

## Celebration and Suppression: The Strategic Uses of Identity by the Lesbian and Gay Movement<sup>1</sup>

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Critics of identity politics decry the celebration of difference within identity movements, yet many activists underscore their similarities to, rather than differences from, the majority. This article develops the idea of "identity deployment" as a form of strategic collective action. Thus one can ask under what political conditions are identities that celebrate or suppress differences deployed strategically. A comparison of strategies used in four lesbian and gay rights campaigns shows that interactions between social movement organizations, state actors, and the opposition determine the types of identities deployed. The author suggests the model's application to the Civil Rights and feminist movements.

[The organizers of the 1993 lesbian and gay march on Washington] face a dilemma: how to put forward a set of unsettling demands for unconventional people in ways that will not make enemies of potential allies. They do so by playing down their differences before the media and the country while celebrating it in private. (Tarrow 1994, p. 10)

Sidney Tarrow's portrayal of the 1993 lesbian and gay march on Washington highlights a central irony about identity politics and the decline of the Left: Critics of identity politics decry the celebration of difference

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within contemporary identity movements, charging them with limiting the potential for a "politics of commonality" between oppressed peoples that could have potential for radical social change (Gitlin 1995). On the other hand, the lesbian and gay movement seems largely to have abandoned its emphasis on *difference from* the straight majority in favor of a moderate politics that highlights *similarities to* the straight majority (Seidman 1993).

Over time, "identity" movements shift their emphasis between celebrating and suppressing differences from the majority. For example, the Civil Rights movement underscored similarities to the majority in order to achieve concrete policy reforms. At other times, movements that assert radical racial identities to build communities and challenge hegemonic American culture take center stage. The American feminist movement has alternately emphasized innate gender differences between men and women and denied that such differences exist or that they are socially relevant. Under what political conditions do activists celebrate or suppress differences from the majority? Why does the stress on difference or similarity change over time?

To answer these questions, this article draws on evidence from several campaigns for lesbian and gay rights ordinances.<sup>2</sup> The lesbian and gay movement was chosen because it is considered the quintessential identity movement (Melucci 1989; Duyvendak 1995; Duyvendak and Giugni 1995). The cultural barriers to acceptance of homosexuality and the challenge of self-acceptance for lesbians and gay men require cultural struggle. However, the lesbian and gay movement has been altered from a movement for cultural transformation through sexual liberation to one that seeks achievement of political rights through a narrow, ethnic-like (Seidman 1993) interest-group politics. This well-documented transition (Altman 1982; Paul 1982; Escoffier 1985; Epstein 1987; Seidman 1993; Gamson 1995; Vaid 1995) has yet to be explained.

This research will show that celebration or suppression of differences within political campaigns depends on the structure of social movement organizations, access to the polity (Tilly 1978), and the type of opposition. By specifying the political conditions that explain variation in strategies within movements, one can better understand differences in forms of collective action across movements.

<sup>2</sup> Human rights ordinances typically provide protection from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of characteristics such as sex, race, and national origin; "lesbian and gay rights bills" typically add "sexual orientation" to this list of protected categories.

## IDENTITY AND MOVEMENT TYPES

Attempts to classify social movements have typically centered around the distinction between "strategy-oriented" and "identity-oriented" movements (Touraine 1981). Abandoning this distinction, Duyvendak and Giugni argue instead that "the real difference is, however, the one between movements pursuing goals in the outside world, for which the action is instrumental for goal realization, and identity-oriented movements that realize their goals, at least partly, in their activities" (1995, pp. 277-78). Social movements, then, are classified on "their logic of action," whether they employ an identity or instrumental logic of action, and whether they are internally or externally oriented. Movements such as the lesbian and gay movement are internally oriented and follow an identity logic of action. Instrumental movements, by contrast, engage in instrumental action and are externally oriented (Duyvendak and Giugni 1995, pp. 84-85).

This mechanical bifurcation of movement types, reflected in the division between identity theory on the one hand and resource mobilization and political process theory on the other, has left the literature on contentious politics unable to explain changes in forms of collective action. First, the casual use of the term "identity" obscures fundamental distinctions in meaning (e.g., Gitlin 1995). Second, I argue that theorists must abandon the *essentialist* characterization of social movements as expressive or instrumental because it impairs the study of all social movements. This essentialist characterization stems from the conflation of goals and strategies (i.e., that instrumental strategies are irrelevant to cultural change, while expressions of identity cannot be externally directed) apparent in resource mobilization, political process, and new social movement theories. Finally, attempts to integrate these theories have been unsuccessful.

Subsumed under the rubric of new social movements, "identity movements" have been defined as much by the goals they seek, and the strategies they use, as by the fact that they are based on a shared characteristic such as ethnicity or sex. According to new social movement theorists, identity movements seek to transform dominant cultural patterns, or gain recognition for new social identities, by employing expressive strategies (Touraine 1981; Cohen 1985; Melucci 1985, 1989).

New social movement theory suggests that movements choose political strategies in order to facilitate the creation of organizational forms that encourage participation and empowerment. Thus strategies that privilege the creation of democratic, nonhierarchical organizations would be chosen over strategies narrowly tailored to produce policy change.

For resource mobilization and political process theorists, identity may play a role in mobilization through solidary incentives (Klandermans

1984, 1988), but once the “free rider” problem is overcome (Olson 1965; Hardin 1982), all other collective action is deemed instrumental, targeted solely at achieving concrete (i.e., measurable) goals. Resource mobilization and political process theorists have neglected the study of identity movements with their seemingly “nonpolitical,” cultural goals. Even when culture is recognized as an integral part of sustaining activist communities, changing or challenging mainstream culture is rarely considered a goal of activism. Strategies are seen as rationally chosen to optimize the likelihood of policy success. Outcomes are measured as a combination of policy change (“new advantages”) and access to the structure of political bargaining (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982; Gamson 1990). Such a narrow framing of social movement goals can lead to erroneous assumptions about the reasons for collective action and for strategy choice (Turner and Killian 1972; Jenkins 1983). Where goals are cultural and therefore harder to operationalize, theorists assume collective action has no external dimension but is aimed simply at reproducing the identity on which the movement is based (see Duyvendak 1995; Duyvendak and Giugni 1995). This leaves theorists unable to explain social movement action that seems to be working at cross purposes to achieving policy change. Furthermore, it relegates “prefigurative” (Breines 1988; Polletta 1994) politics—a politics that seeks to transform observers through the embodiment of alternative values and organizational forms—to the realm of the irrational.

Although political opportunity or political process (McAdam 1982) models share resource mobilization’s assumptions about the relationship between strategies and goals, they provide a more useful starting point for understanding how political strategies are chosen. According to Tilly (1978), forms of collective action will be affected by “political coalitions and . . . the means of actions built into the existing political organization” (p. 167). These short- and medium-term “volatile” (Gamson and Meyer 1996) elements of “political opportunity” (Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1996; Kriesi and Giugni 1995) include the opening of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and cleavages among elites (Tarrow 1988; Kriesi and Giugni 1995). As the political context changes, strategies should also change. Yet political opportunity models lack specificity in analyzing why or under what political conditions movements choose particular forms of collective action.

Attempts to reconcile the disjuncture between new social movement and resource mobilization or political process theory center on the relationship between forms of collective action and the movement’s life cycle. The emergent “new social movements” of the 1960s and 1970s seemed so striking because they utilized innovative, direct action tactics. According to Calhoun (1995):

As Tarrow (1989) has remarked, this description confuses two senses of *new*: the characteristics of all movements when they are new, and the characteristics of a putatively new sort of movement.

It is indeed generally true that any movement of or on behalf of those excluded from conventional politics starts out with a need to attract attention; movement activity is not just an instrumental attempt to achieve movement goals, but a means of recruitment and continuing mobilization of participants. (P. 193)

In this view, a lack of historical perspective has mistakenly led new social movement theorists to label behavior "distinctive" when it is simply behavior indicative of an emergent social movement.

This criticism of new social movement theory glosses over important empirical and theoretical distinctions. First, not every emergent social movement employs novel or dramatic tactics in order to gain new recruits. Religious right organizations that arose in the 1970s drew on the dense network of conservative churches as well as direct mail lists to mobilize; they did not employ innovative or novel tactics (Diamond 1989). Rather than misattributing certain forms of collective action to the newness of social movements, one should ask what accounts for different forms of mobilization. Furthermore, attributing certain forms of collective action to the newness of social movements precludes an understanding of why such forms of collective action may emerge at later points in a movement's protest cycle.

Second, the glib dismissal of the sorts of political action attributed to new social movements (Duyvendak 1995; Duyvendak and Giugni 1995) as simply expressive, or unrelated to political structure, ignores the external or instrumental dimensions of seemingly expressive action. If putatively new social movements do challenge dominant cultural patterns, then theorists must take seriously the political nature of such collective action. Social movement theory must examine the challenges all social movements present to dominant cultural patterns.

This research seeks to provide a more complete understanding of the role of identity in collective action. I build in part on political process theory, while incorporating new social movement theory's emphasis on the importance of cultural change to movement activism. I argue that the concept of "identity" has at least three distinct analytic levels, the first two of which have been developed in the social movement literature. First, a shared collective identity is necessary for mobilization of *any* social movement (Morris 1992), including the classic labor movement (Calhoun 1995). Second, identity can be a goal of social movement activism, either gaining acceptance for a hitherto stigmatized identity (Calhoun 1994) or deconstructing categories of identities such as "man," "woman," "gay," "straight" (Gamson 1995), "black," or "white." Finally, this research argues that expressions of identity can be deployed at the collective level as a political strategy, which can be aimed at cultural or instrumental goals.

Once the concept of identity is broken down into these three analytic dimensions, then one can explore the political conditions that produce certain identity strategies.

The next section examines analytic uses of the concept "identity" in the social movement literature. Then I present a general model to explain identity strategies. The following sections elaborate the general model by drawing on historical research and interview data to explain diverse identity strategies used in campaigns for lesbian and gay rights ordinances. The essentialist assumptions embedded in new social movement, resource mobilization, and political process perspectives limit their ability to account for these variations. The case studies will show that forms of collective action are the result of specific features of social movement organizations, the type of opposition, and concrete interactions with the state. Finally, I suggest the model's application to the Civil Rights and feminist movements.

### THREE ANALYTIC DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY

The creation of communities and movement solidarity, which the bulk of research on collective identity examines (Williams 1995), is necessary for mobilization. I define *identity for empowerment* to mean the creation of collective identity and the feeling that political action is feasible (see table 1). In other words, some sort of identity is necessary to translate individual to group interests and individual to collective action. All social movements require such a "political consciousness" (Morris 1992) to create and mobilize a constituency (Taylor and Whittier 1992; Calhoun 1995).

Identity for empowerment is not necessarily a consciously chosen strategy, although it is a precursor to collective action. If a movement constituency has a shared collective identity and the institutions or social networks that provide a cultural space from which to act, then community building and empowerment will be forfeited to "instrumental" goals of policy attainment. In the absence of visibility or movement organizations, more work must be done to build organizations and recruit activists.

Collective identity can also have an external dimension in mobilization. Beckwith (1995) argues that an actor can use her or his identity to gain "political standing" (i.e., to legitimate participation) in a social movement in which she or he is not directly implicated. So, for example, women involved in coal mining strikes who are not miners can justify participation based on their relations to the miners, such as mother, sister, or wife. The choice of identity (e.g., wife of miner vs. working-class woman) can have implications for future activism.

Identity can also be a goal of collective action (*identity as goal*). Activists may challenge stigmatized identities, seek recognition for new identi-

TABLE 1  
THE THREE ANALYTIC DIMENSIONS OF "IDENTITY"

Dimension	Description
Identity for empowerment ....	Activists must draw on an existing identity or construct a new collective identity in order to create and mobilize a constituency. The particular identity chosen will have implications for future activism.
Identity as goal .....	Activists may challenge stigmatized identities, seek recognition for new identities, or deconstruct restrictive social categories as goals of collective action.
Identity as strategy .....	Identities may be deployed strategically as a form of collective action. <i>Identity deployment</i> is defined as expressing identity such that the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become subject to debate. <i>Identity for critique</i> confronts the values, categories, and practice of the dominant culture. <i>Identity for education</i> challenges the dominant culture's perception of the minority or is used strategically to gain legitimacy by playing on uncontroversial themes.

ties, or deconstruct restrictive social categories. New Left organizations of the 1960s, for example, sought not only concrete policy reform, but thought that the creation of alternative cultural forms could foster structural change. Polletta (1994) asserts that "student-organizers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) saw their task as to mobilize and secure recognition for a new collective identity—poor, 'unqualified' southern blacks—in a way that would transform national and local politics by refashioning criteria of political leadership" (p. 85). Feminists influenced American culture by challenging and altering conventional usage of sexist terms in the English language. Gamson (1995) argues that social movement theory must take seriously the goal of contemporary "queer politics" to deconstruct social categories, including "man," "woman," "gay," and "straight." Without a broader understanding of the goals of collective action and their relationship to the structural location of the actors, social movement theory cannot adequately explain strategy choices made by activists.

In addition to influencing motivations and goals of collective action, "cultural resources also have an external, strategic dimension" (Williams 1995, p. 125). I define *identity deployment* to mean expressing identity such that the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become subject to

debate. What does it mean to “deploy identity” strategically? Taylor and Raeburn (1995) view identity deployment as a way to contest stigmatized social identities for the purposes of institutional change. Yet contesting stigma to change institutions is not the only reason for identity deployment. The goal of identity deployment can be to transform mainstream culture, its categories and values (and perhaps by extension its policies and structures), by providing alternative organizational forms. Identity deployment can also transform participants or simply educate legislators or the public.

Identity deployment can be examined at both the individual and collective level along a continuum from education to critique.<sup>3</sup> Activists either dress and act consistently with mainstream culture or behave in a critical way. *Identity for critique* confronts the values, categories, and practices of the dominant culture. *Identity for education* challenges the dominant culture’s perception of the minority or is used strategically to gain legitimacy by playing on uncontroversial themes.<sup>4</sup> Although the goals associated with either identity strategy can be moderate or radical, identity for education generally limits the scope of conflict by not problematizing the morality or norms of the dominant culture.

Identity deployment should be understood dramaturgically (Goffman 1959) as the collective portrayal of the group’s identity in the political realm, whether that be in city council hearings or at sit-ins in segregated restaurants. The strategic deployment of identity may differ from the group’s (or individuals’) private understanding of that identity. In this research, I examine identity deployment at the collective level.

It is important not to conflate the goals of identity deployment with its form (i.e., critical or educational). Both can be part of a project of cultural challenge or a strategy to achieve policy reform. Whether these strategies are associated with organizational forms that encourage participation and empowerment by privileging the creation of democratic, nonhierarchical organizations, as new social movement theory would suggest, or with narrow interest group strategies designed to achieve policy change, as resource mobilization and political process perspectives would suggest, then becomes an empirical question, not an essentialist assumption based on movement types.

<sup>3</sup> Individual-level identity-for-critique strategies rooted in oppositional cultures might include feminists not wearing bras or shaving their legs to challenge gender-based appearance norms.

<sup>4</sup> Of course justification for political participation can have subversive effects. For example, women in the late 19th century justified their incursions into politics as a natural extension of their role as men’s moral caretakers (e.g., Kradtitor 1981). Political activism then changed views about women’s appropriate roles.

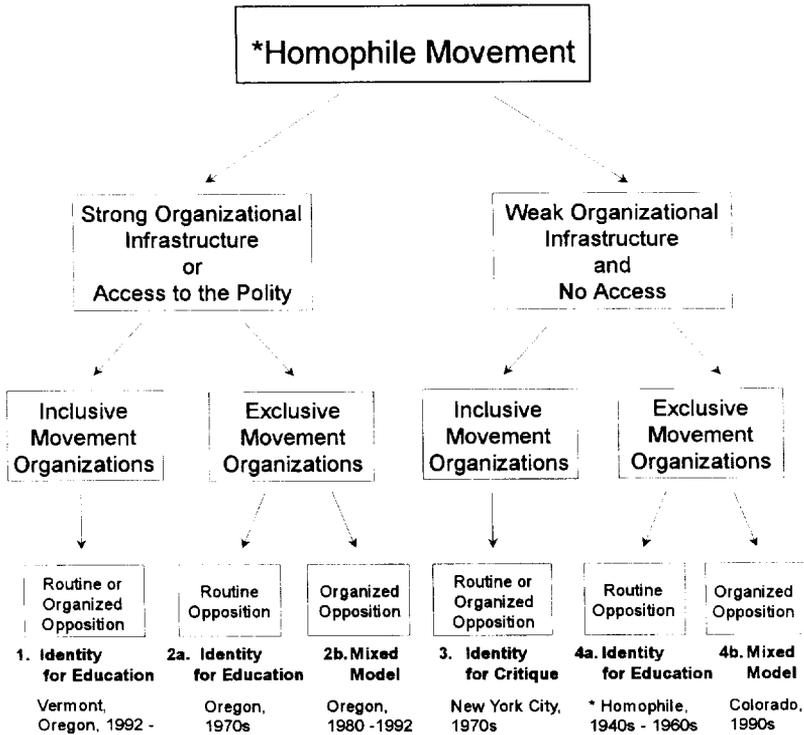
Understanding identity as a tool for mobilization, as a goal, and as a strategy will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of social movements. Instead of asking whether identity plays a role in a given movement, we can ask several questions: What role does identity play in mobilization? To what extent is identity a goal of collective action? Why or under what political conditions are identities that celebrate or suppress differences deployed strategically?

#### GENERAL MODEL

I argue that identity strategies will be determined by the configuration of political access, the structure of social movement organizations, and the type and extent of opposition. In addition to affecting political outcomes (Zald and Ash 1966; Gamson 1990), the characteristics of movement organizations should also influence political strategies. I define *inclusive* movement organizations to be those groups whose strategies, in practice, seek to educate and mobilize a constituency or maximize involvement in political campaigns. *Exclusive* organizations actively discourage popular participation, choosing strategies unlikely to mobilize a movement constituency. Changes in the political context should also influence political strategies (Tilly 1978). I consider that a movement has *access* to the polity if candidates respond to movement inquiries, if elected officials or state agencies support and work toward the movement's goals, or if movement leaders have access to polity members (e.g., through business affiliations, personal contacts, or official positions in political parties). Organized opposition is also an important part of the political context (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Most contemporary American social movements eventually face organized opposition to their goals, and this should influence the types of identities deployed. *Routine opposition* will refer to polity insiders (Tilly 1978); that is, those who by virtue of their institutional position (such as a cardinal of the Catholic Church) have the ear of policy makers. *Opposing movements* will refer to groups outside the polity mobilized around the issues of contention (Bernstein 1995; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

The role of identity in mobilization will differ across movements, but not because of some abstract essentialism of movement types. For example, identity for empowerment may play a smaller role in mobilizing movements sparked by a "moral shock"—such as the antiwar movement, the antinuclear movement, or the animal rights movement—than in mobilizing movements based on a shared characteristic or identity. But once a movement has emerged, I suggest that the same conditions that determine identity deployment should also apply to movements started by moral shocks.

In order to emerge, a social movement requires a base from which to



\* This path represents the pre-mobilization stage of activism.

FIG. 1.—Identity deployment in the lesbian and gay movement

organize and some sort of collective identity to translate individual into group interests. Movements with access to the structure of political bargaining or strong organizational infrastructures that have fostered a shared identity will tend to seek policy change, emphasize sameness rather than difference, and will use identity for education rather than identity for critique (see fig. 1, paths 1, 2a).<sup>5</sup> However, if the movement faces organized opposition from outside the political establishment, and if the movement

<sup>5</sup> Before a movement has emerged publicly, opposition will be routine, because the embryonic movement poses no threat (the apex of fig. 1). Scapegoating would be one exception to this generalization. Movements in this pre-mobilization stage, by definition, lack political access, and if organizational actors exist at all, they are likely to be exclusive, placing little emphasis on mobilization.

is led by exclusive, narrowly focused groups uninterested in movement building, the movement may split, with some groups emphasizing differences and community building, while the exclusive groups continue to emphasize sameness and narrowly focused policy change (a mixed model; see fig. 1, path 2b). In such cases, critical identities may be deployed as much in reaction to movement leadership as to the opposition.

When an emergent movement lacks both political access and an organizational infrastructure or collective identity, then an emphasis on difference will be needed to build solidarity and mobilize a constituency (fig. 1, path 3). Such movements will tend to focus on building community and celebrating difference, as will those sectors of a movement marginalized by exclusive groups encountering nonroutine opposition (fig. 1, path 4b).

Once a movement has been established—with constituency and organizational actors—then movement between the cells in figure 1 may take place as organized opposition emerges or declines, political coalitions shift, and the structures of movement organizations change over time.

After a movement's emergence, the types of identity deployment will be related to the structure of social movement organizations, access to the polity and whether opposition is routine, deriving from polity insiders, or external, arising from organized opposing movements. Changes in short- or medium-term elements of the political context should have a determining effect on forms of collective action such that greater access produces more moderate forms of collective action and identity for education strategies, while closing opportunities will lead to an emphasis on identity for critique. When the polity is relatively open and diverse segments of the activist community are represented in movement organizations or are included in political campaigns, there will be less emphasis on criticizing normative values. Because identity is deployed in the context of concrete interactions, the baseline against which activists define themselves will be influenced by opposing movements. Exclusive social movement organizations, the presence of a strong opposition, and negative interactions with the state will likely result in greater dissension within the community. That dissension will lead to factionalization and will produce moderates who will focus more on education and traditional lobbying tactics and radicals who will focus on criticizing dominant values (a "mixed model"). Radicalization in the movement can stem as much from reaction to movement leaders as from reactions to the political context. In short, identity deployment in the political realm will depend on the structure of and relations among movement organizations, the extent of political access, and the type of opposition. The next section draws on evidence from the lesbian and gay movement to suggest more concretely the causal processes that lead to certain types of identity deployment.

THE LESBIAN AND GAY MOVEMENT

Detailed historical and qualitative research was employed to understand how political strategies were chosen by activists under distinct political conditions. I conducted field research on city and state campaigns for lesbian and gay rights ordinances in New York City, Vermont, and Oregon. The cases were chosen to vary on the independent variables. Through archival research, I examined movement documents such as press releases and position papers, newspaper accounts from both lesbian and gay and mainstream presses, and transcripts from public hearings. Interviews with selected informants were used to supplement the written material. For each case, I traced the development of state-oriented lesbian and gay organizations, including foundational and position papers that delineate goals, strategies, and guiding principles. For illustrative purposes, I also briefly discuss gay and lesbian responses to antilesbian and antigay legislation in Colorado. The opposition was investigated through secondary sources.

When lesbians and gay men deploy their identity strategically, debates may center around whether sexual orientation is immutable, what constitutes "homosexual practices," or whether pedophilia is the same as homosexuality. Lesbian and gay lives become the subject of conflict. Nothing about the lesbian and gay movement dictates the strategic use of identity at the collective level. For example, activists could draw attention to discriminatory employment practices, with a universal appeal to everyone's right to a job based on their skills. That is different than disclosing one's sexual orientation to legislators or neighbors, saying "Here I am, know me."

In the case of the lesbian and gay movement, identity for education challenges negative stereotypes about lesbians and gay men, such as having hundreds of sexual partners a year or struggling with uncontrollable sexual urges (Herman 1994), while identity for critique challenges dominant cultural assumptions about the religious or biological "naturalness" of gender roles and the heterosexual nuclear family. Arguably the greatest success of the women's movement has been to break down the division between public and private through challenging traditional notions of gender (Gitlin 1994). Both identity for critique and identity for education can be part of broader projects seeking cultural change or policy reform.

Although many have looked at the relationship between lesbian and gay culture and individual-level identity strategies (Taylor and Whittier 1992; Whittier 1995), few have examined this phenomena empirically, as a collective, consciously chosen political strategy. The rest of this article explores identity strategies along the continuum from critique to education at the collective level. As Seidman (1993, pp. 135–36) argues, we must

“relate the politics of representation to institutional dynamics” rather than reducing cultural codes to textual practices abstracted from institutional contexts. The lesbian and gay movement has challenged a variety of institutions in American society, but I will restrict my analysis to interactions with the state because, with the onslaught by the Religious Right, the state has become one of the central loci of identity deployment. Future research will have to determine the ways diverse institutional dynamics (e.g., the church or psychiatry) influence the creation and deployment of identities.

#### THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT

A collective identity among lesbians and gay men emerged prior to the strategic recruitment of a constituency by organizational actors, as long-term structural changes brought increasing numbers of gay men and lesbians together in urban settings (D’Emilio 1983). The secretive nature of the early homophile organizations (Licata 1980/81; D’Emilio 1983), however, precluded mass mobilization. The only public meeting places for lesbians and gay men—cruising places and Mafia-run bars (Nestle 1987; Chauncey 1994)—were ill-suited for mobilization. Cherry Grove, Fire Island, a visible lesbian and gay summer community, may have provided a more hospitable avenue for mobilization (Newton 1993) but was not linked to a broader organizational infrastructure.

The predominantly underground homophile movement of the 1940s and 1950s has been well documented (Licata 1980/81; D’Emilio 1983). Groups such as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society had exclusive organizational structures,<sup>6</sup> lacked access to the polity, and faced routine opposition from the state (see fig. 1, path 4a). The goals of the homophile movement varied over the years as some sought assimilation while others thought homosexuality was a distinctive and positive trait that should not be subsumed by mainstream culture. Yet both sides agreed on strategies: homophile activists would educate professionals (in particular medical professionals) about the realities of homosexuality; those professionals would in turn advocate for changes in state policies on behalf of homosexuals.

As the social strictures against homosexuality loosened, the lesbian and gay movement became more public through the 1960s (Weeks 1989). Much of the emergent movement’s activism appeared to be “expressive,” aimed for and at lesbians and gay men. In part, that perception was

<sup>6</sup> The homophile organizations did not publicize their meetings for fear of exposing their members as homosexuals (Marotta 1981; D’Emilio 1983).

strengthened by the connection of many activists in post-Stonewall organizations to the New Left (e.g., RadicaLesbians, the Furies, and the Gay Liberation Front [Teal 1971; Marotta 1981; Cruikshank 1992])<sup>7</sup> who felt that alternative cultural forms would lead to a revolutionary restructuring of society. The visible and outspoken nature of 1960s and 1970s activists accounts for the perception by scholars that the lesbian and gay movement was fundamentally different from other social movements.

But this perception is misguided because it ignores the diversity within the lesbian and gay movement, even around the time of Stonewall. The development of these local movements and the strategies they chose depended on their access to the polity, on their organizational structure, and on the type of opposition they faced. For example, where movement leaders had access to the polity, usually in smaller cities where gay white businessmen had contacts in government (Gay Writers Group 1983) or where earlier movement activities had created political access, as in Washington, D.C. (Johnson 1994–95), expressive action was minimal. In most cases, local movements lacked access to the polity and had to create a constituency. To do so, they had to locate others like themselves. The lack of lesbian and gay institutions, such as churches or bookstores, forced leaders to construct those spaces as well as to launch political campaigns.

When groups lack their own institutions and a political consciousness, they will concentrate on identity for empowerment and community growth. Over time, as institutions and opportunities to act develop, what was once seen as an expressive movement will come to be seen as instrumental as political representation increases and the emphasis on empowerment decreases. Once a movement has been established, forms of collective action will depend on access to decision makers, the extent of opposition, and the degree of inclusiveness of movement organizations.

#### NEW YORK CITY AND OREGON

In 1971, New York City's Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) launched a campaign to add "sexual orientation" to the list of protected categories in the city's human rights ordinance.<sup>8</sup> Although GAA engaged political authori-

<sup>7</sup> "Stonewall" refers to the 1969 riots that took place in New York City when patrons of the gay afterhours club, the Stonewall Inn, fought back during a police raid. The weekend of rioting that ensued sparked national publicity for the movement, and dozens of new gay liberationist organizations formed (Teal 1971; Marotta 1981; Duberman 1993), accelerating the trend toward radicalism that had begun earlier in the 1960s.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to secondary sources, I examined the papers of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, from 1973 to 1993, and the collection of veteran gay activist Bruce Voeller, housed at the Cornell University Human Sexuality Collection.

ties in the public realm, it emphasized identity for critique, seeking to increase publicity and refusing to compromise for the sake of policy change (fig. 1, path 3). Activists borrowed freely from the tactics of other contemporary movements, turning sit-ins into “kiss-ins” at straight bars to protest bans on same-sex displays of affection (*Advocate* 1970a). They held peaceful demonstrations protesting police brutality (Rosen 1980/81) and infiltrated local political clubs to “zap” public officials with questions about police raids on gay bars, entrapment, and support for antidiscrimination policies (Martello 1970b; *Gay Activist* 1972a). Activists consistently refused to dress in accordance with mainstream culture, using their identity to criticize gender roles and heterosexual norms. In short, they used theatrical tactics that increased the scope of the conflict, demanding publicity, regardless of its potentially dilatory effect on achieving policy change. For example, Eleanor Holmes Norton, chair of New York City’s Commission on Human Rights, offered GAA members the option of holding private hearings on the ordinance. GAA refused, declaring that it would only participate in open hearings, although that was less likely to achieve policy change. GAA finally secured public hearings after a demonstration—intended to be peaceful—outside General Welfare Committee chair Saul Sharison’s apartment building turned bloody when Tactical Police Force officers taunted and then beat demonstrators with their clubs. Despite dissension within GAA, drag queens were ultimately allowed to participate in the hearings. City council members would subsequently exploit the confusion between transvestism and homosexuality to defeat the ordinance (Marotta 1981).

The fight for antidiscrimination legislation in Oregon contrasted sharply with the battle in New York City. Activists in Portland and Eugene in the 1970s—primarily gay white men—had easy access to the polity because of their status as business persons. The Portland Town Council (PTC), an informal coalition of gay-oriented businesses and organizations, was founded in 1970. Due largely to the lack of opposition and the semi-insider status of its members, the PTC won a series of incremental victories culminating in Portland’s passage of a law to prohibit discrimination against city employees on the basis of sexual orientation (*Gay Blade* 1975; PTC 1976). In Eugene, activists also capitalized on their insider status by choosing strategies that discouraged mass participation, including secret meetings with council members. In 1977, Eugene passed a lesbian and gay rights ordinance (Gay Writers Group 1983).

The PTC also spearheaded efforts to add sexual orientation to the state’s human rights statute. Despite agonizingly narrow defeats of state-wide antidiscrimination bills (by one vote in 1975), activists continued to work with state officials. In 1976, at the PTC’s request, Oregon Governor Straub created the Ad Hoc Task Force on Sexual Preference to conduct

factual research and to make policy recommendations to the Oregon legislature. The PTC served as an advisory board, recommended areas for research, and facilitated interactions between lesbian and gay communities and the task force (PTC 1976; Coleman 1977).

The strategies employed in New York City and Oregon contrasted sharply. When given the choice, New York City activists consistently privileged strategies that challenged dominant cultural values over those that would maximize the likelihood of policy success. By refusing to hold private hearings with the Human Rights Commission, activists increased the scope of conflict. Rather than allaying the fears of legislators and the public by reassuring them of the incremental nature of the policy reform, activists exacerbated those fears by having transvestites testify at public hearings. In Oregon, activists were content to hold secret meetings with lawmakers in order to gain legal change.

What accounts for these diverse approaches to political change? The early stage of New York City's lesbian and gay liberation movement appears to be consistent with a new social movement interpretation. At the time, movement theorists stated explicitly that the battle was over ending oppressive gender roles and the restrictive categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality that inhibited everyone's true bisexual nature (Wittman 1972; Altman 1993; Seidman 1993). Thus activists chose strategies that highlighted differences from the straight majority, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the liberation potential. Uncompromising strategies that reproduced the identity on which the movement was based and created participatory organizations took priority over goals of achieving policy reform. Creating a sense that gay was good and should be expressed publicly, with pride, would not come through secretive meetings with city officials or concealing drag queens.

In Oregon, on the other hand, little emphasis was placed on creating democratic organizations. The goals in Eugene, Portland, and at the state level were to obtain narrow legal protections. Rather than focus on mobilization, the PTC hired a lobbyist to advocate for the new antidiscrimination legislation (PTC 1976). The comparison of Oregon to New York City suggests that newly emerging social movements will only emphasize differences through expressive tactics to the extent that they lack access to the polity and a strong organizational infrastructure.

Political access and differing resources explain in part the different orientations of the Oregon and New York City activists to cultural and legal change. In New York City, activists faced a closed polity. New York State retained an antisodomy statute, which effectively criminalized the status of being lesbian or gay (Copelon 1990; Cain 1993) and was used to justify police entrapment and bar raids. The New York City police routinely used violence to quell peaceful lesbian and gay demonstrations and were

unresponsive to lesbians and gay men who were the victims of violence (*Advocate* 1970b, 1970c; *Gay Activist* 1972b).

Lesbians and gay men needed to become a political minority. To do so, they had to increase visibility at the expense of losing short-term policy battles. Influenced as well by other contemporary movements (e.g., the Civil Rights, New Left, and feminist movements) activists had little to lose and much to gain by radical political action. Although deploying identity for critique may have had long-term political benefits, many saw the goal of a political battle in terms of empowering the lesbian and gay communities. In short, the political battle was an opportunity to create a cultural shift in sensibilities among lesbians and gay men (Marotta 1981).

Despite the importance of the political context, it was in interactions with the state that identities were formed and deployed. Although activists' analysis of the relationship between political and cultural change (Marotta 1981)—either that political campaigns served the purpose of empowering activists or that political reforms would enable cultural change—produced and reinforced critical identities, negative interactions with the state entrenched an oppositional dynamic. The New York City Council's initial refusal to hold public hearings, in addition to the police repression (Rosen 1980/81) that included the attack on demonstrators outside Sharison's building, cemented the antagonistic relationship between activists and the state. Because organizations were inclusive and the lesbian and gay social movement sector was relatively undifferentiated, a cultural critique could only be expressed in the political realm. There was nothing about the movement per se that dictated the deployment of critical identities. Activists' interpretations of the relationship between culture and politics and the types of identities deployed were contingent on interactions with the state.

A second part of the formation of a critical identity was the absence of an organized opposition. Because opposition was routine, lesbians and gay men had only to define themselves against mainstream cultural views in order to criticize the dominant culture. Identities were constructed through interactions with the state, in the absence of organized third parties. In short, inclusive movement organizations, lack of access to the polity, negative interactions with the state, and routine opposition produced critical identities.

Activists in Oregon had greater resources than did activists in New York City, due in part to class and gender differences. The unique access to government officials facilitated by business connections enabled quick passage of local legislation and almost won passage of statewide legislation. Unlike GAA, the PTC had had mostly positive relations with state authorities in Portland, Eugene, and the state capitol. So after narrow losses in the state legislature, rather than respond in a critical way through

dramatic demonstrations, the PTC approached Governor Robert Straub for redress (PTC 1976). Had Governor Straub not been responsive to lesbian and gay demands, or, similarly, had the Eugene City Council initially rebuffed the gay activists, critical identities would have been deployed, as much in reaction to the elite gay leadership as to the state (which is what happened in Oregon more than a decade later).

Critical identities, however, were not deployed in Eugene, and success came easily as a result of political access and the low-key tactics of the gay activists. The elitist attitude and nonparticipatory stance of the gay leadership, however, created antagonisms between different lesbian and gay communities. But because interactions with the state had been positive, as shown by the bill's relatively quick passage, these tensions lay dormant. When newly organized religious right groups placed a referendum to repeal Eugene's lesbian and gay rights ordinance on the ballot, the dissension within the lesbian and gay communities made it difficult for them to present a united front, and the antilesbian and antigay referendum ultimately passed (Gay Writers' Group 1983).

By the end of the 1970s, the lesbian and gay movement had undergone profound internal change.<sup>9</sup> Activists no longer placed the same emphasis on challenging gender roles and the construction of heterosexuality in state-oriented lesbian and gay rights campaigns. As many have observed, an ethnic- or interest-group model that sought achievement of rights replaced the liberation model that sought freedom from constraining gender roles and sexual categories (Altman 1982; Paul 1982; Escoffier 1985; Epstein 1987; Seidman 1993; Gamson 1995). Institutionalized, professionally led organizations often supplanted the grassroots groups of the early 1970s in leading campaigns directed at the state. The gay liberation fronts and the gay activists' alliances had all but disappeared. In addition to internal changes within the lesbian and gay movement, by the end of the 1970s the religious right emerged and worked to oppose all of the changes sought by lesbian and gay activists (Adam 1987).

The next section explains why these changes within the lesbian and gay movement occurred and what accounts for the continued variation in forms of collective action across the United States. Access to political decision makers produced identity for education, as in Vermont (fig. 1, path 1). However, where exclusive groups faced organized opposition, as in

<sup>9</sup> I am referring here to the lesbian and gay movement that sought policy change from the state. Much lesbian and gay activism was not oriented toward the state. For example, during the 1970s, lesbian feminists split off from the feminist and gay movements to form separatist institutions and communities (Cruikshank 1992). The political nature of the radical feminist community has been described by others (Taylor and Whittier 1992). Here I refer only to those lesbian or gay organizations that targeted the state.

Colorado, a mixed model of identity deployment was produced as marginalized groups within the lesbian and gay movement reacted to the lesbian and gay leadership and to the opposition (path 4b). In Oregon, exclusive leadership and intense opposition would later produce a mixed model (path 2b). But as activists realized that sustaining a prolonged campaign against the religious opposition required cooperation among diverse lesbian and gay communities, organizations became more inclusive and an educational model prevailed (path 1).

## VERMONT

Vermont's lesbian and gay community began organizing more than a decade after the Stonewall riots.<sup>10</sup> Although Vermont had a strong lesbian-feminist community with developed organizational and personal networks, it had not targeted the state about specifically lesbian or gay issues. Motivated by the religious right's attack on lesbian and gay rights, activists decided to work for passage of a statewide bill that would protect lesbians and gay men from discrimination.

Activists quickly obtained official recognition from the governor's office of community-appointed male and female liaisons to the lesbian and gay communities. The liaisons fostered contact with elected officials as well as with the attorney general's office and the Vermont Human Rights Commission. Close collaboration with both offices resulted in the inclusion of protection based on sexual orientation in the state's Hate Crimes Bill

<sup>10</sup> Data for this section come from personal interviews with both lesbian and gay activists and state officials as well as an analysis of *Out in the Mountains* (monthly issues, 1986–92), Vermont's only lesbian and gay newspaper. Interviewees included Keith E. Goslant, liaison to the Vermont governor's office from the lesbian and gay community and member of the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (hereafter Vermont Coalition) (personal interview, February 25, 1995); Linda Hollingdale, activist with the Vermont Coalition (personal interview, February 22, 1995); Mary Hurlie, cochair of the Vermont Coalition (personal interview, February 23, 1995); Bill Lippert, activist, and openly gay member of the Vermont State Legislature (personal interview, February 22, 1995); Peggy A. Luhrs, organizer of Vermont's first lesbian and gay pride march, board member of the Vermont Coalition, and director of the Burlington Women's Council (personal interview, February 25, 1995); Paul Olsen, activist; M. Holly Perdue, liaison to the Vermont governor's office from the lesbian and gay community and member of the Vermont Coalition (personal interview, February 24, 1995); Howard Russell, organizer of Vermont's first lesbian and gay pride march and of Vermonters for Lesbian and Gay Rights, first openly gay candidate for the Vermont State Senate, member Vermont Coalition (personal interview, February 23, 1995); Susan Sussman, director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission (personal interview, February 24, 1995). It should be noted that lesbian publications existed prior to the publication of *Out in the Mountains*, but the lesbian feminist movement did not target the state about specifically lesbian and/or gay issues (Luhrs, personal communication), so those publications are excluded from this analysis.

(Sussman, see n. 10 above). The Vermont legislature also passed important legislation sought by the AIDS communities (Goslant 1991).

Unlike New York City activists of the early 1970s, the Vermont activists whom I interviewed did not see policy campaigns as a vehicle for staging a cultural critique. In fact, many claimed not to see the issue of gay rights as a cultural battle at all, but as simply a matter of social justice. They took a *laissez-faire* approach to organizing, and they encouraged participation. They made no attempts to constrain testimony in the public hearings on the lesbian and gay rights bill. Ironically, lesbians and gay men showed up for the hearings conservatively dressed, in clothes many had probably not worn since their first job interviews, choosing in this way not to challenge dominant gender norms. One of the liaisons recounted that she would dress in her "Republican drag" when attending hearings at the statehouse (Perdue, see n. 10).

In the final push for the lesbian and gay rights bill, Vermont activists chose to "put a face on lesbian and gay rights," by fostering personal contact between constituents and their legislators. In addition to telephone campaigns, they activated friendship, organizational, and professional networks to arrange meetings between legislators and their gay and lesbian constituents and other supporters of the bill—what they called "coffee klatches" (Hurlie, see n. 10 above). During these meetings, traditional educational work and identity for education activities took place. Legislators were educated about the scope of the bill, emphasizing that the bill did not endorse a lesbian and gay "lifestyle" but was simply a question of justice. Activists used the meetings to dispel the myth that passing a nondiscrimination law would lead to affirmative action for "queers" (Hurlie, see n. 10) or to certain defeat for legislators who supported the bill. Although fact sheets dispelling myths about, for example, gay men as child molesters, were distributed to each state senator and representative, the meetings capitalized on personal relations (rather than social science studies) to dispel myths about homosexuality (Olsen, see n. 10). By fostering personal contact, activists themselves became the contested terrain. Activists initially targeted the swing votes on the judiciary committee so that the bill could reach the floor, successfully swaying several votes; they then targeted other key legislators. Politicizing the personal also took place among legislators as one closeted gay legislator came out to his colleagues (Hurlie, see n. 10).<sup>11</sup>

New social movement approaches are clearly unable to explain the conservative tactics, the narrow focus on policy reform, and the lack of attention to creating a lesbian and gay constituency in Vermont. The activists

<sup>11</sup> At the time of my interviews, this legislator had still refused to come out publicly (Hurlie, see n. 10 above).

I interviewed stated that if a lesbian and gay movement came out of the gay rights campaign, that would be fine, but their goal was to pass the bill. Part of the problem with new social movement theory is its failure to specify the conditions under which collective action is aimed either at strengthening communities and organizations or at changing perceptions of the public and institutional authorities. Activists in Vermont deployed identity for education, but did not seek cultural change through influencing public opinion or creating democratic organizations. In fact, the creation of an ongoing organization was an unintended consequence of the grassroots style of organizing used by activists. The positive interactions with the state and the feeling that victory was possible validated activists' choice of strategies.

The structure of the lesbian and gay organizations running the political campaigns in New York City in the 1970s and in Vermont in the 1980s were similar, yet the two groups adopted vastly different strategies. While New York City activists deployed identity for critique, Vermont activists used identity for education. No formal organizational structure existed in Vermont until after the passage of the statewide lesbian and gay rights bill. Attempts to create a formal structure in Vermont resulted in the demise of the first lesbian and gay political organization, later to be replaced by the Vermont Coalition (see Russell, no. 10 above). In fact New York City's groups may have been somewhat more hierarchically structured, with the Gay Activists Alliance following *Robert's Rules of Order* (Martello 1970a). During the Vermont lesbian and gay rights campaign, there were no official titles (with the exception of the two community-appointed liaisons) or paid positions in the Vermont Coalition. Everyone was encouraged to attend organizational meetings and public hearings and to participate in community events such as the annual pride marches. For example, Holly Perdue (see n. 10), one of the liaisons, recounts that members of the male leather community would be encouraged to serve donuts and coffee at a gay pride rally in an effort to maintain diversity within the movement.

Lesbian and gay activists were able to foster cooperative relationships with polity members in part because of long-term shifts in Vermont politics. Considered a one-party Republican state since the 1950s (Jacob and Vine 1965), by the early 1980s Vermont had a liberal Democratic governor (Madeline Kunin) and a Democratic majority in both houses. Burlington, one of the state's largest cities, elected self-proclaimed socialist Bernie Sanders mayor.

The insider status of Terje Anderson, an openly gay state and national Democratic Party activist and movement leader, also facilitated access to the polity. Because of his party work, Anderson had access to Governor Kunin who, in 1985, largely at Anderson's request, officially recognized

the two liaisons (Hurlie, see n. 10). In 1986, Anderson became chair of the platform committee of the state Democratic Party. Partly as a result of Anderson's efforts, support for lesbian and gay rights was included in the official platform of Vermont's Democratic Party (*Out in the Mountains* 1986). But unlike the early gay rights campaigns of Oregon, where gay men with access to the polity excluded community participation (Gay Writers' Group 1983), Vermont activists encouraged participation in the political process. Furthermore, several state agencies had a tradition of activism, which created more political leverage (Sussman, see n. 10).

A lack of organized opposition also influenced the types of identities deployed. All of the activists I interviewed felt that the emotional outbursts and the lack of decorum characteristic of the mostly church-based religious opposition helped the case for lesbians and gay men. Once again, identities are deployed in the context of real-life interactions in specific social settings. The presence of a religious opposition (no formal, conservative social movement organizations were in evidence) that relied on emotional and religious appeals gave lesbian and gay activists a visible opponent against whom to define themselves. Given that context, it makes sense that activists, of their own accord, would distinguish themselves from the opposition through conservative appearance and professional demeanor.

The interactions between activists and members of the polity and among groups within the activist community produced strategies that emphasized similarities to the straight public and the incremental nature of policy reform. The inclusive nature of the campaign, access to the polity, and the presence of a church-based opposition effectively severed the cultural challenge from the political battle over rights. The next section looks at movements that faced organized opposition.

## OREGON

Eugene, Oregon, was among the first cities whose antidiscrimination statute was targeted for repeal. After the repeal, the lesbian and gay community maintained good relations with the state Democratic Party (*Journal* 1977), despite repeated defeats of the statewide antidiscrimination bill. Activists also worked to foster relations with the state's Republican Party. In October 1987, following another defeat of Oregon's statewide lesbian and gay rights bill, Oregon governor Neil Goldschmidt issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation by state agencies. The order was payback for lesbian and gay support during his election campaign (Towslee 1987). During that same year, the conservative Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) was founded. Early the following

year, OCA announced that it would begin a drive to overturn the governor's executive order through a ballot initiative (Towslee 1988*b*). By November, OCA had achieved its first major victory as Measure 8 was passed and the executive order was repealed (Towslee 1988*a*).

Bolstered by its success, OCA went on the offensive, seeking to pass a statewide initiative that would condemn homosexuality, nullify existing local ordinances, and prohibit the enactment of future legislation to provide protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 1992 and 1994, OCA gathered enough signatures to place antilesbian and antigay initiatives (Measure 9 and Measure 13, respectively) on the state ballot. OCA also campaigned for a series of local antilesbian and antigay measures, passing such laws in 20 localities by March 1994 (*Lesbian/Gay Law Notes* 1994*a*).

As the OCA campaigns gained momentum, reported incidents of antilesbian and antigay hate crimes skyrocketed (Egan 1992*a*). Although neither side was immune from the violence—churches on both sides of the debate were vandalized and OCA leaders received verbal threats (Egan 1992*b*)—lesbians and gay men experienced the bulk of actual physical assaults (Bull and Gallagher 1996).<sup>12</sup>

What strategies were available to Oregon's lesbians and gay men in the face of such virulent opposition? Activists could have responded to the opposition in a number of ways. They could have used identity for critique to challenge the values and practices of the sex-phobic society by portraying their own sexuality as liberated, free from the debilitating impact of strict gender roles. Additionally, they could have challenged the idea that sexuality is static, fixed throughout a person's entire lifetime, thus decentering heterosexuality as a norm from which homosexuals deviate.

Alternatively, activists could have used identity for education to show that they were just like everyone else. In Vermont, this had taken the form of coming out to legislators, by constituents and by other legislators, as a way to counter myths that homosexuals were sex-obsessed creatures who preyed on innocent children.

Identity strategies were not the only tactics available to lesbian and gay activists in Oregon. Strategies that did not make lesbians and gay men the contested terrain could have been used. Activists could have formed coalitions with ethnic and racial minority groups. They could have focused attention on abstract principles of discrimination and found evidence to support their claims.

The "No on 9" campaign, like Oregonians for Fairness, the group that

<sup>12</sup> Articles appearing between 1988 and 1995, found in an extensive search on Nexis, support this conclusion.

(unsuccessfully) fought the repeal of Governor Goldschmidt's executive order in 1988 (UPI 1988a), refused to refute the OCA charges point by point (Johnston 1994). Both embarked on slick media campaigns with commercials that never mentioned the words "gay," "lesbian," or "homosexual" (e.g., Richardson 1992). Activists feared making the campaign a referendum on homosexuality. They were afraid that, given a choice, the population might genuinely prefer to discriminate against a minority many despised. There was also concern that addressing OCA's allegations would lend credence to the charges (Johnston 1994).

No on 9's philosophy was to wage and to win a limited campaign. Its goal was not to disrupt dominant notions about homosexuals or to challenge the sex/gender system (Johnston 1994). Nor was its goal to create a long-term organizational infrastructure that could continue to fight OCA initiatives or advocate proactively for legislation. According to Holly Pruett and Julie Davis (1995, p. 7),<sup>13</sup> "The unofficial slogans of CHFO [Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, which became No on 9] could have been 'campaigns are about getting 50% + 1 on election day—nothing else' and 'a campaign is not a movement.'"

The No on 9 leadership wanted to avoid any type of cultural challenge. Those who deviated most from conservative, heterosexual appearances—that is, those who seemed to fit lesbian and gay stereotypes as "bull dykes" or effeminate men and grassroots activists who wanted to disrupt dominant notions of sexuality—were increasingly distanced from the campaign. According to Bull and Gallagher (1996, p. 53), for example, Metropolitan Community Church pastor Gary Wilson "was asked to pass the word to direct action groups like Queer Nation to keep their activities low-key during the campaign so as not to cause any embarrassment." Fissures in the lesbian and gay communities became more pronounced as the campaign drew on. According to movement leader Julie Davis, Kathleen Saadat, an African-American woman snubbed by the No on 9 leadership, formed the group African-Americans for Human Rights to pursue her own style of organizing (personal communication 1996).

Unlike the New York City activists who embraced the unconventional or the Vermont activists who let each individual present their own case, the No on 9 activists dodged the issue of morality, preferring to focus on abstract principles of discrimination (Johnston 1994). The direct action groups reacted as much to the elitist efforts of the No on 9 leadership as to the opposition. These grassroots, direct action organizations employed more radical tactics, increasing publicity through public demonstrations and civil disobedience (Bull and Gallagher 1996). Spurred by the exclusive

<sup>13</sup> Davis and Pruett were the campaign managers in the 1994 "No on 13" campaign.

leadership and (lack of) response to the organized opposition, the ideological schism embodied in separate organizations became about the relationship between political campaigns and cultural change. The grassroots groups saw the bill as an opportunity to strengthen the lesbian and gay communities and to combat homophobic stereotypes, whereas No on 9 saw the bill as a crucial political goal.

By avoiding identity strategies, specifically by avoiding a defense of homosexuality, Oregon activists exacerbated existing tensions in the lesbian and gay communities. By 1992, the lesbian and gay movement was split, with one faction focusing on abstract principles of discrimination, underscoring sameness rather than difference (No on 9), while another side became more militant and deployed identity for critique (ACT UP, Queer Nation, Bigot Busters; see Bull and Gallagher 1996). Many lesbians and gay men, including Johnston (1994), resented the fact that homosexuality, itself was avoided by the No on 9 leadership. Avoiding identity strategies necessarily entails a focus on similarities to the majority, and the Oregon campaign was no exception. Had educational strategies been combined with inclusive movement strategies, as in Vermont, the movement would have been strengthened. But by focusing only on winning the immediate campaign, other issues, such as combating negative stereotypes, building a movement, and empowering communities were neglected so the community was divided.

What explains the mixed model of identity deployment that we see in Oregon in the late 1980s and early 1990s? New social movement perspectives help explain the tactics of the radical organizations involved in the rights campaign. The frustration within the lesbian and gay communities over No on 9's failure to dispel myths about homosexuality, and the lack of democratic participation within both the organization and the political campaign, fit with the view that new social movements are about cultural production. However, they are unhelpful in explaining No on 9's strategies.

Activists in Oregon, as in Vermont, brought political experience and professional skills to the rights campaign, yet the structure of the organizations in the two states differed. Although neither stressed public education or community empowerment as a goal, Vermont activists relied on interpersonal networks and grassroots participation, whereas No on 9 limited participation. Unlike the exclusive organizations in Oregon in the 1970s, Oregon activists in the 1980s and early 1990s faced an organized opposition, a circumstance that fostered dissension within the community and led to the deployment of both educational and critical identities (a mixed model, see fig. 1, path 2b).

Political coalitions partly explain No on 9's avoidance of identity strategies and emphasis on sameness in pursuit of instrumental gains, despite

the potentially alienating effect on lesbian and gay communities. Those who opposed Measure 9 read like a *Who's Who* of political notables. Current and past Democratic governors as well as Republican gubernatorial hopefuls opposed OCA's measures (UPI 1987, 1988*b*; Raric 1990, 1991). OCA leader Lon Mabon's hard line on an array of social issues, and the hatred his organization seemed to promote, led to a split in the Oregon Republican Party, so that in the end the party stood firmly against the OCA's antilesbian and antigay rights initiatives.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Oregon's entire congressional delegation, including Republican Senators Hatfield and Packwood opposed Measure 9 (Richardson 1992). Community support for lesbian and gay activists also came from newspapers and civil libertarian and religious organizations, including the Oregon Catholic Conference (Baker 1992; *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* 1992; Quindlen 1992).

Measure 9's defeat was a Pyrrhic victory for Oregon's lesbian and gay movement. It became immediately clear that the enemy was not going anywhere. After their loss, the indefatigable OCA members dusted themselves off, got out their clipboards, and began gathering signatures to place Measure 13, a new antilesbian and antigay statewide initiative, on the 1994 ballot. To consolidate its local victories OCA placed numerous antilesbian and antigay charter initiatives on city ballots across Oregon (*Lesbian/Gay Law Notes* 1994*a*, 1994*b*). Lesbian and gay activists needed to recover from the internecine fighting that had worsened schisms within the movement.

In direct response to the exclusive strategies of the No on 9 campaign, which left the lesbian and gay communities badly divided, the "No on 13" leadership sought to build an inclusive campaign that would embark on long-term educational projects and was designed to foster organizations that would last beyond election day (Pruett and Davis 1995) (Path 2*b* to Path 1). Another group launched a "Speak Out" campaign. In this, quintessential identity for education strategy, 60 people wrote to every radio station, TV network, and chamber of commerce in Oregon, to say that they would present their side of the story. They called to follow up, sent letters to the editors of local newspapers, and spoke at Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, and other civic, business, and community groups.

In neighboring Colorado, similar splits handicapped the campaign to defeat Amendment 2, that state's antilesbian and antigay initiative. The main difference between Colorado and Oregon was the extent of state

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that after the 1992 defeat of Measure 9, activists from OCA began a concerted effort to take control of the Oregon Republican Party. At one point the party's leader threatened to create a second Republican Party, in response to the covert takeover mounted by OCA members (Feeny 1993).

support. Whereas in Oregon the political establishment lined up firmly against the OCA measures, important members of Colorado's Republican Party and key state agencies supported Amendment 2. The Catholic Church remained silent, which was probably construed as tacit endorsement of the measure (Bull and Gallagher 1996, p. 118). Unlike in Oregon where both Measure 9 and Measure 13 were defeated, Amendment 2 passed. Regardless of political access, exclusive movement leadership in the face of organized opposition in both Oregon and Colorado created a mixed model of identity deployment, as diverse segments of the activist communities reacted to both the opposing movement and the lesbian and gay leadership.

### IMPLICATIONS

This approach to understanding the strategic deployment of identity has potential applications to other movements based on a shared characteristic. For example, the Southern Civil Rights movement that emerged in the 1950s followed path 1 as shown in figure 2. The complex organizational infrastructure of the South, which included black colleges, black churches, and even beauty parlors, provided a locus from which to organize (Morris 1984). Thus when federal policies began to change, leaders were able to mobilize from an existing base (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984). Emergent, inclusive civil rights organizations underscored sameness rather than difference and sought concrete policy goals.

Over time, the focus on identity for education often gave way to identity for critique as the black power movement gained momentum (fig. 2, path 3). According to Robert Scheer (1970, p. 202), black power, or "*black revolution* [is] the statement of an alternative system of values, the move to acquire power to assert those values, and the express willingness to respond with revolutionary violence to the violence inherent in established power." By fostering an identity based on differences from the majority, black nationalism was a way to challenge dominant cultural values, to build communities, and to create revolutionary change. Leaders hoped that deploying critical identities based on perceived cultural differences would be a crucial step toward economic independence and political power.

I suggest that local variations in political access and organizational infrastructures, as well as the degree of exclusivity of African-American leadership would also account, in part, for the relative stress placed on deploying critical or educational identities. In short, local conditions (political access and the type of opposition) as well as the relationships among African-American political organizations should help explain the vicissitudes

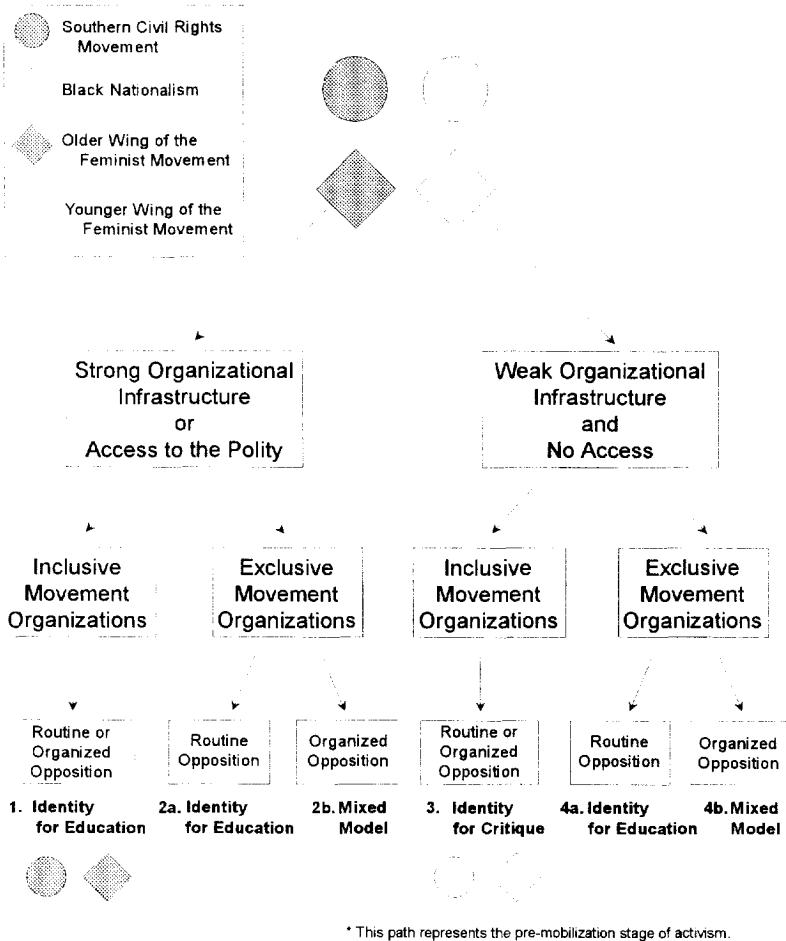


FIG. 2.—General model of identity deployment

tudes in the deployment of radical racial identities on the one hand and educational identities on the other.

When the feminist movement began to emerge in the 1960s, two activist factions were identified. Older professional women appointed to state governmental commissions on the status of women created formal organizations and began to lobby (Evans 1979; Freeman 1984). What came to be known as the liberal wing of feminism (Eisenstein 1983) stressed similarities to the majority, deployed identity for education (i.e., that there were

no socially significant differences between men and women), and focused attention on gaining formal policy reforms (fig. 2, path 1; see Evans 1979; Freeman 1984). Because of their political access, older feminists stressed similarities to men.

The other wing of the emergent feminist movement was dominated by college-age women. Lacking the political access of the older wing, and of course influenced by the New Left, these women stressed identity for critique and their activism followed a dramatically different path from that of the older wing (fig. 2, path 3; see also Evans 1979). The younger wing, which eventually became identified with radical feminism, drew attention to "women's values" deriving from motherhood (Eisenstein 1983) as a positive and distinct characteristic that set women apart from men in socially meaningful ways. Rather than devaluing these traits, critical female identities were deployed to criticize problematic manifestations of male dominance (such as violence [Brownmiller 1975] and nuclear arms [Caldicott 1986]).

Reforming policy and challenging culture was a goal of both strategies. Suppressing differences to denaturalize categories such as "family" challenged the cultural underpinnings of existing policies based on an allegedly natural, gender-based public/private distinction. Stressing differences was also a part of a broader project of normative challenge.<sup>15</sup> Over time, the relative emphasis on stressing similarities or differences changed as local conditions varied.

This brief overview of the feminist and Civil Rights movements broadly suggests how the differing structural locations of the actors, the extent of political access, and the strength of the organizational base from which these movements could mobilize influenced the types of identities deployed. This cursory overview of the movements cannot (and is not meant to) capture their complexity, but only to suggest the importance of understanding identity deployment and *why* certain movements *appear to be* internally or externally directed, and why they seem to seek "instrumental" or "identity" goals.

<sup>15</sup> Even movements not based on a shared characteristic—particularly those mobilized around a moral shock—must decide whether or not to deploy identities strategically. For example, animal rights activists criticize the instrumental rationality of science that privileges human life over animal life to justify animal research. Animal rights activists often deploy critical female identities as moral caretakers to underscore the inhumanity of scientific experiments on animals. At other times, animal rights activists criticize animal experimentation on "rational" scientific grounds as redundant, wasteful, and unnecessary research. In turn, scientists deploy identities by bringing forth pictures of adorable children whose lives were saved as a result of animal research (Jasper and Nelkin 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1993). In short, scientists combat identity with identity to refute the cultural critique of instrumental rationality.

CONCLUSION

Essentialist characterizations of social movements as either cultural and expressive or instrumental and political miss the reality that goals and strategies, including identity for education or critique, are related to concrete institutional dynamics and to the structural location of the actors. Collective celebration or suppression of differences in political campaigns is the result of political access, movement interactions with opposing movements and with the state, as well as of interactions among groups within activist communities. Activists' interpretation of the relationship between culture and politics will depend on whom they are being defined against, on prior successes and failures, and on their interactions with polity members.

In New York City during the 1970s, grassroots organizations that emphasized cultural goals faced a closed and hostile polity. Opposition was routine, leaving activists to define their identities in response to state authorities. Negative interactions with the state and the lack of political access led to the deployment of ever more critical identities. By contrast, in Oregon in the 1970s, gay men with insider status by virtue of their race, gender, and class had access to the polity, and local antidiscrimination legislation passed.

In Vermont, democratic movement organizations with easy political access deployed identity for education. The presence of a church-based foe, but lack of organized opposing movements, left activists to construct identities in opposition to the emotional and unprofessional religious opposition. In Oregon in the 1980s, exclusive leadership faced with hostile opposition created dissension among lesbian and gay communities, leading to a mixed model of identity deployment. Responding to the factionalism, new leadership emerged to pursue an inclusive educational strategy. Colorado's lesbian and gay movement also split as a result of infighting, lack of political access, and the exclusive lesbian and gay leadership. Unlike Oregon, however, Amendment 2's passage left the future of Colorado's lesbians and gay men up to the courts.

The tension between political and cultural goals will always be an issue for social movements, not just for the lesbian and gay movement. For example, battles rage over the wisdom of pursuing cultural as opposed to structural and economic change to end poverty among African-Americans in inner cities (West 1993). The interactional framework developed in this paper can be used to explain these tensions.

By understanding the role of identity in social movements, we can move beyond narrow conceptualizations of movements as entities with static goals and strategies in order to understand the relationship between struc-

tural location and cultural and political change. Movements employ innovative direct action tactics at various points throughout their life cycle, not just when they are emerging. Such action can be internally or externally directed, depending on the type of movement organizations, level of political access, and the extent of opposition. Instead of asking what is "new" about "new social movements," we should focus on explaining the structural relationship between identity and mobilization, when identity is a goal of collective action, and under what political conditions activists either deploy educational or critical identities or avoid identity strategies altogether.

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