we were having a lot of drop off after the beginning of the year from so many students who weren't interested in a) activism, b) politics, or c), you know, intensive discussions. We were falling off on the barbeques and parties and other events that we had when we first started with the organization. So in truth the mark of a successful organization would probably be one that has a bit of a hybrid status to keep its numbers up, but also one that is very specific on what it wants its goals to be. It doesn't have to be one thing, it can be dual track, involved in both activism or politics and culture.

Another Loyola student named Franklin, who was involved in the group a few years later as the group began to transition from a sole focus on direct actions to an emphasis on community building, largely echoes Colin's arguments. Specifically, he notes that the Advocate group was initially filled with "activists" who were interested in a "political, activist atmosphere," along with a few "folks that are deeply religious" who wanted to "rectify their Catholics views with being queer." Yet there was a mismatch between this emerging hybrid "group ethos" and the interests of dozens of other Loyola students who were simply "interested in being gay, and in finding a social outlet," and who thus quickly dropped out of the group when this purpose wasn't being filled:

I: How would you describe Advocate, as you experienced it during your time there, to someone who wasn't familiar with it?

R: I would say that it was a group that was mostly focused on activism, the political, but increasingly with an emphasis on community building. I think the constant struggle was that you would get – every year there would be a new group, a new class that would come in, and the first meeting would have 150-200 people in it, but then the vast majority of people are there just to see who else is like them, who else identifies as queer or bi or lesbian or trans, if that's how they viewed themselves. And so once they know that, the interest wanes rather quickly, because once they make those connections, and aren't necessarily interested in the political, activist atmosphere, they drop out. So out of 150 new students, only 10-20 actually stick around and become involved. And I think you have some of those folks who are naturally driven to politics and activism, and then you

have some folks that are deeply religious and they're trying to rectify their Catholic views with being queer – those are probably the 2 biggest demographics we had – we had a very strong Catholic group that was trying to figure out how to be both at the time same time, and then we had the activists that mainly stuck around – but the rest of the time it was just these two groups pleading with those who were only interested in being gay, and in finding a social outlet, to come to the events.

It is worth noting that nearly every other respondent at Loyola, regardless of the time period in which they participated, repeated this argument that so many individuals dropped out of the Advocate group each year because the group's purpose didn't align with their own identities and desires to meet other LGBT people. And as I discuss in a later section, as many of these activist-oriented LGBT students began to graduate from the university, individuals interested in connecting with other LGBT students came to dominate the group. Indeed, the most recent Loyola students I talked to pronounced the name of their organization in the form of a noun (**ad-vuh-kit**) and have largely dropped direct actions in favor of a focus on providing a “safe space” for members of the LGBT community.

These quotes, which focus on the differences in identities between individuals, provide important evidence for the argument that commitment to LGBT groups is contingent on the correspondence between one's collective identity and an organization's “group ethos.” However, other evidence for this argument can be found in changes within individuals themselves. For example, Goshen's Open Letter movement draws a large number of individuals with activist identities. Indeed, as a group member named Fletcher discusses, the Open Letter campaign has

been organizing public events nearly every week in protest of their school's discriminatory faculty hiring policy:

I: Could you walk me through some of the responsibilities [your position] entails?

R: What we do – it started out very small, we'd drive to [a local store] to pick up shirt orders. We get orders first to make sure the money would be there when we come back. And then we would have these shirt days, which is almost every Friday, where we ask all supporters to wear their "Where's My GLBTQ Prof?" shirt. But we've begun holding a lot more strategic events. Recently, [blinded] wanted a group of us to come up and sing at the end of a university event with our shirts on. We sang a song from Les Mis, and it's a revolution song. We sang it together and everyone got up and came to the stage. And we also sang some songs wearing our shirts at the alumni weekend. We also had a summit – a summit educating people about what actually is the history and whatnot.... And then recently the board of Goshen College met – we actually handed them the Open Letter with all the signatures and actually tried talking with them as they went into chapel... Students at EMU [Eastern Mennonite University] have also been organizing in support of a policy change, and we've been in touch with them, so that when they have protests at their school, we have protests at our school in solidarity, and vice versa.

A student at Goshen named Jeremy became involved in the early stages of the Open Letter movement because he had long been involved in LGBT activism, including by drafting other open letters to the Mennonite Church USA:

I: Why did you become involved with the Open Letter movement? What initially spurred on that involvement?

R: Yeah, well, at that time of my life, especially, I was really into activism and really, yeah, pushing for progressive politics. And I think a lot of that was shaped by growing up at the time of 9/11 and the Iraq War and all that stuff – I was involved in protests against the Iraq War, against the Bush administration during high school.

I: Did you have any prior involvement in LGBT activism?

R: Yes, that was a big part of it. Pink Menno [a Mennonite LGBT activist group] first kind of started in 2009 at the big convention in Columbus, which I was at as a member of my church's youth group in high school. So I was there and still not out at that point, but I went to a lot of their activities, participated in a lot of stuff that they were doing. And then, actually, in the aftermath of that, it was – it was an amazing experience, sort of the first real, visible LGBTQ advocacy for people of our generation – there were a lot of questions about, where do we go from here? And one of the things that I was kind of – yeah, it was my idea, I helped to see this happen – was getting together some other young adult people in my area of the Mennonite conference. Mennonite congregations are grouped into different sort of regional conferences with anywhere from 1 to 2 dozen to 100 congregations within a single conference – and that's sort of a different stage of the denominational structure and polity and whatnot – so I got together with some other

young people within our local conference and we actually drafted an open letter to that – to the conference – from young people within the conference calling for LGBTQ inclusion. And it’s kind of similarly structured, in a lot of ways, to what we did at Goshen College, with putting it up online and soliciting signatures and that sort of thing. So yeah, it was natural for me to get involved with this group.

While there was a “natural” correspondence between Jeremy’s early activism and his involvement in the Open Letter movement at Goshen, Jeremy himself did not openly identify as queer when he first got involved. When asked why he was so willing to become involved in the Open Letter movement despite being “in the closet,” he said that “it was definitely easier for me, at that point, to become a straight ally activist, that was less of a risk... Yeah, at that stage of my life, that was easier for me to do, and it made sense with kind of who I was, with my involvement in justice work.” However, Jeremy did eventually come out as queer while in college, and this queer identity eventually supplanted his activist identity, causing him to step back from a group that was dedicated to activism:

I: How many hours each week would you say you spent participating in the Open Letter movement while you were there? Did it vary?

R: Yeah, it varied. Toward the beginning, toward the very beginning of the movement, it was probably 5-10 hours a week, when we were really trying to figure out what to do.... But especially as I entered into junior and senior year, I kind of became less actively

involved in leadership or in figuring out where to go next. And yeah, that definitely dropped off, I stepped back from active involvement.

I: Is there a particular reason you became less involved junior year and after?

R: I think... it was just being a recently “out” person and kind of just needing some time and space to chill a little bit and just to live into that new experience and become more involved in the queer community at Goshen, and less involved in public advocacy stuff, I think that was the biggest part of it for me.

The other two universities that contained LGBT groups with “direct action” forms – Catholic University and Belmont University, both from 2009-2011 – similarly drew a large number of committed participants with salient “activist identities.” Catholic University’s CUAllies group in its early stages was perhaps the most radical of all the groups examined here, having been founded in part by a self-identified queer anarchist and having regularly organized confrontational events such as unauthorized demonstrations in the student center. Similarly, Belmont University’s Bridge Builders group turned in its early stages to tactics such as sit-ins and outside protests to (successfully) pressure the university to approve the organization and a non-discrimination statement inclusive of “sexual orientation” (see Coley 2014 for more on this case). Accordingly, most of the group’s leaders were “activists” who had been involved in previous social justice causes. Nevertheless, both groups initially transitioned into an educational form as more religiously-minded participants joined the group, and I turn to a discussion of these transformations now.

RELIGIOUS PARTICIPANTS, EDUCATIONAL GROUPS, AND COMMITMENT

In contrast to the seasoned “activists” discussed above, other individuals came to their universities with salient “value identities,” especially religious identities that had been shaped by socialization into (generally conservative) Christian values and beliefs without any prior involvement in social justice activism. These individuals were generally drawn to LGBT groups that provided education and awareness-raising around LGBT issues, as well as group discussions that centered on the intersection of faith and sexuality. Thus, while still interested in achieving social change, these groups eschewed more contentious tactics in favor of more conciliatory tactics such as prayer vigils and educational events such as guest speakers and movie showings. These educational groups were present at all of the colleges or universities either as iterations of existing organizations (the CUAllies group at Catholic beginning in 2011 and the Bridge Builders group at Belmont beginning in 2011) or as dedicated organizations (the Advocates group at Goshen and the LGBT Christian Life Community group at Loyola). I focus here on the CUAllies group at Catholic and the Bridge Builders group at Belmont.

The most recent iteration of the CUAllies group at Catholic University could best be characterized as a group that pursued social change through education and awareness-raising. While CUAllies had initially begun in the late 2000s as a direct action group that engaged in contentious tactics, a few students who arrived at the school after 2010 believed the group was too confrontational to gain official approval as a student organization. Thus, in the spring of 2011, rather than waiting for some of the older students to graduate, a few of the newer students initiated what has been described on both sides of the conflict as a “takeover” or “coup”: as one of the newer students put it, “I just sort of approached [the current President], and I told her, it

was time for a change, it's time for you to step aside.” One of the newer students, Brent, described his new approach to the organization:

I: What kind of activities did your group engage in?

R: So, we didn't have meetings, because that's typically boring and no one shows up.

And we didn't have protests. But we always did events. Our first event was with [a staff member at a Catholic LGBT organization], and he basically talked about the founding of [the organization] and what they do, and this and that. And so, that was basically our first meeting, it was well attended, I would say 30 students or so.... And when we returned the next semester in the fall, we hosted [blinded], who was a lesbian denied communion ... at her mother's funeral - the priest knew she was a lesbian, stuck his hand over the communion, says she couldn't have it. And then we had – oh my goodness, what's his name. We had Father [blinded] who used to work in Campus Ministry at [blinded], and he's now a priest. And I had, over the summer, read a column he wrote for San Francisco Chronicle, and I was like wow, this is really well written. It was about pastoral care for gay people. And so I invited him to speak. We also held a prayer vigil that semester as well, where we sort of did a procession from one of the residence halls to the student center. And then read a prayer, so, those were our major events.

In other words, rather than engaging in contentious protests (as a direct action group would) or focusing on providing a private “safe space” for members of the LGBT community (as a solidarity group would), Brent and the other members of the new iteration of CUAllies wanted

an organization that would educate the wider Catholic University community through lectures by Catholic speakers and through “bridging cultural practices” (Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood 2014) such as prayer vigils. When I asked why he was motivated to get involved with this new group, he emphasized in part his identity “as a Catholic, as someone who wants to participate in church life”:

I: So what initially motivated you to get involved with the group?

R: Well, that’s an interesting question. In the larger context, I felt...the original CUAllies took the approach that there’s violence happening on campus against gay students, there’s horrible discrimination, those sorts of things. And for me, it’s not so much about those bold statements. Because I don’t think, or at least I don’t know, of any really prominent cases of discrimination or violence or these sorts of things. But I do think the university was discriminatory in a way [by], one, not allowing a student organization on campus to be officially recognized, and two, not having an organization or something that officially represents the university to the LGBT community on campus, and allies, that they’re welcome to attend mass, that they’re welcome to attend church functions, that there welcome to go into Campus Ministries – these sort of things – and I think, for me, *as a Catholic, as someone who wants to participate in church life*, I thought it was important to get involved in CUAllies – and sort of rebrand the organization from what it was, from this very protesty sort of organization, to an organization that was focused on bridging the gap between the Catholic Church and the LGBT community and their allies on campus through more *thoughtful, educational events* (emphasis added).

Similarly, when I asked Brent why he decided to get involved with this organization and assist with its rebranding, he again emphasized the fit between his Catholic identity and his role in the organization:

I: And how would you have characterized your own role in this organization? Would you have identified as an activist, or is that not really a word or term you really applied to yourself or thought of yourself?

R: Okay, well the university might apply it to me [laughs]. But, no, I – I think in my role as CUAllies I didn't think of myself as an activist, I considered myself someone who is attempting – I would consider myself Catholic, I guess. That's what I considered myself throughout the entire thing.

In my other interviews, nearly every other student involved with this new iteration of CUAllies at Catholic agreed with this characterization of the previous and current iteration of CUAllies. These students also agreed that, while the previous iteration of the group did not appeal to them, the new iteration of the group very much resonated with their identities at Catholics. For example, Eric noted that he was turned off by the “caustic” tone of the older group, and that he was also happy that the new club wasn't simply a “gay club meet up sort of thing.” Rather, he saw the new CUAllies group as a group that that was “in line with the mission of the school, which was the mission of the Church”:

I: So how would you describe the new iteration of CUAllies to someone who wasn't familiar with it? Once you got involved.

R: It was more of a cultural type sort of thing. We wanted to try and work with the administration rather than against it- you know, what are the common grounds, what can we do, *how can we create a group that, I guess, was in line with the mission of the school, which was the mission of the Church*, and not start advocating for political things, you know (emphasis added). Because before it was very, it seemed, my first impression was in freshman year of the CUAllies group, it was kind of caustic – I remember in one of the, like, orientation days, when new students came in, they were doing a big protest, standing on top of tables, throwing flyers in the air, putting tape on their mouths, weird things like that. That kind of steered me away from the whole group.... And – what else was I going to say.... I also did not want us to be a gay club meet up sort of thing.... But with [the new President], he wanted to take a different tone, and so, that's more why I got more involved with the group I guess.

When I asked him about his own Catholic faith, he emphasized his “strict” Catholic roots and his general adherence to all Catholic tenets – except for Catholic teachings on homosexuality, which was the “one issue where I have a little thing – but it’s the kind of thing where I’m not going to throw away my entire faith over one issue, that sort of thing.” He then continued by arguing that his interest in promoting discussions surrounding the Catholic faith and sexuality is why the “new approach to the group appealed to me”:

R: And that was also another motivation I had for joining CUAllies and also trying to help contribute to the group, why the new approach to the group appealed to me, and that is my Catholic faith. I don't think being gay should be a reason to lose your faith, or to completely, you know, drop Catholicism, or something like that, there should be a way where you can be gay and Catholic, so I wanted help other people who were trying to provide a space— especially like [the new group leaders'] sentiment and approach – where that could happen, you know. A lot of people think that the ideal of a Catholic university is not to build soldiers to go out and fight battles, you know, it should be where the Church comes to think and think through its theology, its stances, you know. We should have scholarly discussions, we should have speakers who can talk through these issues, and that's more in the direction I saw CUAllies going, that's kind of where I wanted to help steer it to.

Similar to CUAllies, the current iteration of the Bridge Builders group at Belmont also takes on the form of an “educational group.” While Bridge Builders had initially employed direct action tactics – such as protests and sit-ins – to achieve its status as an officially-recognized student organization (Coley 2014), the group eventually shifted its focus to educating the Belmont community on issues of faith and sexuality. Although some religious students had felt alienated by the group's initial confrontational approach, and while some of the students with salient activist identities were displeased with the group's shift to an educational focus, the change from a direct action to an educational purpose seems to have mostly occurred through cohort replacement rather than a hostile “takeover” (although, as I discuss below, there was some effort by religiously-oriented students to steer the group toward a more peaceful mission). A

student named Michelle described the group's current educational focus, which involves weekly discussions about issues facing the LGBT community as well as semi-weekly events such as movie showings or "coming out" programs:

I: How would you describe the Bridge Builders group to someone who wasn't familiar with it?

R: We meet in the University Ministries building every Friday. At 4 people come in, we sit in a circle, we do introductions which consists of your name, your preferred gender pronoun, and a ridiculous question of our choosing that you have to answer. And then we go through announcements, any events coming up, and we'll talk about those and what we need to do to plan them. And then usually members of the group will lead discussions – so last week it was feminism, the week before that it was politics, we talk about people of color in the community, and it is a pretty diverse community considering being Belmont not super-diverse. We talk about faith and sexuality quite often, and three people from the group lead the discussion. Throughout the year we also put on various events to inform the Belmont community about LGBT issues. So Belmont does convocations, which are – you go and get your card swiped and all that stuff, and you need a certain number to graduate. Next month we're going to do a movie showing, a movie called Saving Face, an Asian American lesbian couple, and it's like the intersectionality of being Asian American and also lesbian. We'll have a discussion after the movie showing and people can get convocation credit. Recently we participated in the AIDS Walk, and last week we had an event called Tell Your Story, which was really

cool, it was for Coming Out Week, but the event was basically, you know StoryCorps on NPR or This American Life? It's like we recorded coming out stories or ally stories.

Technically we invited all students to share stories of faith and sexuality, because we're Bridge Builders and we are faith based. So we recorded all these stories, basically a snapshot of what Belmont is like right now, and we're archiving them.

Given that the group's mission is explicitly faith-based – it is sponsored by the school's University Ministries and it has an official mission of “bridging the gap between the LGBT and Christian communities” – it is perhaps not surprising that the group draws a number of individuals who are primarily motivated to participate because of their Christian identities. The direct causal influence of collective identity in decisions to commit to a group is perhaps best seen in the story of Andrew, who participated in the very early stages of Bridge Builders as an “ally Like Jeremy at Goshen, Andrew initially identified himself as a “straight ally” and was involved in the initial founding of Bridge Builders. However, by his junior year, Andrew went through a period of significant personal transformation, as he not only came to acknowledge his identity as a gay man but also began to reconnect with his Christian faith. At that point, because of what he saw as a growing mismatch between the more militant nature of Bridge Builders (which at that point was still a direct action group) and his identity as a Christian, he decided to step away from the group:

I: How did you initially become involved in Bridge Builders?

R: I was one of the original members of what became Bridge Builders back probably in 2009... At that point I wasn't out, I was just in the role of an advocate or ally... At that point I was also not attending church regularly... But the language they were using was very militant – there was a lot of anger there, which I thought was not the correct way to approach the situation at Belmont. And as I was going through my coming out process and re-connecting with my Christian faith, I- because of that language, I just had to remove myself from that group and I began seeking other ways through just normal – through dialogue, through conversation, to bring about that particular change at Belmont, in a way that would be true with my Christian faith....

Although he withdrew from the Bridge Builders group and began participating more heavily in the school's University Ministries, a pivotal event at Belmont – the sudden exit of a lesbian soccer coach from the school – prompted him to re-join the group and attempt to transform the organization to one that would align with his Christian identity. As he continued:

R: And then [the soccer coach] was let go, or she left, depending on who you ask. It appeared that Belmont was no longer being shy about where they stood on LGBT issues. Because we couldn't get a clear picture, the Bridge Builders leadership decided it was time for action. A lot of those people in leadership in Bridge Builders at the time were not particularly mature in the way they were going to go about challenging the university. A lot of that militant language that was being used previously and in years past was now becoming action.... And so it was at that point that I decided I had to do something, to try to take a larger role in the response to [the coach's] firing. To try to shape the message

that Bridge Builders was putting out.... So I helped lead a prayer walk across campus, because it was very important to me as a person of faith that we affirmed Belmont as a Christian organization, as a Christian institution, and also to show you can be a Christian and be gay and those things are not irreconcilable, which I was learning through my own coming out process as a member of a welcoming and affirming Baptist church in Nashville. And eventually I also began to help lead weekly group discussions, including a Bible study focused on Isaiah.

If the connection between his renewed Christian faith, his preferred purpose for the group, and his level of participation in the group was not clear by that point, he soon made it explicit:

I: So would you say your faith played a role in your decision to participate in the group?

R: It played by far the largest role in my decision to participate and once again take on a leadership role, and it also affected the direction I was trying to steer this group into. In a lot of situations LGBTQ people have been most discriminated against by the church. And I didn't want – well, I wanted to be available to show that doesn't have to be the case. I am someone who is gay and who is affirmed by faith.

Andrew's story, then, provides more evidence for the idea that the alignment of one's most salient identity and an LGBT organization's group ethos produces commitment to LGBT activism. Although so much about Andrew remained constant during his college years (e.g., his

biographical availability, his college of attendance), his own identity did change over time, initially prompting him to disengage from the group, and then prompting him to change the group in a way that would align with his emerging identity.

While not all students in Bridge Builders actively attended church like Andrew, it is important to note that almost all of the current students reported that they were raised in Christian households and attended church before they came to Belmont. Furthermore, because even most of those students who did not attend a church reported that they were still spiritual or still believed in God, the group's overarching mission to "bridge the gap between the LGBT and Christian communities" was indeed a draw for these students, because they could discuss issues of sexuality and the Christian faith in a way that they could not in a church setting. For example, when asked why he joined the group, Evan, a general member who has volunteered to lead a few recent discussions in the group, reported:

I: What initially motivated you to join the organization, Bridge Builders?

R: I mainly came because – and this is what it said on the description on BruinLink - is that Bridge Builders is kind of combining spirituality and sexuality and stuff like that. So I thought, I'm originally Roman Catholic, and I can't really talk about homosexuality in the Catholic church. So I figured, hey, since I couldn't talk about it there for the first 18 years of my life, maybe now I can finally talk about it in like a spirituality based way. Yeah.

The two other universities studied here, Loyola University and Goshen College, have supported dedicated organizations focused on education around LGBT issues for the past several years. Loyola's Campus Ministry supports a "Christian Life Community" geared toward LGBT Christians; participants meet regularly to discuss issues surrounding faith and sexuality and, not surprisingly, the group exclusively draws Christians (or at least individuals interested in reconnecting with the Christian faith). Goshen's Advocates group (not to be confused with Loyola's Advocate group) organizes monthly events such as movie showings and guest speakers geared toward educating the Goshen community about LGBT issues. Interestingly, while all of the leaders self-identified as Mennonite, only one of the group's leaders identified as LGBT (the others were straight), and most of the leaders reported feeling that the Open Letter movement was too aggressive or "activist" in nature for them. Overall, then, the evidence from all four of the schools studied here points to the idea that the correspondence between a value-based identity (especially based on religion) and an educational group ethos produces commitment to LGBT organizations focused on education.

SEXUAL MINORITIES, SOLIDARITY GROUPS, AND COMMITMENT

A final group of students came to their universities with salient identities based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Especially in the absence of salient activist identities or religious identities, LGBT students were especially drawn to what I call "solidarity groups," or groups that existed to connect students with LGBT identities and affirm these students' LGBT identities. These groups generally focused on offering opportunities for students to socialize through ice cream socials, trivia nights, athletic events, and so on. These groups also attempted to foster a "safe space" for LGBT students who were early on in their "coming out" process or

otherwise needed to find a place where their sexual identity or gender identity was affirmed. These solidarity groups were present at each of the colleges and universities either as dedicated student organizations (the Prism group at Goshen College), as iterations of existing student organizations (the Advocate group at Loyola beginning in 2010), or as underground student groups (the aforementioned underground GSA at Belmont).

The most recent iteration of the Advocate group at Loyola is perhaps the best example of a “solidarity” group that incorporates opportunities for socializing, as well as support for students in their coming out process. As previously discussed, the Advocate group shifted to a “solidarity” form mainly through cohort replacement - students who were interested in activism and advocacy graduated. Indeed, as the state of Illinois became increasingly accepting to LGBT individuals by prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and by offering marriage rights to same-sex couples, many incoming students simply no longer saw the need for active mobilization. As part of this shift, students began pronouncing the name Advocate in its noun form (**ad-vuh-kit**) rather than its active verb form (**ad-vuh-keyt**), and in fact the most recent students whom I interviewed were not even aware that Advocate was once pronounced as a verb (**ad-vuh-keyt**). One active Loyola student named Elizabeth began by discussing the role and functions of Advocate’s support group, formally known as Spectrum:

I: What kinds of LGBT groups have you been involved in at Loyola?

R: ... Advocate is the only—that I know of—registered student organization. And within Advocate, Advocate has a group that it sponsors, which is Spectrum, which is a support

group... So they meet as separate groups, but Spectrum is run and sponsored by Advocate.

I: Okay, so Spectrum is a support group? Is it confidential?

R: Yeah, we have an open group and then we have the option for closed group. Open group is, everything is still confidential, we don't reveal number of participants, names of participants, everything that is said is still confidential, but the time and location are publicized throughout campus on flyers.... And then we have the option of closed group, which is, people would e-mail us, and we'd set up a special time to meet with them that no one else knows about. But - it's open to anyone in Advocate or anyone else that wants to come and talk, about being on campus as an LGBT student, it's sort of a safe space kind of thing.

Here Elizabeth discusses how, unlike the direct action groups or the educational groups, this Spectrum group was primarily intended for LGBT students. The group did not have a mission of achieving changes in policy at the university or in educating the broader student body about LGBT issues, missions that might have attracted straight allies. Rather, because the group exists to support LGBT students who are coming out or who are facing stressors related to their sexual identity or gender identity, there is a rather obvious and natural correspondence between the group's "solidarity form" and students' LGBT identities. Elizabeth goes on to discuss the wider transition that has been occurring in the Advocate group more generally, from a focus on

“advocacy” to a focus on “community building and social events, to kind of build that sense of queer community on campus”:

I: And how would you describe Advocate to someone who wasn't familiar with the organization? You described the Spectrum portion, but what does Advocate do separately?

R: Yeah, well Advocate actually is sort of in a transitional phase right now. Instead of taking on the advocacy sort of role, we're in a transitional role right now. We're moving a lot more toward community building and social events, to kind of build that sense of queer community on campus. We're trying to work on diversity, because unfortunately we have that reputation for being a very white gay men sort of group. And so we're trying to be less white, is pretty much where we're going right now. But – it's a lot of social events and we do - I'm trying to think. CMSA is Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association, it's basically like a gay sports league, and they funded dodgeball and volleyball night a couple weeks ago with us and DePaul, and they're doing another one hopefully in another few weeks because it went really well.... We'll have... trivia night, sometimes we do, we call it Alphabet Soup bingo. We do that at the beginning of the year, and we also do an ice cream social, we did a hot chocolate social at the beginning of this semester.

Once again, these various events – participation in a gay sports league, ice cream and hot chocolate socials for Advocate members – imply a focus on building community among LGBT students themselves, not achieving policy change at the university or educating straight allies. It

is not surprising, then, that the students I talked to in solidarity groups all had strong, salient sexual identities and felt drawn to these groups because of their focus on members of the LGBT communities. For example, a student named Damon discusses how he became involved in the group because he wanted to make “gay friends,” and given his own gay identity, he felt “right at home” in Advocate:

I: When you first joined the organization, what did you personally think would come about as a result of your participation, what were your expectations for the group?

R: I was definitely seeking out a social outlet. I would say, coming from a high school where there weren't any openly gay people, I was just like, I'm so excited to have gay friends! That's so cool. So it was definitely that social, that feeling that I want to come out of this having a strong sense of community. And I felt right at home in Advocate... The point of it was, we're all out and proud, that's fine, and that enticed me to join. And today I still kind of feel that way, that that's what Advocate wants to celebrate.

As previously discussed, previous iterations of the Advocate club at Loyola often had trouble maintaining the strong interest they received at the beginning of the school year because many LGBT students weren't interested in direct action campaigns. However, because the new solidarity focus of the Advocate club is so geared to LGBT students, it has been more successful in maintaining an active membership base. As Laverne discusses:

I: You said second semester there's usually declining attendance. How many members would you say participate in the first semester versus the second semester?

R: We usually have over 100 people probably at our ice cream social at the very beginning. Last year we definitely had over 100, this year we may have had around 80 people. So that's always a big turnout, because people at the very beginning are trying to get a feel for what Advocate is gonna be like, especially all the new freshmen... And then what used to happen sometimes in spring semester is that some events just get the e-board. [laughs] Where we all show up because we have to and then no one else shows up. We had a meeting that was sort of a flop a couple months ago because our President was out of town for ethics bowl and SDMA [Student Diversity & Multicultural Affairs] came to lead a workshop and we did some theater exercises and stuff and it was like probably half the e-board, so 5 people plus one or two other people, and there were only 5 or 6 of us and that was a pretty depressing one. And that was characteristic of what it was like for most of the 2nd semesters before now - we'd show up and it'd be like, oh, 5-10 people showed up for this meeting, okay, or like, everyone here is on the e-board, awkward. And I think it's because the meetings were a bit too formal, too serious. But this semester has actually been really great – for most events we've had really great turnout, and I think it's because we've been much more intentional about community building. And we're expecting probably at least 20, 30 people for the dinner this Thursday, hopefully more because we're giving out free food and that always draws people. But yeah we often draw 30, 40, 50 people now. It used to be a much bigger disparity, so that's progress.

Another student added that, because some of the students who show up at initial meetings eventually become involved with the Spectrum group, the overall number of students who remain active participants in not only the larger Advocate group but also its Spectrum sub-group may be even larger.

This overall focus on providing community-building activities and safe space for LGBT students raises questions over to what extent these students are truly engaged in social justice activism. Indeed, the Advocate group in its latest iteration would likely not be considered a social movement group in its traditional formulation, given that it eschews extra-institutional, direct action tactics in favor of solidarity-building. Nevertheless, it remains true that all of the students I spoke to believed that they were indeed promoting social change and even engaging in “political” activity. As Franklin discusses, the group takes seriously the feminist notion that “everything is political,” including “building a safe space for students to identity exploration and be better advocates in everyday life”:

I: A couple people I talked to who were involved earlier on in the mid-2000s remember the group being more political, and some of the students I talked to during my visit to Loyola say that it’s more focused on community building now. So I was going to ask if you experienced a turn in the group?

R: I think that after – there was that lull in trying to get gay marriage passed in Illinois, and during that lull, we focused very internally on the community aspects, and some on how you are queer and Catholic... Yeah, I think that was the initial thing but also ... we were much more influenced – we took a lot of our cues maybe from a feminist-political

standpoint, from the fact that everything is political, that community is political, building a safe space for students to do identity exploration and be better advocates in every day life, those things are political actions, and I think we sort of saw the – sort of these efforts by the last leadership to get people involved and galvanized around political issues – everyone would get fired up and go to a march... but that would dissipate right away, there was no investment in individuals who then would want to return to the community and then get back. So I think – yes, it was partially outside circumstances. Not only was there the national scene, but then the university really started listening to us in my sophomore and junior year, like the Vice President was accessible, the directors of Student Diversity were accessible, so we didn't necessarily have to go off-campus to feel like we were doing meaningful work. And I mean, my gut reaction is, if you talked to those early 2000s folks, they may have been – they may have bemoaned that that's the direction we took, but I think our approach is also political.

The group Prism at Goshen College also nicely fits the categorization of a “solidarity group.” Much like the Advocate support group, Prism provides a safe space for students who are early on in their coming out process or who are facing issues related to their sexual orientation and gender identity. The group is completely confidential, meaning that group members could not talk at any length about the discussions held in the group or the dynamics of the group. Nevertheless, the group has an important characteristic that hints at a tight correspondence between the group's “solidarity form” and participants' solidary identities: participants are required to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (or at least be questioning their sexual or gender identity) to participate in the group. In other words, heterosexual students (who

may be passionate about LGBT rights because of their activist identities or religious identities) are formally barred from participation. While it is possible that LGBT students with salient activist identities or religious identities also participated in the group, those respondents who self-reported being participants in the group did tend to fit the profile of students who participated in LGBT groups primarily due to their sexual or gender identities.

DISCUSSION

In the sections above, I have produced evidence for the notion that commitment to activist groups is contingent on the correspondence between a participant's most salient collective identity and an LGBT organization's dominant group ethos. The evidence includes not only quantitative evidence in the form of correlation matrices and contingency tables but also qualitative evidence in the form of direct self-reports and second-hand reports about the role of collective identity and group ethos in commitment. Where possible, in an effort to eliminate alternative explanations (by holding the individual constant), I have shown that individuals who experience changes in their own identities over the course of their participation will subsequently modify their level of participation.

However, it is important to explicitly consider alternative explanations for commitment to activist groups, including those offered by previous studies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in terms of micro-level explanations for commitment, attitudes toward LGBT rights did not seem to be linked to commitment, because support for LGBT rights was all but universal among participants. However, micro-level explanations of commitment have tended to emphasize rational choice calculations. To understand the potential role of rational choice calculations related to collective benefits and solidary incentives in social movement commitment, I first

asked the question “When you first joined this organization, what did you personally think would come about as a result of your participation?”; depending on respondents’ answers, I followed-up with questions such as “Did you think this organization would be successful in changing your school in any way?” and “Did you think you would make new friends by joining this organization?” These questions did produce a range of answers, but they seemed to vary by the type of group rather than by levels of commitment. For example, the expectation that an LGBT group might successfully change the wider school (an anticipated collective benefit) was generally limited to students in direct action groups and educational groups, but students in direct action and educational groups were generally no more committed than students in solidarity groups, who were most likely to anticipate making new friends (a selective incentive) (see Tables 5-3 and 5-4).

Biographical availability, which points to the role of calculations regarding the costs and risks of participation in activist groups, did not seem to be linked to commitment in any way, mostly because there was very little variation in this variable. I asked all respondents the question, “What other activities or commitments did you have during your time in this organization?”, with follow-ups that included “Did you have any family responsibilities at this time, such as a partner or any children living at home?”, “Were you a member of any other clubs or organizations?”, and “Did you have a part-time or full-time job?” Very few respondents had family responsibilities, but interestingly nearly all respondents (and especially leaders) reported participating in other clubs and/or holding part-time jobs in addition to attending classes. Furthermore, I asked non-leaders whether they might consider becoming a leader one day, but in no cases did concerns related to “biographical availability” seem to factor into these respondents’ thinking. While it is possible that biographical availability might be linked to commitment in

other social movement groups, it does not seem to be a persuasive explanation for groups where members are all at a similar life course stage.

Past research has also pointed to the role of meso-level constraints in commitment to activist groups. For example, Baggetta, Han, and Andrews (2013) argue that Sierra Club leaders who attend a higher number of meetings are less committed to the organization. Among the LGBT groups examined here, the attitude toward meetings was generally all or nothing: groups either had no meetings (as with the Advocate group and the Open Letter movement at Goshen and the latest iteration of CUAllies at Catholic) or had weekly meetings (as with the Advocate group at Loyola, the Bridge Builders group at Belmont, and the first iteration of the CUAllies group at Catholic). Among those groups that held no meetings, the number of hours individuals participated each week was above 3; among groups that held weekly meetings, the number of hours individuals participated each week was just above 5. If one assumes that individuals in the meeting groups spent up to 2 hours each week in meetings (which was often the case), this means that the overall level of participation in LGBT activism outside of meetings did not significantly vary according to whether groups held meetings.

While these past explanations do not seem to explain commitment to LGBT groups, it is true that considerations related to collective identity and group ethos likely did not exhaust all variation in participants' commitment to LGBT groups. Perhaps most commonly, in response to open-ended questions asking members whether they might consider becoming leaders, a few individuals responded that they preferred to remain general members rather than leaders because they were heterosexual. As these individuals elaborated, they believed that minorities should be in control of their own organizations and that members of majority groups should remain as allies. This points to a small role for a general LGBT organizational identity (regardless of group

ethos) in participants' commitment to LGBT groups. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this concern most often arose in contexts (such as Goshen) that already had a relatively high number of heterosexual students serving as leaders, so this concern was not universal among members.

Related, I also found that some students with salient LGBT identities exhibited a greater willingness to join direct action groups or educational groups than other students whose identities did not correspond with an organization's group ethos (see Tables 5-3 and 5-4). This was especially true at colleges and universities like Belmont or Catholic where only one LGBT group was present, and as these individuals reasoned, they felt like they should play a part in any effort that will ultimately benefit individuals like them, even if the group did not function in the way they preferred. Again, this points to a small role for a general LGBT organizational identity (rather than a more specific group ethos), although these individuals' levels of participation are still not as high as those LGBT-identified individuals whose identities aligned with a group ethos.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to shed light on the bases of commitment to activist groups, a question that Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman (2003) call a "black box in the social-movement and voluntary-association literatures" (p. 311). Specifically, I have demonstrated that commitment to social movements is contingent on the correspondence between a participant's collective identity and an LGBT organization's group ethos. Furthermore, I have examined the mechanisms linking collective identity and group ethos to commitment. As I have shown, LGBT organizations signal their group ethos and exert a kind of causal pull to individuals with corresponding collective identities through their branding efforts and their choice of activities. Nevertheless, potential

participants retain agency and can transform the nature of their organizations by gradually replacing previous cohorts or by attempting to take over the organization.

By demonstrating the role of group ethos and collective identity in social movement commitment, the chapter sheds light on the previously undertheorized cultural underpinnings of social movement commitment. Previous literature's focus on meso-level constraints portrayed commitment to activist groups as a somewhat mechanistic process followed by all committed participants. Furthermore, because those rational choice concepts invoked to explain commitment are highly similar to the concepts used to understanding micro-mobilization, previous literature failed to capture how what happens once individuals actually join an activist group affects individuals' commitment to that group.

Certainly, because this study is focused on LGBT groups at religious colleges and universities, future research should assess the extent to which this theory applies to other groups and settings, such as LGBT groups at secular colleges and universities or other identity-based (racial/ethnic, gender, religious) groups across a wide range of settings. I contend that, although the particular salient identities (e.g., religious, sexual identity, gender identity) might change from group to group, the broader categories of collective identity (e.g., activist, value, solidarity) and the broader categories of group ethos (e.g., direct action, educational, solidarity) very well could apply to other groups. At the same time, researchers should continue to examine the potential role of concepts emphasized in previous literature. Because nearly all participants in the LGBT groups examined here were at a very similar stage in the life course, the possibility remains that rational choice calculations related to biographical availability, collective benefits, and selective incentives might play a role in groups with participants at diverse life course stages.

Beyond contributing to research on activist commitment, the chapter holds implications for other areas in the scholarly study of activist organizations such as the study of biographical consequences. Previous research on biographical consequences has previously been focused on activist groups of the 1960s – overwhelmingly groups that engaged in direct action campaigns – and has shown that direct action groups tend to produce individuals who engage in other direct action groups throughout their life course. However, this chapter raises the question of whether activist organizations with very different group ethos – including activist organizations focused on educating others or on carving out a “safe space” – might produce different kinds of “activists” – for example, activists who might forego future social movement activity to focus on applying their group’s values through humanistic careers or their family lives. I explore exactly this possibility in chapter six and indeed show that the biographical consequences of social movements vary according to an activist organization’s group ethos.

Finally, the chapter holds potential design implications for LGBT organizations at colleges and universities. Because researchers have shown that LGBT student groups positively impact participants’ mental health and academic achievement (e.g., Poteat et al. 2013; Toomey et al. 2011), the question of how LGBT organizations might attract a high number of committed participants is indeed a question of real consequence. The findings in this chapter suggest that colleges and universities that provide LGBT groups appealing to students with a range of salient identities (e.g., activist, value, solidary) should attract a higher number of participants. Nevertheless, it remains an open question whether multiple LGBT groups should form to appeal to these distinct identities or whether a single LGBT group should attempt to appeal to all of these identities. Would competition between multiple LGBT groups have a deleterious effect on overall membership in these groups? Would the attempt to appeal to multiple identities muddy

the overall identity of and thus decrease overall participation in a single LGBT group? These are additional questions that future research should address.

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CHAPTER 6

VARIETIES OF ACTIVISM: DIVERGENT BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORIES OF LGBT RELIGIOUS ACTIVISTS

How are individuals impacted by their participation in LGBT activist groups at Christian universities? The participants of LGBT groups discussed in previous chapters come from a variety of backgrounds – some from highly politicized households, others from more conservative, religious families, and still others from relatively apolitical upbringings. Nevertheless, nearly all participants in LGBT activism share a remarkable willingness to accept risk (Taylor and Raeburn 1995); to face potential backlash from their families, friends, and universities; and to reexamine old values and beliefs. Given the remarkable journeys many of these participants take over just four years -- and at a period in their lives when young adults often experience rapid growth (Mannheim 1952 [1928]) -- it should not be surprising that LGBT activist groups would have significant impact on these participants' lives. But what exactly are these impacts? What precisely explains these impacts, and how might impacts vary across participants?

A growing body of research on Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and LGBT groups more generally has analyzed these groups' impacts on participants, and these studies have shown that LGBT groups have a generally positive impact on student health and well-being, academic performance, and personal identity development, among other impacts (Coley 2014; Currie et al. 2012; Fetner et al. 2011; Goodenow et al. 2006; Griffin et al. 2003; Heck et al. 2011; Lee 2012; Mayberry 2006, 2013a, 2013b; Poteat et al. 2013; Renn and Bilodeau 2005; Renn 2007; Russell et al. 2009; Toomey et al. 2011; Toomey and Russell 2013; Walls et al. 2010). For example,

research on student health and well-being generally shows that students who join GSAs or attend schools with GSAs are more likely to exhibit positive physical and emotional health behaviors and are more likely to develop positive personal relationships (Goodenow et al. 2006; Heck et al. 2011; Poteat et al. 2013; Toomey et al. 2011). Poteat et al. (2013) survey nearly 16,000 students across 45 Wisconsin schools and find that youth in schools with GSAs report less “smoking, drinking, [and] suicide attempts,” though these effects were more significant for LGBTQ students than heterosexual students (p. 1). Similarly, Toomey et al. (2011) survey 245 LGBTQ young adults around the San Francisco Bay area and report that “the presence of a GSA was negatively associated with young adult depression and positively associated with young adult self-esteem” (p. 180).

Some studies also show that LGBT groups have a positive impact on participants’ academic performance (Toomey and Russell 2013; Walls et al. 2010; though see Poteat et al. 2013). Toomey and Russell (2013) draw on a survey of 230 LGBTQ middle school and high school students nationwide and show that both the presence of a GSA and participation in GSAs have a positive impact on the grade-point average (GPA) of sexual minorities. Similarly, in their own nationwide study of sexual minority youth, Walls et al. (2010) survey 306 sexual minority youth across the United States and find not only that merely attending a school with a GSA has a significant, positive impact on LGBTQ youth’s grade point averages, but also that participating in a GSA has an even more significant, positive impact on LGBTQ youth’s grade point averages.

Perhaps most pertinent to this study, a growing body of research shows that LGBT groups can have a significant impact on participants’ identities (Longard 2013; Mayberry 2006; Renn and Bilodeau 2005; Renn 2007). Mayberry (2006) in particular criticizes the dominant discourse of LGBTQ youth as an “at risk” population (given higher rates of suicide, substance

abuse, etc.) and argues that GSAs can provide a “foundation upon which gay and lesbian students resist heterosexist school climates and construct positive identities,” especially insofar as these GSAs cultivate what she calls a “politicized consciousness” (pp. 13, 23). For example, Renn (2007) documents how many sexual minorities involved in a GSA-like group at a Midwestern research university moved from identifying as “LGBT” to identifying as “queer,” and from identifying as “student leaders” to identifying as “activists” (p. 321). The “queer” identity signals a “public gender and/or sexual identity in opposition to normative, straight culture,” while the “activist” identity signals “an approach that incorporated a commitment to changing social systems” (p. 323). Similarly, Longard (2013) examines a GSA-like group at a southern Christian university and shows how the group empowered students to come out of the closet and identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, as well as slowly gain a politicized worldview.

While such studies have produced mounting evidence that LGBT groups have positive impacts on their participants, it is surprising that most of these studies focus on the impacts of LGBT groups on participants’ individual lives, behaviors, and identities. Indeed, very few of these studies consider the impacts of LGBT groups on participants’ collective behaviors – including political, work, and family lives – and those that do have produced mixed evidence (Mayberry 2013b; Russell et al. 2009; Toomey and Russell 2013). Mayberry (2013b) arrives at little evidence that participants in GSAs are involved in any school or community-based activism. Fetner et al. (2011) also find that “activism is not the inevitable outcome of Gay-Straight alliances. High schools’ concerns with discipline and order, and especially their restrictive policies on student behavior, limited the activities that were feasible or even imaginable among our participants” (p. 204). Finally, Toomey and Russell (2013) find that

participation in GSAs is not linked to future plans to vote. But are these findings applicable to all types of LGBT groups and across all levels of education?

In this chapter, to address the lack of attention to the future political, work, and family lives of LGBT activists, I draw from a long-standing body of theory and research in social movement studies on the biographical consequences of social movements (Coley 2014; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Giugni 2004; Isaac, Coley, Cornfield, and Dickerson forthcoming; Isaac, Cornfield, Dickerson, Lawson, and Coley 2012; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Taylor and Raeburn 1995; Van Dyke, McAdam, and Wilhelm 2000; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; Wilhelm 1998). As I will discuss in more depth below, this literature on biographical consequences of social movements shows that activist groups produce individuals who continue participating in formal activist organizations, who enter into humanistic occupations, and who alter their family plans. To explicitly account for the ways in which LGBT groups produce divergent impacts, I appropriate Xu's (2013) concept of "group ethos" (also see chapter five).

As I show, LGBT groups do affect participants' subsequent political, work, and family lives, and variations in LGBT organizations' group ethos tend to explain divergences in biographical impacts. Specifically, I find that activist participants who are drawn to direct action groups tend to pursue subsequent involvement in social movements; religious participants who are drawn to educational groups tend to enter into humanistic careers; and the LGBT-identified individuals who are drawn to solidarity groups tend to reconsider their future family plans. I also report on one biographical impact that seems to be common among participants of all groups: changes in personal relationships with family members and friends.

To be clear, the biographical consequences of LGBT activist groups that I identify in this chapter are “immediate” or “short-term” in nature. Given the short time horizon of my interviews – which were conducted in 2011 through 2014 not only with current students but also with alumni who had graduated up to 10 years prior – I cannot speak to the enduring consequences of LGBT activist groups over participants’ entire life courses (see, e.g., Isaac et al. 2015). Nevertheless, some of the consequences I identify – such as gaining courage to come out to one’s family members and friends – are perhaps no less significant in their biographical impact. Additionally, it is important to note that, because I do not have a comparative sample of non-participants with which to compare my sample of LGBT activists, I cannot make conclusive causal claims about the impact of LGBT activist groups on participants’ life trajectories (as in some quasi-experimental studies such as McAdam [1988]). Nevertheless, to address concerns about selectivity, where possible I bring in participants’ claims regarding their political, work, and family plans prior to joining an LGBT activist group, and I contribute a novel theory about group ethos and biographical consequences that can inspire future experimental research in this area. I expand on my methodological approach, findings, and theoretical contributions below, but first I further discuss the literature on biographical consequences of social movements and its potential insights for the study of LGBT groups.

PAST RESEARCH AND THEORY ON BIOGRAPHICAL CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIVIST GROUPS

The aforementioned literature on the impacts of LGBT groups on participants has mostly focused on more private, individual-level behaviors and attributes, including participants’ health behaviors, academic performance, and personal identities. As I discuss in this section, the long-

standing body of research on biographical consequences of social movements provides potential insights to address this lacuna. Specifically, studies in this literature have explored participants' behaviors in groups (whether political groups, work organizations, or families) and have consistently shown that participants of activist groups are very different from non-participants in terms of future political views, political activities, and work and family lives.

The majority of research on biographical consequences of social movements was inspired by popular media claims that New Left activists of the 1960s had gradually become more conservative and had renounced their activist identities (see discussions in McAdam 1989, 1999). To the contrary, in terms of political views, a study by Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken (1971) on white civil rights activists who participated in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's voter registration drives in the early 1960s; studies by Fendrich (1977, 1993) and his colleagues (Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988) on black and white civil rights activists in Florida in the 1960s; studies by Whalen and Flacks (1980, 1984) on activists who burned a bank in Santa Barbara, California in 1970; studies by McAdam (1988, 1989) on applicants to the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project in 1964; a study by Sherkat and Blocker (1997) on the political lives of former high school students from the 1960s through the early 1980s; and Klatch's (1999) study of participants in the Students for a Democratic Society all found that participants in New Left social movements generally held political views that were to the left of the general public after they left the movement. (Klatch [1999] also interviewed members of the conservative Young Americans for Freedom and found that they generally held either traditionalist or libertarian political views after they left the organization.) Furthermore, in terms of political behavior, most of these studies showed that participants of social movements were much more likely than the general population to continue in either social movement

activism or mainstream political activism throughout their lives (Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; but see Sherkat and Blocker 1997).

Popular media accounts of 1960s social movement activists also tended to highlight those rare individuals who settled into mainstream jobs and traditional family lives (e.g., Jerry Rubin, a New Left activist who became a stockbroker, and Eldridge Cleaver, a leader of the Black Panther Party who became a conservative Republican businessman and politician). Once again, however, scholars found that most former activists went on to lead very different lives in terms of their careers compared to the rest of the population. Fendrich and Tarleau (1973), for instance, created a typology of occupations “classified along a continuum, ranging from those chiefly offering rewards of money and status in the private sector of the economy to those that offered the opportunity to express creativity and a chance of humanistic service: (1) proprietors, managers, officials, and salesmen in the private sector of the economy; (2) private practice professionals such as doctors and lawyers; (3) government workers; (4) academic professionals; and (5) those in social service and creative occupations” (p. 249). They found that former activists almost exclusively pursued jobs in the 4th and 5th categories, while non-activists pursued jobs in the first 3 categories. Studies by Whalen and Flacks (1980, 1984), McAdam (1988, 1989), Sherkat and Blocker (1997), and Klatch (1999) similarly found that New Left activists were disproportionately located in “humanistic professions” and often followed much more chaotic job trajectories than the general population. Finally, in terms of family lives, most of these studies find that New Left activists are more likely to delay marriage or practice cohabitation than the general population (Klatch 1999; McAdam 1989, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; Wilhelm 1998).

What is particularly remarkable about these findings is their consistency even given major variations in research design. Many of these earlier studies (e.g., Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984) were critiqued because of their small sample sizes, non-random samples of activists, lack of control groups (though see studies by Fendrich and his colleagues), and the relatively short amount of time that elapsed between the time of social movement participation and the time of survey. Nevertheless, those scholars who conducted larger surveys of activists a couple decades after the social movement participation occurred, sometimes also using random samples and controls, reached the same conclusions (e.g., McAdam 1988, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Wilhelm 1998). As a whole, then, these studies seem convincing.

Despite these mostly consistent and seemingly robust findings, this literature falls short of providing a comprehensive explanation for the biographical consequences of activist groups. First, while these studies have been very helpful in demonstrating the differences between activists and non-activists (“between-group” differences), we know much less about whether differences exist among activists in terms of their subsequent trajectories (“within-group differences”). As I discuss below, a few studies have explicitly examined this question (e.g., Fendrich 1977, 1993; Van Dyke, McAdam, and Wilhelm 2000), and they have shown the promise of this line of research, but much more work can be done. Indeed, I explicitly examine within-group differences in biographical outcomes among activists within LGBT religious groups at Christian universities.

Second, while as a whole these studies have produced consistent and seemingly robust empirical findings, they are much weaker in terms of theory – why is it that activist groups have such powerful effects on participants’ biographical trajectories? The vast majority of the studies

cited above reference Mannheim's theory of generations to explain the effects of activist groups – namely, that experiences shared by individuals during young adulthood powerfully shape their political views and behaviors. But as Klatch (1999) points out, while individuals of the same age may share certain experiences, they often interpret them and act upon them quite differently (hence the name of her book, *A Generation Divided*). Similarly, Sherkat and Blocker argue that those who rely on Mannheim's theory fail “to supply a mechanism through which participation might influence individuals' orientations or actions” (p. 1051). Thus, in the section directly below, I develop a theory to explain potential divergences in movement-induced biographical trajectories, one that highlights the role of group ethos.

A final critique that might be made about the literature on biographical consequences of social movement activism is that studies overwhelmingly focus on the social movements of the 1960s, especially the New Left, and thus ignore activist groups before or after the 1960s (though see Corrigan-Brown 2011). Similarly, these studies focus on a particular kind of high-risk activism (direct action campaigns) and thus ignore other kinds of high-risk activism that are quite common in LGBT communities, such as the politicization of personal troubles through awareness-raising campaigns or the creation of “safe spaces” (though see Taylor and Raeburn 1995). Thus, it is still a relatively open question whether activist groups that hail from different eras or movement families and that may pursue different means of promoting social change would impact activists in the same ways. Attention to activists outside of the 1960s movements, such as activists participating in LGBT organizations, might help us understand whether the findings from this literature are generalizable.

THEORIZING DIVERGENT BIOGRAPHICAL CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIVIST GROUPS

Past literature on impacts of LGBT groups has mostly ignored the consequences of LGBT groups for participants' political, work, and family lives. For its part, the literature on biographical consequences of social movements has failed to theorize within-group differences in the biographical consequences of activists and has generally failed to examine activism beyond the New Left movements of the 1960s. To address these shortcomings, in this section I build a theory of divergent biographical consequences experienced by participants in modern-day LGBT religious activism. Specifically, I theorize that *variations in LGBT organizations' group ethos contribute to divergences in the biographical consequences of LGBT activists.*

While most existing literature on biographical consequences of activist groups has focused on differences between participants and non-participants in terms of biographical trajectories, it is true that a few studies have begun to theorize within-group differences in biographical consequences. Specifically, and drawing on a concept emphasized in studies of GSAs (Longard 2013; Mayberry 2006; Renn and Bilodeau 2005; Renn 2007), these studies point to the idea that biographical consequences are linked to participants' identities. For instance, Corrigan-Brown (2011) studies the United Farm Workers, Catholic Workers, Concerned Women for America, and a homeowners association. She finds that individuals in these groups who carried "activist identities" (and to a lesser extent "value identities") tended to persist through activist groups over time, because they tended to be motivated by broader critiques of society and were never completely satisfied with the state of society, even if some gains were made by their groups. However, individuals who carried identities mostly tied to their specific organizations were likely to disengage from participation, often because goals of their organizations were achieved. Similarly, Frenrich (1977) studies participants in the 1960s civil

rights movement. He finds that individuals who were motivated by some type of “other-oriented humanism” (generally tied to an “activist identity” or “value identity” held by white participants) were likely to identify on the political left and to continue participating in political demonstrations and illegal protests. In comparison, those participants who were motivated by their racial identity (that is, a salient “solidary identity” generally held by black participants) tended to hold more moderate political views and usually desisted from social movement participation.

These studies provide a fairly intuitive explanation for differences in subsequent social movement participation among activists. However, a sole focus on collective identity would fall short in completely explaining biographical outcomes, because some identities (especially solidary identities) presumably do not significantly differ prior to and after participants’ participation in activist groups, and thus a sole focus on collective identity would not take into account how what happens once individuals actually join a social movement group might impact participants. Furthermore, scholars have mostly invoked the concept of “collective identity” to explain divergences in subsequent political views or political behaviors, but we are still lacking an explanation for divergences in other areas, such as work and family lives.

In an attempt to theorize how group dynamics might impact participants, I bring in the concept of “group ethos” offered by Xu (2013) and further developed in chapter five. As I discussed there, “group ethos” refers to the character of a group, as communicated through its beliefs and embodied in its practices. While “collective identity” is likely still relevant to explanations of activist group consequences – as I showed in chapter four, differences in collective identities are systematically linked to very different pathways to initially joining movement – I argue that the relevance of “collective identity” will mostly be mediated through

“group ethos” – as I showed in chapter five, collective identity combines with “group ethos” to produce commitment to social movements. Furthermore, I argue that even when participants’ collective identities do not correspond with group ethos, those participants who do continue participating in the group will often experience the impacts shared by other participants of organizations with a certain group ethos.

Specifically, I theorize that variations in group ethoses can be mapped on to variations in biographical consequences. First, I expect that plans to participate in subsequent social movements or organized political campaigns will mostly be confined to graduates of LGBT organizations with a “direct action” ethos. This is because graduates of direct action groups would be equipped with the organizing skills that facilitate such participation; socialized into a praxis that inspires their future participation; and provided with direct connections to other social movements in which they could subsequently be involved. Second, I expect that plans to enter into humanistic careers will be most common among participants in LGBT organizations with an “educational” ethos. This is because veterans of such groups would have gained skills more useful for working within (rather than outside of) institutions; internalized values that they could use in selecting such careers; and been put in contact with appropriate employers over the course of their participation in such groups. Finally, I expect that changes in family relationships and future family plans will be most common among participants in LGBT organizations with a “solidarity” ethos. This is because solidarity groups often provide safe, confidential spaces through which can improve in their relational skills; clarify their own personal goals and values; and form ties with others that provide mutual support. Table 6-1 provides a visual summary of the ideal-typical impacts associated with each type of group ethos.

TABLE 6-1. CATEGORIES OF GROUP ETHOS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED BIOGRAPHICAL IMPACTS

<i>Group Ethos</i>		<i>Biographical Impact</i>
<i>Direct Action Group that seeks structural or policy changes through more confrontational and extra-institutional forms of collective action</i>	➔ Extra-Institutional Organizing Skills, Refined Philosophy of Social Change, Inter-Movement Ties	<i>Future social movement or political participation, such as continued involvement in LGBT activist groups or participation in marriage equality ballot campaigns</i>
<i>Educational Group that establishes a shared set of values and raises consciousness about those values in a broader community through more conciliatory and institutional means</i>	➔ Intra-Institutional Leadership Skills, Expanded Humanistic Values, Employer Ties	<i>Pursuit of humanistic careers, such as jobs with church reform organizations or careers in LGBT social services</i>
<i>Solidarity Group that facilitates personal development and growth by connecting similarly-identified individuals with one another within a safe space</i>	➔ Relational Skills, Clarified Personal Values, Personal Support Ties	<i>Revised family plans, such as intentions to enter into more equitable martial partnerships or plans to raise tolerant and accepting children</i>

By theorizing the connection between group ethos and post-graduation political, work, and family lives, I provide a basis for understanding within-group differences across multiple types of biographical consequences of social movements and for pinpointing the mechanisms implicated in these biographical consequences. I turn now to a discussion of my data sources and methodological approach before providing evidence for these links between group ethoses and biographical consequences of social movements.

DATA, METHODS, AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

To assess whether biographical consequences of LGBT activism vary according to an LGBT organization's group ethos, I draw on my in-depth interviews with LGBT activists at four Christian colleges and universities in the United States: Loyola University Chicago, Goshen College, Catholic University of America, and Belmont University. Importantly for this chapter, I sought out interviews with participants who were nearing graduation or who had already graduated from their university, because they were more likely to have formulated their post-college political, work, and family lives. Furthermore, for schools with multiple LGBT groups, I sought out participants in each LGBT organization. The final sample at each university was generally evenly split between alumni and students approaching the end of their college career (but with a few students who were freshmen and sophomores); the final sample also yielded participants in a range of LGBT groups (i.e., LGBT groups with a direct action ethos, educational ethos, or solidarity ethos).

The interview schedule contained a section examining these groups' impacts. I began this section by asking students open-ended questions, such as "Do you think you were personally changed as a result of your participation in this organization, and if so how?" I then moved to more specific questions about the potential impacts of LGBT groups on their religious and political views; their collective identities; their political and religious behaviors; their relationships with friends and families; their future career plans; and their future family plans. These questions yielded a rich and diverse mix of responses about LGBT groups' biographical impacts. The earlier sections of the interview schedule also included questions ultimately relevant for this chapter, including questions that sought to understand the ethos of the LGBT

organizations in which participants were involved (e.g., “How would you describe your organization to someone who wasn’t familiar with it?”).

To analyze these data on biographical consequences of participation in LGBT groups, I coded these interviews using a “grounded theory approach” (Charmaz 2014). Specifically, I inductively assigned codes to any interview quotes pertaining to *types* of biographical consequences and *mechanisms* by which LGBT groups impact participants. Participants most commonly reported four types of biographical impacts: 1) changes in plans to participate in social movements or approach to participation in other social movements (45% of respondents); 2) changes in choice of or approach to future careers (75% of respondents); and 3) changes in decisions to have a family or approaches to raising a family (49% of respondents); and 4) changes in their relationships with others (91% of respondents). I also discovered three mechanisms by which LGBT groups produced these kinds of impacts: 1) by giving respondents skillsets that they might apply to future social movements, careers, or family lives; (2) by allowing respondents to clarify their own values and goals; and 3) by directly linking respondents to other social movement organizations, employers, potential spouses, or friends.

Given the theory that biographical consequences of social movements vary according to an LGBT organization’s group ethos, I also drew on prior inductive coding from chapter five on each LGBT organization’s group ethos. There, I found that organizations tended to exhibit one of three group ethoses based on their stated missions and the nature of their activities. First, some organizations exhibit a “direct action” ethos and thus seek policy and cultural changes through organized protests and other contentious tactics. Second, other organizations exhibit an “educational ethos” and thus seek to talk about and raise awareness about LGBT issues. Finally,

still other LGBT groups exhibit a “solidarity ethos” and thus seek to carve out a “safe space” for LGBT individuals and otherwise connect LGBT individuals with each other.

TABLE 6-2. SELF-REPORTED BIOGRAPHICAL IMPACTS, BY GROUP ETHOS

<u>Group Ethos</u>	<u>Biographical Impact</u>			
	<i>Political Impact</i>	<i>Career Impact</i>	<i>Family Impact</i>	<i>Relational Impact</i>
<i>Direct Action Group</i>	72.41% (21 of 29)	75.86% (22 of 29)	48.28% (14 of 29)	82.76% (24 of 29)
<i>Educational Group</i>	22.73% (5 of 22)	86.36% (19 of 22)	50.00% (11 of 22)	95.45% (21 of 22)
<i>Solidarity Group</i>	21.43% (3 of 14)	42.86% (6 of 14)	85.71% (12 of 14)	100.00% (14 of 14)

As a preliminary way to assess the potential connection between types of biographical impacts and the types of group ethos, I constructed a basic contingency table showing how the self-reported biographical impacts vary by group ethos. As Table 6-2 shows, a majority of participants in direct action groups (nearly three-quarters) reported participating (or expressing plans to participate) in direct action campaigns and other organized political campaigns following graduation, but a minority of participants in educational groups and solidarity groups (under one-quarter in each) reported such impacts. Next, the vast majority of participants in educational groups (86%) reported some type of change in their planned careers or at least their approach to their planned careers; interestingly, participants in direct action groups (76%) also

reported such a change in their careers, but a minority of participants in solidarity groups experienced this type of impact. As expected, the majority of participants in solidarity groups (86%) reported a change in their future family plans, but a minority of participants in direct action groups and only half of participants in educational groups reported these changes. Finally, through inductive coding, I did find one impact that seemed to be shared by the vast majority of participants in each group: most participants reported that their personal relationships with family members or friends had changed in some way after participating in the group.

To unpack such associations, I now proceed to a presentation of my qualitative results in the form of profiles of (1) LGBT direct action groups that produced activists who pursued participation in subsequent social movement campaigns or organized political campaigns; (2) LGBT educational groups that produced activists who pursued humanistic careers; and (3) LGBT solidarity groups that produced activists who experienced changes in family plans as well as changes in personal relationships. Specifically, in each section, I begin with a description of an LGBT organization's "group ethos" – a direct action ethos, an educational ethos, or a solidarity ethos - and then I discuss how that ethos was linked to the changes experienced by individuals. I pay special attention to changes reported by individuals who had already graduated from the university, but I also include quotes from individuals who are still in school but have taken concrete steps toward subsequent activism, a future career, or changes in family relationships and behaviors. Overall, the qualitative evidence supports the idea that variations in group ethoses are linked to divergent biographical consequences.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT ACTIVISM AS BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORY

Following their participation in LGBT groups at these four Christian colleges and universities, some participants continued to be involved (or expressed intentions to continue being involved) in social movements and other forms of organized political activity. The majority of these participants had participated in LGBT groups that exhibited a “direct action ethos,” including the CUAllies group at Catholic from 2009-2011, the Advocate group at Loyola from 2005-2010, the Bridge Builders group at Belmont from 2009-2011, and the Open Letter movement at Goshen. In this section, I focus most closely on the first iteration of the CUAllies group at Catholic and on the Open Letter movement at Goshen. The LGBT direct action groups at these schools tended to produce subsequent activism by providing respondents with concrete organizing skills, transforming the respondents’ philosophy or approach to social change, and by directly exposing them to other activist groups in which they could participate.

The CUAllies group at Catholic from 2005-2010 was likely the most radical of the LGBT groups studied here. Following an incident of vandalism committed against an LGBT student at Catholic – whose car was spray-painted with the word “fag” and whose tires were slashed – and following a heated exchange over LGBT rights in the campus newspaper, several students at Catholic decided to form an LGBT student organization. Following a more radical “queer” strand of politics, the group generally focused on issues such as violence and discrimination against the LGBT community. Furthermore, following one of the student’s anarchist convictions, the LGBT student organization was nonhierarchical in structure, although a core group of students did take on most of the responsibilities. The group quite regularly engaged in contentious tactics such as demonstrations and banner drops in the student center. The group also set up an anonymous e-mail account from which it e-mailed descriptions of violence or

discrimination against LGBT students at Catholic to all campus staff, faculty, and administrators each week. Finally, as a means to sustain student engagement, the group regularly held off-campus meetings that were devoted not only to planning the group's on-campus actions but also to socializing students into a more radical praxis.

Such commitment to direct action on LGBT issues required an enormous amount of dedication by student members. Not only did participation in the group require a willingness to engage in a certain amount of "rule-breaking" – an application for the group's official approval was officially denied by the administration, and the group was not formally allowed to hold meetings and events on campus – but participation in the group also placed members in the national spotlight – the group was profiled in several national and local newspapers, which in some cases "outed" participants to their families. Given the intensity of the campaign, and the lessons the respondents learned through its successes and failures, it is perhaps not surprising that the CUAllies group had a direct impact on the participants' biographical trajectories, beginning first and foremost with the participants' future social movement and political activities. For example, one student named Neil (all names are pseudonyms) reports that CUAllies helped him critique his theory of organizing, specifically by showing him the need to cultivate diverse leadership that could outlive a campaign. Following graduation, he dropped plans to go to graduate school and now works full-time at an organization that coordinates social movement campaigns, where he has implemented his revised theory of organizing:

I: ...Do you think you personally were changed as a result of your participation in the organization, and if so how?

R: Oh yeah. I mean, I actually do this work for a living now, right, I organize campaigns and do actions for people. And that first six months or so of the CUAllies campaign – it was like, this is what it's actually about. Feeling you had a family and, I don't know. It's hard to describe the comfort that comes from that, especially – yeah, it was amazing, and I would definitely do it again, and I wish I had started it my freshman year, and yeah, yeah, it definitely had a long lasting impact on me, especially in helping me critique my analysis of organizing and stuff, I often look back to it to see, this is what we did wrong, this is how I'd do it better next time.

I: Would you say more about that? How it critiqued your model of organizing?

R: Uh, just like – thinking about how, not to get into a critique of organizing, but thinking about leadership structures and when it's more appropriate to use consensus and then not appropriate to use consensus. So, the structure that we had was great, but if we had critiqued it more to make it a little less work, that would have made it more sustainable. So for example, thinking about leadership development as not just focused on one person, but building leadership development into everything we do. We had one person leading each of our meetings, but what we should have done is pick 5 freshmen and say, we're going to do the first 5, and then you 5 do the next 5, and doing it that way, being much more intentional about it. That would have been smart. And that has influenced the way I organize – I have mentees that I've brought into this work and I very much put out a program for them, and said this is what you have to do.... In direct action campaigns, building alternative structures often allows you to win anyway. It allows you to win even

if your target doesn't concede, because you've developed leaders who can outlive a campaign.

Although Neil's story is instructive, especially in showing how participation in an LGBT group can transform one's approach to activism, it does not provide conclusive evidence that participation in an LGBT direct action group directly leads to subsequent social movement participation, because Neil had previously been involved in leftist activism prior to participating in CUAllies. The story of another Catholic student named Ashley is perhaps more insightful in this regard. As discussed in chapter four, Ashley had come from a very conservative background (she reported that she had been a "fundamentalist Christian") with no prior involvement in activism. However, Ashley noted that her participation led her to adopt a new philosophy of social change – one that did not see the world as naturally moving toward justice, but as being pushed toward justice by the concerted efforts of individuals – which subsequently inspired her involvement in a campaign for marriage equality in her state:

I: I meant to ask earlier – how would you have described your political leanings going into the group, and did the group have any impact on your political views or political development in any way?

R: Yeah. Probably the biggest impact that it had – and not even like a discussion about, oh, I used to be right of center and now I'm left of center, which is true – but I think I had previously just thought the world moved toward justice. Like, the arc of human history bends toward justice, and all of those well-known sayings, and that it just naturally

happens. And I think getting involved in a group like this made me realize that the only reason why that stuff happens is because people work to make it happen, you know? We don't just become more accepting of people of other races because we just realize at one point that it's bad – we become accepting because we realize at one point that people stood up and said, you can't treat me like this, I'm a human being, you know? And then they worked, and they worked hard. And I think this realization led me to become involved in working for Marriage Equality in [blinded state]. There were so many of my friends that were like, oh, no, it'll pass, and it'll be great, why do you have to work so hard, it's not that big of a deal. It'll pass, everyone's becoming more accepting now. And I'm like, yes, that is true, but they're becoming more accepting because we're picking up phones every single night and calling people, we're going places and talking about these issues. Stuff just doesn't happen – so I think the biggest effect that it had is recognizing that if people want shit to change, they need to go and try to change it, and that's what I've tried to do.

The other students I interviewed who were involved in this early CUAllies campaign at Catholic similarly reported that their participation in the organization influenced their decision to become involved in future political activity. This includes a student named Julie, who despite having no prior involvement in activism before CUAllies, similarly became involved in a campaign for marriage equality in her state – she not only donated to a marriage equality campaign but also knocked on doors throughout the state. She reported that her participation in CUAllies helped her become comfortable “knocking on a door and not knowing if that person is gay themselves or not knowing if that person is a right wing pastor, being able to converse with

those people in respectful ways... and also to get across this idea of human rights and equal rights and what we all want – we all want the same thing, we all want to go home to a loving family, and these type of things- that CUAllies really emphasized, that bottom line that we focused on.” As another example, a student named Sonja, who described herself as an “activist without a cause” (and without any prior participation in movements) before joining CUAllies, said her participation in CUAllies “moved [her] to change [her] perception of acceptable risk.” Indeed, she subsequently took on the challenge of moving to a developing country and working full-time on efforts to alleviate poverty there, and she says that once she returns to the U.S. she hopes to focus her studies and activism on intersectional campaigns.

As profiled in chapter five, the Open Letter movement at Goshen has coordinated a campaign to change Goshen’s faculty hiring policy over the past several years. The movement began small, with an “open letter” to the school that students were invited to sign. The campaign quickly grew to involve weekly actions, including sing-ins in the chapel, vigils on the campus lawn, and solidarity protests with Goshen’s sister school, Eastern Mennonite University. Unlike some of the other LGBT groups studied here, which took on multiple functions or changed focus over time, the Open Letter movement has been completely focused on this direct action campaign, given the existence of other LGBT groups on campaigns that focused on other functions (such as Advocate, which focused on education, and Prism, which focused on solidarity building).

Once again, such immersion in a direct action campaign focused on LGBT inclusion had a profound effect on participants’ lives. As with the students at Catholic, many participants in the Open Letter movement reported that their involvement in the campaign directly led to their involvement in future social movement groups. This can perhaps best be seen in the story of

Roger, who despite having no prior involvement in LGBT activism, did not cease his participation in the Open Letter movement upon graduating – rather, he worked to expand the campaign through more outreach to Goshen alumni, staff and faculty. Furthermore, he has worked to connect the Open Letter campaign with broader movement organizations within the Mennonite Church, such as the Brethren Mennonite Council and Pink Menno:

I: So how have you been involved with the movement since you graduated?

R: I first got involved in the campaign not long before I graduated. And then like after I did graduate – like, that felt really good, to at least have said something before I graduated, before I was like an alumni off somewhere, and I felt like I needed to take action before I graduated. But once I graduated, I did apply for a number of positions at the college, but I didn't hear anything back, so I stayed in Goshen for the next two years. And I was able to kind of coordinate some of the effort while I was still there... And now I'm in kind of a different position, where I'm off-campus. It's been about – yeah, building more of an online presence, connecting with alumni, even staff and faculty now, and connecting with the other larger Mennonite groups like Pink Menno, which is working at a denomination level, EMU Safe Space is a group that's pretty active at their college, and the other Mennonite Colleges there are about 5 or 6 that have their own groups, and trying to support them, too, to be more active. And BMC is a group – you've heard of them?

I: Is that the Brethren Mennonite Council?

R: Yeah, that's right. So they would be like the initial people, the pioneers, in the LGBTQ movement in the church. So yeah, connecting with them as well, and trying to get all these groups on the same page so we can all work toward a common goal. And really, if the church were to pass anything to be more inclusive, then all of these colleges would follow suit.

Importantly, although he has begun to step back from the Open Letter campaign and allow current students to take on most of the responsibilities, Roger's work to connect Open Letter with wider Mennonite organizations put him in contact with other LGBT organizations in which he has now become involved. In particular, he has become a leader in the Pink Menno campaign, which coordinates direct actions at the Mennonite conference in support of greater inclusion of LGBT members:

I: Have you become involved in any of these organizations yourself?

R: Yes, Especially Pink Menno – I've become a leader there, since connecting with them through the Open Letter movement. So Pink Menno has been vying more for queer people in leadership and in ministry positions in the Mennonite Church, membership isn't officially okay for the denomination, and of course like marriage covenants, you know. And Pink Menno shows up especially at the Conference, for example we have had signs and have had a demonstration at a delegate session of the MCUSA Board. And it's just an incredible – the people you meet there are just incredible. Like they have an incredible

amount of energy for this kind of advocacy work, they are very invested in the church, because I mean they wouldn't be doing this unless they wanted to be part of the church. So, yeah, just incredible people and I think, yeah, some of my closest friends have come out of this kind of work.

Although so many of the Goshen students I talked to had not yet graduated from the college, nearly every student I interviewed did express interest in becoming involved (or becoming further involved) in Pink Menno's campaign. It is true that, as noted in chapter four, nearly all of the Goshen students in my sample had participated in social movement campaigns prior to coming to Goshen, and thus their intentions to continue participation in social movement campaigns might not be surprising. For example, Kylie, who described her pre-college participation in Pink Menno in chapter four, reported she planned to become more involved in Pink Menno following graduation. Nevertheless, in addition to Roger, my sample did contain other students who had not previously been involved in any social movement activity and who intended to become involved in LGBT activism following graduation. For example, Tyra, who came from a deeply "red state" where Pink Menno was not active, reported that she hoped to similarly join Pink Menno's campaign after she graduated.

HUMANISTIC CAREERS AS BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORY

Other participants in LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities have pursued (or expressed plans to pursue) humanistic careers that reflect the values of their group, especially humanistic careers that involve the reform of existing institutions. The group ethos that seems most tightly linked to the pursuit of humanistic careers is an "educational" ethos (including the

CUAllies group at Catholic from 2011-present, the Bridge Builders group at Belmont from 2011-present, and the Advocates group at Goshen), although interestingly a majority of participants in LGBT groups that exhibited a “direct action” ethos similarly changed their choice of or pursuit of a career. LGBT groups inspired this kind of occupational trajectory by giving participants leadership skills useful for working within institutions, providing students with a set of values that they would use to guide their selection of a career, and directly linking participants to a new employer.

As first discussed in chapter five, the CUAllies group at Catholic shed its “direct action” ethos and adopted an “educational” ethos beginning in 2011. No longer did the organization engage in confrontational protests, such as demonstrations in the student center. Rather, the group began to focus on events that would educate the Catholic University community about matters of faith and sexuality, including through guest talks by Catholic priests or leaders of Catholic reform organizations. While such activism required no less dedication on the part of CUAllies’ members, such activism placed members in a dramatically different mindset that eschewed radical politics in favor of “bridge building” tactics (Coley 2014).

Several dedicated members of the CUAllies group at Catholic have entered into careers directly focused on reforming the Catholic Church through outreach and education on LGBT issues. And in the case of members like Timothy, who was first introduced in chapter four, this kind of career path is dramatically different than the career they had initially planned to pursue upon entering college. As previously discussed, Timothy had little exposure to LGBT issues prior to his time in CUAllies, and indeed had argued against full equality for LGBT individuals in the past. However, after being recruited to the CUAllies group because of his demonstrated leadership skills on campus, Timothy was exposed to “a subculture of, either people who were

out and struggling, or people who weren't out and thought they couldn't come out on campus"; some even assumed Timothy was gay and began to treat him negatively. Timothy quickly became passionate about the cause of LGBT rights and abandoned his plans to enter seminary. Indeed, as he discusses below, he has now become employed by a Catholic LGBT organization that he had been introduced to through his time in CUAllies:

I: So you said your decision to go to [blinded organization] is a direct result of your participation in CUAllies?

R: Yeah. I graduated unemployed, and I went on the job hunt for a month, and I was like ahh, what am I gonna do. And then this position just came onto my radar, and I had known the executive director from my time in CUAllies, and he had featured us on their blog actually... So I sort of had a relationship with them. I ended up –they wanted someone to do campus outreach.

I: Is that still your position?

R: No, I do more young adult outreach now, so more post-college. We still do some college and high school, but more post-college, and I do communications stuff for them.

I: What's the mission of the organization?

R: It's – in the Catholic world there's several groups that do church reform and stuff. There is [another group] that focuses on pastoral membership, you know, helping LGBT people, their family and allies, to have faith experiences. And this group does more of the education and advocacy. We publish stuff – like, we wrote a book ... that's like a Q&A of how Catholics support marriage and how to talk about things. We do educational workshops, we help with parish ministry development...

I: So you had ties to the organization through CUAllies – did your participation in CUAllies influence the way you've gone about this job at all?

R: I mean, opening my eyes and giving me personal experience with some of the issues at play was one way, because a lot of what we did was sort of more abstracted. Just to have that as sort of a background has been – it keeps me grounded, right, when I'm in this nonprofit industrial complex, this mentality right, and I'm like what am I doing? Oh, it's because of that student I had a conversation with. So that's helpful.

Another Catholic student named Jess, also introduced in chapter four, similarly changed her career plans as a result of her time in CUAllies. Unlike Timothy, Jess had long been committed to the cause of LGBT rights – she recalled speaking out in favor of LGBT equality as early as the fifth grade. Furthermore, she initially exhibited a proclivity toward direct action – she reported that she went to “three protests my first weekend here just because I could.” However, following several years of participation in CUAllies, Jess reported that while she was still fully committed to LGBT rights (and indeed had gone through a transformation in her

understanding of her own sexual identity), she no longer became involved in protests.

Furthermore, she is now “not the kind of activist who’s tying myself to a building – but I think I’m always looking for opportunities to engage in conversations.. and sort of never shying away from, you know, if I hear someone say that’s so gay or you’re a fag, just sort of saying, do you understand the implications of saying that?” Indeed, she has sought such conversations head-on by pursuing a career with an organization dedicated to outreach to faith communities, and she notes that certain skills she gained (such as the ability to talk to people in authority) and faith values she internalized through her time in CUAllies have proven useful in this career:

I: Do you think you were personally changed by your participation in the organization-in CUAllies-and if so how?

R: Yeah, I think I’d definitely say, having the opportunity to sit down with the President [of the school], I don’t think I would have had the guts to do that earlier on, just sort of seeing the shape of the organization, and seeing what everyone else put into it – having that confidence, to sit down and have this conversation, and to be this proud representative, I think it definitely shaped me in that way. And I think it’s - I have discovered what I want to be active for. It’s helped me find my voice. Like now I have an internship with the [blinded organization], and I guess in that sense, it’s sort of – like, I’m aligning myself with a group that I know will be a voice for change and stuff like that. So I guess I’m finding more constructive ways to be – you know, I’m not going to protests all the time anymore.

I: What is that internship in [blinded organization] – what's your involvement with that?

R: I'm actually focused on religion & faith, so again it's a lot of this intersection and stuff with faith traditions and sexual and gender identity. And so what the program – what the actual religion & faith program does is that they reach out to different faith communities and faith leaders and engaging in those dialogues. And they publish resources in how to implement acceptance in your own faith community. And they have, you know, different programs – like, one I really love focuses on Latino Catholicism, and how to like cope with sort of sexual orientation in that sort of household or cultural identity... So a lot of it is about open dialogue and really creating these resources to implement acceptance.

I: Do you see a link between your involvement in CUAllies and that internship? And is this something you would like to pursue as a career?

R: Oh, absolutely. I think – I think especially, just sort of preparing myself with the rhetoric and understanding of what LGBT acceptance in a faith tradition means – definitely has equipped me to want to be in that department. And I think I would absolutely love to have the opportunity to work for, you know, [blinded organization] or something like that. I think that would be beneficial, especially as I'm finding my own sexual identity, I'm sort of recognizing the implications of this on my future, and that I sort of need to work for this change if I actually want to be able to live in an environment where I'm not judged differently and stuff. So I think definitely after graduation, I would

like to sort of work for a nonprofit organization, it's just kind of a matter of where I can kind of do my part. So I think that's absolutely on the agenda.

The remaining respondents from the CUAllies group from 2011 onward similarly entered careers in which they could apply skills and values that they learned in the group. This includes Eric, the conservative-leaning participant with deep religious convictions. While he reported that his plans to pursue a career in medicine is primarily a response to “this Christian call to care for people who are sick and ill,” he believes he can effect change in what he calls a “very conservative field” by being open about his sexual orientation and by plugging into a new “LGBT health issues” organization.

Belmont University represents another case where an LGBT group transformed from a “direct action” group to an “educational group.” Indeed, as discussed in chapter five, after achieving policy changes at their school through sit-ins, rallies, and other direct action tactics, the Belmont Bridge Builders group quickly transitioned to a focus on providing group discussions and community events about issues facing the LGBT community. Given their involvement in these types of educational and outreach events, participants were able to envision future careers involving outreach to LGBT communities.

The effect of Bridge Builders on its participants' post-movement trajectories can be best illustrated in the story of Sarah. Sarah reported that she always had a passion for social justice, and from the time she stepped foot on campus during her freshman year, she became involved in another social justice organization. Accordingly, she initially envisioned working for a human rights organization like Amnesty International following graduation. Nevertheless, her involvement in the social justice organization was generally restricted to behind-the-scenes work,

such as writing letters to legislators, because she reported that she was “very, very shy,” an attribute that actually led her to become involved in Bridge Builders:

I: So when you first joined Bridge Builders, what did you personally think would come about as a result of your participation?

R: Um, well, for me I just wanted, I guess, at that time I was very, very shy. Like I was pathologically shy almost. Like I couldn't – talking to someone, it was very bad. So I just kind of wanted to be in a space where I felt safe and – well actually more than that, because I wasn't talking, I wanted other people to have a space to be themselves. And that's what I wanted to come out of it more than anything. I just kind of wanted to see other people be themselves.

Despite her initial shyness, she reported, “Bridge Builders helped me throughout that, to become a more open person... I was just able to talk more, I was like an instant extrovert.” When asked what about Bridge Builders made her less shy, she said that being asked to lead some of the group discussions on topics such as mental health helped her break out of her “shell.” This personal transformation helped her envision a shift in careers to social work, a career that would require intense interpersonal skills and also allow her to work with LGBT youth:

I: ...Before you joined the organization, what had your post-graduation plans been? Are they still the same, or if not, what are they now?

R: Oh no, they're different. Before joining I wanted to – well, before college, I wanted to definitely work with Amnesty International. Like, that was hands down what I wanted to do with my life, there was no other option for me. I wanted to either work for Amnesty or – work with an organization like it. When I became a part of Bridge Builders, that's when I started thinking, I think I could see myself working with the LGBT community, that's awesome, I love what I'm doing. I could be like a child advocate, like, teens in juvy. Our criminal justice system, social services, they aren't always set up to work with LGBT youth. And that's why I began taking sociology classes, because I was interested in social work. And, right now I just want a job, but in the future I would love to work with, like, LGBT youth.

I: And would you say that's influenced by your participation in Bridge Builders?

R: Oh, definitely. I mean, I wouldn't have even thought of that before. Yeah. And I wouldn't have wanted to do something that required me to work that closely with people.

Other students at Belmont reported similar shifts in career plans after participating in Bridge Builders. A student named Michelle said that, despite her initial plans to “play and write music and tour and record” following graduation, and despite initially joining the group just to “meet other gay people,” she is now interested in working full-time at an LGBT community organization following graduation. She went on to say she changed her career plans after she witnessed so many other “graduates of Bridge Builders who participate in the community now, doing outreach to the LGBT community, and at least one of them as his job.” Another student

named Ruth, who was initially interested in pursuing a career in journalism, has since joined a social services organization catered to low-income youth (including LGBT youth), and she reported that she chose this career path because “Bridge Builders definitely gave me a love and a passion for helping people and serving.”

INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AS BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORY

The final types of biographical consequence of participation in LGBT groups are of a more personal nature. First, nearly all respondents reported some type of changes in their relationships with other family members and friends. This is perhaps not surprising, given that all of these LGBT groups provided participants with a new set of relational skills and personal values that they could communicate with their family and friends. Second, some respondents reported that their participation in LGBT groups changed the way they related to their partners and envisioned raising their future children. This type of change was most common among graduates of LGBT solidarity groups, given that solidarity groups focus most explicitly on the personal growth of their participants and indeed often provide a “safe space” for participants to reflect on their own upbringings. I focus on both types of changes below, with a focus on the Loyola Advocate group after 2010 (a solidarity group).

Of all of the LGBT groups studied here, the Loyola Advocate group after 2010 perhaps best exemplifies an LGBT group with a solidarity ethos. As discussed in chapter five, the group has now mostly moved away from direct action campaigns and other organized political activity. Instead, the group offers weekly social events, from ice cream socials to trivia games to dodge ball nights. The organization also sponsors Spectrum, which provides a safe space for students

who are early on in their coming out process or who are otherwise facing stressors related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Given this focus on social events, most participants certainly expected to have fun and develop friendships with LGBT-identified students, but rarely did they anticipate the other changes that would follow. For example, Damon, first introduced in chapter four, reported that he first joined Advocate “because [he] thought the social aspect of it was really important, especially when you’re a freshman and want to make friends that are like you.” He had never been involved in any LGBT group or other social justice group before and certainly had no prior reason to think of himself as an “activist.” In fact, he reported that he “never thought that [his] opinions” were “valid” before. Nevertheless, he says he now considers himself to be an “activist,” and this is because he has gained confidence in talking to his family and friends back home about LGBT issues:

I: Coming into the organization, would you say that you would have identified as an activist, or was that not really a term you would have thought of yourself as or applied to yourself as?

R: Yeah, I didn’t consider myself an activist at all.

I: Do you now?

R: I do now, and it’s funny, when I go back home, and all of our friends go back home for Christmas or whatever, my friends always make the comment of, oh, [name blinded],

you're an activist now, you're so – because I come back home with my “Loyola Supports Love” t-shirt or I have my pride wristbands, and they're like, this is who you are now, you're an activist. And yeah, I had never thought of myself as one before this, just because I've never – I guess I never thought that my opinions were, like, valid, you know? I never valued my opinions I guess, I'm very non-confrontational, so I'm just like, yeah, I'll agree with you, that's fine. But definitely coming to Loyola and becoming involved in Advocate, it helped me develop a sense of what is – not necessarily what is right and wrong, but what I feel should be right and what I feel should be wrong. And especially being in Loyola and in a Jesuit institution, since they do value social justice so much, I feel like – yeah, I would call myself an activist. Yeah. I'd never thought of myself as one until Advocate, definitely.

I: Is that just – are you an activist ... when talking to friends or family about LGBT issues, or are you involved at all in protests?

R: ... I would say it's shaped more of my daily life. I feel like I make active choices now where my choices reflect the morals and standards that I've set up for myself because of how much I know now. And definitely it helps me kind of – it helps me direct certain kind of conversations I have with friends and family now, especially with my family too, I feel like they've just noticed it. You know, my family doesn't talk to each other about feelings or whatever. They're very much a family of, like, they can take cues from you. But I feel like now that they know I'm a member of Advocate, they've kind of softened up what they talk about, or they're very careful about what they say, they try to make

sure they carefully word things. They've been very gender neutral, which is nice, they're just very vague. So yeah, I would say that. And especially with friends too, the roommates I have now are in the same way. We could be like watching episodes of Medium or whatever but in the middle have a long, deep conversation about queer theory or whatever, something like that. So it's kind of helped how I relate with others, and kind of helped me see what I value in other people, too.

Another Loyola student named Colin also reports that his participation in Advocate has helped spur on conversations about LGBT issues with other students and with co-workers. Importantly, he said he learned how to start conversations with people who might make offensive comments about sexuality "in a way that would be easy on people, that would make it easy for them to come on your side":

I: A couple more questions – one is whether you think you personally had any impact on friends or family members as a result of your participation in your organization, whether your participation in the organization spurred on any conversations with family and friends. And maybe it didn't have that kind of impact.

R: Well, I'm trying to communicate this without being too arrogant or anything, but I suppose this is the opportunity to do it -- that's something I've always strived to do, is to change perspectives. Certainly I grew up as a white privileged male in society, but also growing up a bit religious, in high school, I grew up hearing that being gay was something to be very shameful of, you know, and it just came to a point when I was 15

heading into 16 where I had to decide for myself that, I'm either going to come out of the closet or run away and do something awful... And as I went through Advocate, I certainly did become comfortable coming out to people, but I think also, being in that Catholic environment, I learned how to speak up on these issues in a way that would be easy on people, that would make it easy for them to come on your side. I did not want to be the type of person who was really in people's face, but someone who was open and firm in their presence. So I constantly hear the kind of thing, like, "oh, I would have never even thought that you were gay," or a lot of that kind of language, where they think they're giving you a compliment, like, "oh, you don't act gay, that's great," things that really are kind of offensive and blah-blah-blah. I just think to myself, they're meaning well here, I can talk to them – so I work to cultivate an ally rather than get into someone's face, so to speak. I try to take a long view. I took a different approach than some of my friends who wanted to do something else, who wanted to be more militant activists. It's too bad that so many activists think there's only one way to do things. And so that's one of the things I took away from Advocate, I learned how to raise these issues in a tactful way. And I tried to communicate that to others in Advocate, to say, look, here's the reality of the situation, here's what we can do, here's how we can build relationships.

Beyond giving students confidence in speaking to friends and family about LGBT issues, participation in LGBT groups also helped students plan out or envision their own future family lives. For example, Damon from Loyola reported that he is now also able to envision himself having a same-sex partner and raising a family. As he puts it, despite initially feeling that he "wasn't allowed to have" certain things such as a family or a marriage, he now feels that he is

not only “allowed to have those feelings” and “allowed to have those plans,” but that he indeed “deserve[s] to have those” feelings and plans:

I: You talked about the impact of the group on your friends and family members. Has your participation in Advocate, if not shaped or changed your family plans, like a decision to get married or have children in the future, has it shaped the way you might raise children or relate to a partner? Or would you say that it has not really had that kind of effect?

R: Yes, I think it has, definitely. I think – the biggest thing that’s affected that is that I feel like I’m allowed to have those feelings now- I feel like I’m now allowed to have those plans. That it’s valid for me to want a family and want things I always thought I wasn’t allowed to have, whether that’s have a family, be married, stuff like that.

I: That you thought you weren’t allowed to have because of religious messages in your upbringing?

R: Yeah, I think so – upbringing, and cues that I get from society, I guess. Yeah. And like, specifically with raising children, now I feel like I can have children or that I’m allowed to – that I can do that – to be able to raise children. And I can help them see that things in the world of being gay are valid, and like, tell a child and teach a child that it doesn’t matter, if your parents are gay, it doesn’t have to be – you’re a child of *gay parents!* It’s, you’re a child of *parents*, it doesn’t have to be so specific sometimes. And

it's opened up to me that possibility, that I deserve to have those things, that's one of the biggest things that I'm going to take away from Advocate.

Finally, another Loyola student named Samantha reports that she is now able to envision marrying someone of the same sex and raising children of her own one day. Samantha was raised in a somewhat traditional, religious household, one that long expected her to marry someone of the opposite-sex and have children of her own one day. Samantha was initially afraid that she would let her family down because of her desire to have a partner of the same sex, but she reports that her participation in Advocate has now given her an "understanding [of] how a same-sex partnership works," and indeed a partnership in which she might indeed raise children of her own:

I: Has your participation in Advocate directly shaped or changed your future family plans, like a decision to have children or whether to marry? Or if it hasn't directly impacted plans in that way, has it shaped the way you might raise children or relate to a partner or anything like that?

R: Yeah, yeah. Meeting people in Advocate who are partnered has sort of helped me understand sort of the dynamics of a same-sex partnership. That hasn't been an experience I've had in college, but yeah, understanding how a same-sex partnership works. In terms of children- my family wants me to have children, because it's like, oh, we want grandchildren. And it's like, okay, we'll figure that out somehow. I can now envision raising children of my own, and raising my kids with an understanding that there

are different people in the world and that's okay. You know, if I had a daughter who – it's not expected you'll be a housewife or necessarily submissive in any way to your husband and wife in terms of explorations of gender. My son probably wouldn't wear blue all the time or my daughter wouldn't wear pink all the time. Son, you can grow to a ballerina, and my daughter, you can grow up to be an engineer. Both of those things are fine. Or son you can grow up to be a fire fighter and daughter you can grow up to be a ballerina, that's fine too. Yeah, so I think my understanding of same-sex partnerships has matured, and in terms of raising children, just in terms of, there are different people in the world, and it's okay to expose young children to the fact that there are different people in the world. The argument that, oh, what am I going to tell my kids if 2 men can get married? It's like, that 2 men can get married! The problem is not that you have to explain it to your kids, it's that you don't want to explain it to your kids. Kids can handle it. It's like, oh, so and so doesn't go to church on Sunday, they go to a mosque. And they're like, okay, that's fine. So and so doesn't eat pork because their religion is different. That's fine. So and so has 2 moms – like I have a mom and a dad or whatever. Yeah. Yeah.

Other students in Loyola's Advocate group similarly reported that their participation in the group spurred on changes in their personal life. Beyond inspiring conversations with friends and family or altering their future family plans, these changes include developing a better sense of their own sexual or gender identity. Since arriving at Loyola and becoming involved in multiple LGBT groups, a student named Jordan reported becoming more comfortable breaking rigid gender norms (e.g., norms about gender-appropriate clothing) and has since adopted a

“gender fluid” identity. Lily, who is bisexual, reported that her involvement in the group has “opened [her] up to the idea of being in a relationship with a woman.” And Elizabeth notes the group has exposed her to diversity in the LGBT spectrum, and she has moved from a bisexual identity to a pansexual identity.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have sought to show that LGBT groups have important effects on their participants’ political, work, and family lives. A growing body of literature on LGBT-inclusive schools has demonstrated that participants in LGBT groups experience improved mental health and well-being (Goodenow et al. 2006; Heck et al. 2011; Poteat et al. 2013; Toomey et al. 2013), academic achievement (Toomey and Russell 2013; Walls et al. 2010; though see Poteat et al. 2013), and personal identities (Longard 2013; Mayberry 2006; Renn and Bilodeau 2005; Renn 2007). However, existing literature has mostly ignored (or produced negative findings) in regards to the potential role for LGBT groups to affect participants’ future political, work, and family lives, as well as participants’ personal relationships. The results here affirmatively demonstrate that LGBT groups do have impacts beyond participants’ immediate life circumstances by producing more active citizens, altering work plans, and encouraging healthy relationships and partnerships.

These insights into activists’ political, work, and family lives have long been understood by those who study the biographical consequences of social movements (Coley 2014; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Giugni 2004; Isaac et al. 2015; Isaac et al. 2012; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Taylor and Raeburn 1995; Van Dyke,

McAdam, and Wilhelm 2000; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; Wilhelm 1998). Nevertheless, past literature mostly focused on differences between activists and non-activists and also ignored high-risk activism that eschewed direct action; thus, scholars assumed that certain outcomes of activist group participation (such as subsequent involvement in political campaigns) were shared by all participants. Here, I have imported the concept of “group ethos” to show that different types of LGBT groups produce different kinds of activists. While most participants in LGBT direct action groups do pursue future involvement in social movements, participants in other types of LGBT groups seldom report this impact. Rather, graduates of educational groups (along with veterans of direct action groups) go on to pursue humanistic careers, and graduates of solidarity groups experience changes in their family plans. Finally, graduates of all of the LGBT groups studied here undergo transformations in their relationships with family and friends.

Combined, these insights point to several directions for research. Researchers of LGBT-inclusive schools might attempt to see whether these findings extend to non-religious colleges and universities in the U.S. or to middle schools and high schools across the U.S. Similarly, future studies of biographical consequences of social movements might assess whether this typology of group ethoses – direct action groups, educational groups, and solidarity groups – extends to other contemporary social movements and activist causes and similarly explains those movements’ divergent impacts. Finally, given that most respondents had only recently graduated their colleges or universities – or were indeed still attending their colleges and universities – future studies might follow-up with graduates of LGBT activist groups to examine whether all of their expressed plans and dreams for future political involvement and work or family lives were fulfilled at later points in biographical trajectories.

Overall, in light of previous chapters' insights into the backgrounds of participants in LGBT groups, these findings speak to the potential for LGBT groups to mobilize and empower a broad cross-section of LGBT and allied students at religious colleges and universities. Many of the respondents in this study had at one time held views quite contrary to the missions and purposes of the LGBT groups they joined; others reported that they had faced bullying, harassment, and physical violence in their schools, leading them to be silent or soft-spoken about their views. While not all of the respondents in this study intend to pursue future involvement in social movements, most respondents did say they now considered themselves to be "activists" or advocates." Nearly all participants expressed more confidence in talking with their friends and family about LGBT issues and in standing up for their beliefs at work. Many respondents will indeed desist from future, organized political activity, but if their plans come to fruition, they will all be "change agents" by living out fuller, more purposeful lives.

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CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Growing up, Damon (introduced in earlier chapters) had never thought of himself as an activist. Having been raised in a traditional Catholic household, and having attended a Catholic high school, Damon had never been involved in a Gay-Straight Alliance or other LGBT group, and he had certainly never participated in any protests. He attended Loyola University Chicago in part because of the allure of a big city, and in part because of the school's Catholic identity, but he never stepped foot on the campus before he moved there, and he knew very little about the campus climate for LGBT students.

Once he arrived at Loyola, Damon immediately became involved in the school's theater department and began pursuing his lifelong dream of being an actor. But when he attended Loyola's student clubs fair, he saw the booth for Advocate, the campus LGBT group, and decided to become involved in that group as well – mostly because he was excited to have the opportunity to make gay friends. As it turns out, alongside theater, Advocate would become one of his biggest commitments and passions at Loyola; he participated in the group starting at the beginning of his freshman and all the way through the end of his senior year.

In chapter six, I began to discuss Damon's slow transformation into an "activist." It began with a gradual immersion into queer theory and philosophy that he was exposed to in the Advocate group. He could be doing something as arbitrary as watching the TV show *Medium* when, in the middle, he would suddenly engage into "a long, deep conversation about queer theory" with friends. He also found himself speaking out more in his classes when issues related

to sexuality or gender identity were brought up. In turn, his family, friends, and classmates began to tease him, “oh, [Damon], you’re an activist now.” The slow realization of his “activist identity” took even Damon by surprise – he had “never thought that [his] opinions were... valid,” before, but he had now developed a strong sense of “right” and “wrong.”

Damon’s emerging activist commitments led him to question many of his prior beliefs and commitments. For example, although Damon grew up Catholic, he made the decision to begin attending an LGBT-friendly Protestant church with his boyfriend. He says it felt much different attending a church that on paper had many of the same rituals and beliefs as a Catholic church but that openly accepted members of the LGBT community. Damon feels that he has grown in both in his faith and in his relationship as a result.

His newfound activist identity also influenced his work life. Because Advocate combined opportunities for socializing with educational events, such as an event called Queer Shakespeare where a Loyola professor talked about queer themes in Shakespeare, Damon became more curious about how his queer politics might influence his professional life. As he told me, “as time went on my involvement became more and more about... finding a way to be an activist in my life as a theater-artist and performer, figuring out how I can meet those 2 worlds.”

For example, at Loyola itself, the theater department put on a production of Shakespeare’s 12th Night. While not about LGBT issues specifically, he viewed the characters in the play as being “very ambiguous” in that they “embraced queer-ness and did not exist in specific binaries.” He and the production team made a point to draw out some of these queer themes. One summer during college, he also decided to intern for a queer theater company, where he was excited by the opportunity to act in plays that were specifically focused on LGBT issues. As Damon told me, he has been able to “take what I’ve become really passionate about

and what I've learned more and more about in Advocate, and put that into practice... I feel like I now look for projects that have a strong sense of meaning, or that say something about society or about LGBT issues, and I directly relate that to my activism in Advocate.”

Finally, going forward, Damon expressed to me a strong interest in becoming involved in other LGBT groups, likely groups that focus on providing cultural opportunities or safe spaces for the LGBT community. While not involved in direct action campaigns – traditional social movement activity – he views these kinds of LGBT groups as agents of social change in local communities.

Damon is an excellent example of the potential for LGBT groups to produce “activists,” those who consciously seek to foster changes in attitudes, behaviors, or policies on LGBT rights. Such participants are indeed succeeding in transforming not only the policies of their institutions but also the hearts and minds of fellow students, churchgoers, co-workers, policymakers, family members, and friends. And although my data are limited in temporal scope, if past movements are any indication, these graduates of LGBT groups may very well be agents of change in their communities for decades to come.

KEY FINDINGS

In this dissertation I have sought to support a basic premise – that there is more than one way that an individual can be an “activist.” Although LGBT activist groups are filled with participants like Damon, who have little background in activist groups, the very word “activist” often conjures to mind those whom I have called “politicized participants” – individuals who have been deeply socialized into political ideologies and who have often been involved in activist groups from an early age. Such individuals are generally embedded in personal and

organizational networks that support their activist endeavors, and they are often at a life course stage that facilitates their dedication to activism.

It is indeed true that many LGBT groups are filled with such “politicized participants” (even if many of them fall short of the ideal type). Nevertheless, the assumption that LGBT groups mostly consist of “politicized participants” rests on an additional faulty assumption about the nature of “activist groups.” Specifically, many people assume that “activist groups” take the form of “direct action groups,” or organizations that deploy extra-institutional protest tactics in support of their goals. While these kinds of activists and LGBT activist groups are present at Christian universities, they do not exhaust the meaning of “activism.”

As I have argued here, it is important to consider the possibility of other kinds of “activists” – those who participate in activist groups because of broad, other-oriented values (such as the religious participants studied here) and those who participate because they stand to directly benefit from an activist group’s efforts (such as the LGBT participants studied here). Religious participants, as I have shown, had not been socialized into leftist ideologies that are often presumed to precede activism. These religious participants had also not been involved in activist groups prior to coming to their university. Rather, many actively opposed LGBT rights before coming to college, or at least attempted to hide their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Those participants in LGBT groups whose sexual or gender identities were particularly salient had also not been extensively socialized into political ideologies that might facilitate early involvement in activist groups. Rather, many of these individuals reported experiences with bullying or harassment that made them think twice about speaking up in favor of LGBT rights in their classrooms or at their dinner tables.

Despite these sometimes complicated biographies, individuals with salient religious or LGBT participants could also be found in LGBT groups at their Christian universities. Many of those religious participants who were thoughtful about identifying some set of beliefs and values that might guide their lives were attracted to activists groups that I have referred to as “educational groups,” groups that similarly try to hammer out a collective set of values and share them with their wider communities. These educational groups often hosted weekly group discussions about matters of faith and sexuality and hosted university-wide events that they hoped would facilitate some form of social change.

LGBT participants, more than any other “type” of participant, were open to involvement in a range of LGBT activist groups, but they felt most at home in what I have called “solidarity groups,” those groups that facilitate connections between individuals who share a sexual or gender identity and that provide a “safe space” for individuals to discuss issues related to their own sexual and gender identities.

If one doubts the possibility for these types of groups to actively facilitate social change on their campuses and beyond, one should look no farther than the stories of individuals such as Damon. A literature on “biographical consequences of social movements” shows that the organizations that I have called “direct action groups” have lasting consequences on participants’ lives, as participants generally go on to pursue involvement in other direct action groups and make work and family choices that are unlike those of the general population (e.g., Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989, 1999; Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Van Dyke et al. 2000; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984; Wilhelm 1998). During his four years at Loyola, Damon participated in an activist group that transitioned between (and sometimes blended)

educational and solidarity forms, and because this group was not engaged in direct action, he has not expressed an interest in joining direct action groups in the future.

Still, Damon's is a life transformed in so many ways. As discussed above, and as with many other graduates of educational groups, Damon plans to pursue his career in such a way that facilitates social change – by raising awareness and changing beliefs and attitudes about LGBT issues through theater. And as with many other graduates of solidarity groups, Damon is making choices in his personal life that are undoubtedly fostering social change as well – broaching difficult conversations about LGBT issues with his friends and family and classmates, being honest about his sexuality in church, and otherwise being open about his sexual identity in day-to-day life. Scholars may sometimes overlook this kind of “everyday activism” (Mansbridge 2013), but the point is not missed on Damon's friends and family, who now recognize Damon to be a change agent in the area of LGBT rights.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, the findings discussed above speak most closely to the literature on social movement participation. In terms of literature on micro-mobilization, or initial decisions to join social movements, chapter four joins those studies that seek to move beyond a focus on “between-group” differences in participant vs. non-participants and instead seek to assess “within-group” variation in pathways to participation (e.g., Bosi 2012; Bosi and Della Porta 2012; Isaac et al. forthcoming; Viterna 2006). While previous methodological approaches are certainly not “wrong,” especially when they are combined with a near-singular focus on a certain type of movement (such as citizenship movements that target the state), they can produce misleading results. Indeed, this study reveals substantial variation in pathways to participation,

and innovating within the literature on micro-mobilization, the dissertation links these divergent pathways to variations in participants' most salient collective identities.

How might this dissertation's insights on multiple pathways to participation inform future theories and scholarship on micro-mobilization? While the specific identities I focus on here – left-wing political identities, religious identities, and LGBT identities – are particularly useful for understanding participation in LGBT religious activist groups, these specific identities exemplify broader categories of collective identity – “activist” (or political) identities, value identities, and solidary identities – that might well prove generalizable to other kinds of activist groups. For example, to take a favorite example of the micro-mobilization literature, one might consider participants in activist groups addressing racial inequality, such as the southern civil rights movement. The civil rights movement certainly drew its fair share of battle-hardened “activists,” but it also drew those who held salient value identities (Christian identities) that aligned with the religious tone of part of that movement, and it also drew many African-Americans who participated because they stood to benefit from the movement given their solidary (racial) identity (e.g., Fendrich 1993).

In addressing issues of activist commitment, chapter five takes up a question that has seldom been addressed by the social movement literature, again in part because of past literature's binary focus on participants vs. non-participants. Those few past studies that *have* addressed the question of activist commitment fall short in various ways: studies that focus on rational choice calculations do not take into account how emerging group dynamics may alter participants' willingness to participate, and studies that focus on meso-level constraints do not take into account participants' agency to transform the groups in which they participate (e.g., Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1993, 1995; Cohn, Barkan, and

Halteman 2003; Dorius and McCarthy 2011; Knoke 1981). Contributing to theories of commitment, chapter five argues that commitment to activist groups is contingent on the correspondence between groups' dominant ethos and participants' salient identities. The causal relationship between group ethos and identity is not prespecified, and indeed participants often transform the nature of LGBT organizations when group ethos do not align with participants' identities.

The field of activist organizations I have mapped out in this dissertation – activist groups with a direct action ethos, activist groups with an educational ethos, and activist groups with a solidarity ethos – may similarly prove generalizable to other types of activist groups. For example, again taking up the example of race relations, one might imagine a field of organizations including direct action groups (e.g., civil rights movement groups), educational groups (e.g., racial reconciliation groups), and solidarity groups (e.g., black student associations). Those individuals who would be most expected to commit to these organizations would be those who hold salient identities as civil rights activists, persons of faith, and African-Americans, respectively (with, of course, a certain amount of cross-over).

Finally, the dissertation's finding that graduates of LGBT activist groups sometimes enter into humanistic careers or more intentional relationships rather than other activist organizations challenges past literature on "biographical consequences of social movements," which has often assumed that all participants of activist organizations will experience a greater likelihood of future social movement involvement (e.g., Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Fendrich and Tarleau 1973; Fendrich 1977, 1993; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988; Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988, 1989; Whalen and Flacks 1980, 1984). The finding about the effects of activist group involvement on career and relationship choices also adds to the growing research on the

consequences of Gay-Straight Alliances in particular, which heretofore has mostly focused on the effect of LGBT student groups on mental health outcomes, student safety, and academic achievement (Currie et al. 2012; Fetner et al. 2011; Goodenow et al. 2006; Griffin et al. 2003; Heck et al. 2011; Lee 2012; Mayberry 2006, 2013a, 2013b; Poteat et al. 2013; Renn and Bilodeau 2005; Renn 2007; Russell et al. 2009; Toomey et al. 2011; Toomey and Russell 2013; Walls et al. 2010).

These findings should encourage future research on the divergent biographical consequences of activist groups. To take up the example of race relations a final time, those who study the biographical consequences of civil rights movements will likely continue to find that participants continue to participate in social movement organizations throughout their life course; but they might also find that participants in racial reconciliation organizations will gain skills in conflict management that they might apply in corporations (e.g., by facilitating diversity training) or that graduates of black student associations gain an increased confidence in their own racial identity and views that might lead them to speak up when they experience “microaggressions” in their everyday lives.

Overall, this dissertation makes the case that scholars should broaden their conception of what it means to engage in activism, such that they might better understand the varieties of ways in which individuals join, commit to, and emerge out of activist groups. The motivations individuals express for participating in LGBT activist groups will differ – some may seek policy changes at their institution, others will seek more inclusive campus climates, and still others seek to grow personally – but all of the participants in the LGBT activist groups studied here are taking on real “risk” (McAdam 1986), banding with others in pursuit of their goals, and seeking

to facilitate social change at their institutions. They are all “activists” for the cause of LGBT inclusion on Christian campuses.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

On a Thursday afternoon in the middle of exam season, I met with a Belmont Bridge Builders participant named Byron. My interviews with participants of LGBT groups at Christian colleges and universities had thus far exposed me to a wide range of individuals – from straight allies to LGBT students, from group leaders to drop-outs, from alumni to current students. But most of these participants had at least a few semesters of college experience and had usually participated in an LGBT group at their school for over a year. So I was particularly interested in meeting with Byron, who had only participated in the Bridge Builders group for a few weeks and who was wrapping up his first semester as a college freshman.

As it turned out, Byron was not only new to his Bridge Builders group, but also a newly “out” member of the LGBT community; he had come out, via a Facebook post to all of his friends, only a few days before our meeting. He was soft-spoken, and at times my tape recorder had difficulty picking his voice up. As he told me, he was similarly shy in other social settings, including at his family dinner table, where he found himself sitting out political debates between his family members. “I just kind of avoid everything political,” he told me. “Because everything just gets – it always starts arguments or fights. Like my family is very loudmouth, and I just try to, like, stay out of it.”

In most of my interviews, I conclude with a series of questions about how participation in the LGBT group at their school has impacted my respondents’ lives. In Byron’s case, he couldn’t yet report much of an impact; in fact, one of the biggest “biographical consequences” of Bridge

Builders on Byron's life to date was his willingness to participate in my interview – something he said he would not have done even a few weeks ago. I thanked him for having the courage to speak with me, and I told him I'd love to follow up with him further into his college career.

Given his seemingly shy nature – and his tendency to avoid arguments and fights – it was to my surprise when, two years later, Byron's name came up in news stories about a new, unofficial activist group at Belmont initially known as “Bridge Burners” but now known as the “Queer Straight Student Organization” (Q.S.S.O., pronounced “Queso”). Their goal was to break off the ties (bridges) that LGBT students had made with the school's University Ministries and to become a more traditional GSA-type group. Some students, the group said, felt uncomfortable talking about issues such as sex in a more conservative, religious setting.

Because Byron told me even in our early interview that he was not religious, it is perhaps not surprising that he did not feel he “fit in” with Bridge Builders' more religious, educational nature. What is perhaps more surprising is that, given his starting point as a soft-spoken, newly out member of the LGBT community, Byron was so able to quickly find his “voice” and become a (potential) force for social change on his campus.

Byron's story hints at broader implications for this dissertation. Beyond contributing to sociological theories on social movement participation, the dissertation speaks to the potential for LGBT groups to create change agents – to empower often vulnerable, marginalized student populations and foster feelings of resiliency and agency. The findings of chapter four, for example, show that LGBT groups often draw individuals who were raised in conservative environments, who hold religious beliefs that may seem counter to LGBT activism, and who have often faced bullying, discrimination, and harassment in their educational environments. Because LGBT young adults raised in conservative religious environments often face rejection

from family members and peers, as well as higher suicide rates in comparison to their straight counterparts, LGBT groups who effectively bring in these students may have important roles to place in creating healthier, safer student bodies. The results point to several outlets for recruiting such students: not only from the ranks of other activist groups, but also from the population of religious students who are open to dialogue on LGBT students and from the population of LGBT students with no firm political or religious commitments.

The results of chapter five further show that not all students who initially join or participate in an LGBT group will ultimately commit to that group – rather, they must feel that they “belong,” that their own self-identity resonates with the ethos of the group. As Byron’s story illustrates, students may not settle for organizations that do not align with their own identity. The results thus suggest potential design implications for LGBT groups seeking to retain the students who join them. Specifically, to draw in the highest number of committed participants, LGBT groups should consider how best to cater to the sometimes disparate interests of the students (e.g., politicized participants, religious participants, and LGBT participants) who join them. This might mean that activists should form separate organizations (e.g., distinct direct action organizations, educational organizations, and solidarity organizations) to cater to these different interests, although future evaluative research might consider whether the competition between those organizations has a deleterious effect on overall participation and commitment levels. Alternatively, an organization might consider providing sub-groups or at least distinct activities catering to the different interests represented within the organization, with the caveat that this boundary-spanning might muddy an overall organizational identity and thus also weaken overall participation and commitment levels.

Chapter six most powerfully attests to the ability of LGBT organizations to transform participants into “change agents.” Although individuals self-select into LGBT groups that align with their own identity, they still exhibit growth after participating in such groups – refining their own approaches to social change, gaining concrete organizing and leadership skills, forging new social and organizational connections, and coming to terms with their own identities as “activists.” Practically, the results do suggest specific activities that LGBT groups should focus on depending on their goals for participants’ lives: if LGBT groups seek to produce future political activists, they should directly expose participants to political philosophies, task participants with organizing direct action campaigns, and connect participants with other social justice organizations. If LGBT groups seek to influence participants’ future careers, they might encourage students to gain skills organizing activities inside (rather than outside of) their educational institutions, and they might host career workshops that link participants with potential employers. Finally, if LGBT groups seek to influence participants’ future family lives and personal relationships, they should cultivate safe spaces that allow students to reflect on their own issues with families and relationships and allow students to form social connections presaged on values of tolerance, acceptance, and openness.

Overall, the findings of the dissertation certainly suggest that LGBT organizations can play a major role in transforming the lives not only of their participants but also their campus communities. LGBT student groups can indeed succeed in transforming official non-discrimination policies; for example, the group Bridge Builders organized sit-ins, rallies, prayer walks, and other activities to successfully pressure Belmont University to adopt a non-discrimination policy inclusive of sexual orientation (see Coley 2014). Even when schools initially resist such policies, LGBT groups play a significant role in raising awareness about

issues facing LGBT students; for example, participants in the CUAllies group at Catholic University say the campus community has moved from relative silence on LGBT issues to widespread campus discussion of LGBT issues. Given current law that allows religious universities to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and given many religious denominations' stances against LGBT rights, LGBT student groups are the central agents of change on one of the new frontiers for the LGBT rights movement.

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