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Toward Queer Climate Justice

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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in Political Science

by

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I knew I wanted to get a Ph.D. because I've always loved listening & engaging with people's stories. Whether I walk alongside folks as they garden, tend the cemetery, or go grocery shopping, I am honored to share space with them. But wherever or whatever we're doing to be in community, I consider mirroring and reflecting the joys, sorrows, and everything in-between a crucial part of life, so I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to make being with people part of my professional life. Many people, organizations, and institutions helped me get to this point, so I dedicate this section to you.

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Feng, J. (2018, November). The Rhizomatic Project: Eco-Queer Activism in Imagining a Healthier Planet for All. Envisioning LGBTQIA+ Wellbeing Across Disciplines, Santa Barbara, CA, United States.

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ABSTRACT

Toward Queer Climate Justice

by

Jeff L Feng

Addressing the raging climate crisis requires a just transition to a clean energy world; addressing the attacks on trans people requires a transition to a world committed to gender self-determination. These crises rage on, under the presumption that their respective movements do not have anything to contribute to the other. But in Washington D.C., queer climate justice dance parties and shutdowns of the fossil-fuel-supporting Wells Fargo float at Pride suggest otherwise. After the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016, queer and trans staffers at climate organization 350.org wrote that if activists' vision of climate justice did not include "justice on all fronts," including queer liberation, that vision was not climate justice. How do queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement?

I use a qualitative multi-method approach that draws upon semi-structured interviews and content analysis of secondary sources. I interviewed activists primarily based in Washington D.C. and New York City who worked at the nexus of climate and queer politics (22

interviews) as well as staffers affiliated with four national-level organizations—the Sierra Club, 350.org, the National LGBTQ Task Force, and the National Center for Transgender Equality (17 interviews). I also conducted qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles, magazine articles, blog posts, op-eds, publicly available interviews, emails, and Tweets & Facebook events. By triangulating among these data sources, I tell a more nuanced story than each source could reveal on its own.

Existing queer and trans studies research analyze how LGBTQ institutions reinforce injustice, and yet, this same attention has not extended to *environmental and climate* injustice. By contrast, I examine the extent to which queer & trans climate activists contest and reinforce climate injustice. I argue that queer and trans activists and organizers queer the climate justice movement by substantively bridging queer & trans and climate justice strategy and tactics. Relying upon the content analysis, however, I find that two divergent frames are emerging. First, an LGBTQ climate change frame reinforces gender, racial, and class injustice. Second, the queer climate justice frame advances an intersectional framing linking queer liberation to climate justice, in addition to abolition and anti-imperialism.

Zooming into the New York City People's Climate March in 2014, I argue that intersectional climate justice narratives can exclude queer & trans people. Traveling next to Washington D.C. in 2017, I argue that the queer (of color) climate justice activists tell an intersectional story that disrupts green and rainbow capitalism. Finally, national

organizations lingered on symbolic actions connecting queer & climate movements because of a perceived lack of evidence to support the distributional paradigm—that LGBTQ people must be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis to warrant political resources—and unclear sense of how to substantively plan campaigns at the intersections of queer liberation and climate justice. More subtly, the confluence of neoliberal LGBTQ and environmental politics created an ***eco***homonormative politics that also threatens liberatory movement building. In summary, queer & trans perspectives bring new insights to the climate justice movement, in what I call queer climate justice, but several barriers stand in the way of its practice.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

"I got the right temperature fi shelter you from the storm" – Sean Paul

On April 1, 2017, a contingent of glammed up and exuberant dancers strutted through the streets of Washington, D.C. Buoyed by booming speakers blaring pop music, like Sean Paul's "Temperature," these dancers were not just singing along to the lyrics—they were protesting for climate justice and against Ivanka Trump. They exclaimed, "We are Queer. We are here," all while waving around signs against, for example, the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). At once, they were protesting and playing in the streets.

This may seem odd, given the stark realities of the climate crisis. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent report in 2022 paints a dire picture—the roughly two degrees Fahrenheit of global temperature rise has wreaked havoc on the world's water and food security by amplifying the severity of wildfires, floods, and droughts (IPCC, 2022). The impacts of climate change are and will not be felt equally, and the IPCC report also makes it clear that some groups of people will disproportionately bear the burdens of climate change. In this way, climate science aligns with what activists have said for decades, it is not right for certain groups of people and for entire regions of the globe to bit hit first and hardest by the impacts of an issue that they bear little responsibility for causing (Tokar, 2014). Therefore, striving toward climate justice is serious and necessary.

However, the playful politics at the heart of the queer dance party for climate justice I feature here is a portal for surviving and thriving in a time of climate crisis. When you enter the portal, lyrics like the epigraph's envelop you and suggest, even in those moments of raging storms made worse by climate change, collective joy is an emancipatory practice.

In spite and because of the ways that climate change denies joy, play serves to create a world where joy is not constantly denied and instead, care is at the forefront. Thus, this portal acts as an enticing and fun invitation toward queer climate justice or the focus of the dissertation on how queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement.

Problem Statement

A growing body of social science research moves environmental justice away from questions exclusively revolving around race, class, or gender and instead reconceptualizes environmental injustice and environmental justice organizing as an intersectional outcome and intersectional praxis, respectively (Ducre, 2018; Malin & Ryder, 2018; Pellow, 2017). Through this reconceptualization, scholars are determining how different power structures, such as ableism and speciesism, create intersectional environmental injustice and reinforce existing understandings of power (e.g. environmental racism).

We have also gained deeper knowledge on intersectional environmental & climate justice movements addressing, for example, settler colonialism (LeQuesne, 2019; McKee, 2021). And while we know some of the linkages between sexuality, gender, and environmental & climate justice *conceptually* (Gaard, 1997, 2004, 2015), we lack an understanding of intersectional climate justice movements that engage gender and sexuality *in practice*. As such, this dissertation asks "How do queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement?"

In this chapter, I lay the conceptual foundation for the dissertation, present the overarching argument and sub questions, describe how I answered the research questions, and end with a roadmap of the dissertation. In the first section, I define key terms and set the conceptual foundation for understanding social movements, climate justice movements,

queer & trans movements, and intersectionality. In the second section, I specific four research sub-questions then present my overarching argument and preview the theory. I also outline how I answered my research questions by describing my methods, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I scope out the rest of the dissertation and how each chapter helps answer the research questions.

Defining Key Terms and Setting Conceptual Foundation

Locating social movements

Social movements are part of today's lexicon and usually covered in terms of their protest mobilization success. For example, journalists described the anti-racist uprisings following George Floyd's murder in 2020 as the "largest movement in US history" (Buchanan et al., 2020). While the primary takeaway from these articles rests on how large the mobilizations are, social movements constitute more than mobilizations. Put simply, social movements are collectivities of people who articulate grievances, come together via tactics, such as street protests, blockades, or lobbying, and demand change (D. A. Snow et al., 2018). Social movements are therefore far more complex than vehicles for turning people out onto the streets.

Social movement scholars study and analyze demands, emergence and decline, identity, and narrative in addition to mobilization, and three key theoretical perspectives color the field of study. Political process model, the most influential of the three, articulates a state-centric model of social movements and suggests that arrangement of elites, state capacity for repression, and (un)favorable political opportunities all influence the emergence and success of social movements (McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1978). The resource mobilization

model, by contrast, directs greater attention toward social movements and outlines how social movement organizations (SMOs) play an important function in advancing movement goals(McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Finally, if the first two models prioritized external political environments and structural conditions, framing and collective identity model suggest the importance of ideas, cognition, and culture in driving collective action (Snow & McAdam, 2000; V. Taylor & Whittier, 1992). It is here, in framing processes, where I locate the dissertation and expound upon what this means for me later in this chapter.

Using these theoretical models, social movements scholars have mostly taken a single-issue or single-identity approach to studying social movements. In other words, scholars tend to analyze environmental movements separately from women's movements (Montoya, 2021). Nonetheless, single-issue studies still tell us about how social movements influence each other. For example, studies of the women's movement bring gender into the study of social movements and suggest that gender still constructs social movements ostensibly not about gender (V. Taylor, 1999). That is, gender hierarchies shape organizational leadership, decision-making, and rituals within all social movements (Robnett, 2000; V. Taylor, 1999). These studies imply that while social movements may be distinct from each other, they still cross-over and influence each other (Meyer & Whittier, 1994; Terriquez, 2015).

What are climate justice movements?

Now that we know what social movements are and what they do, in this section, I give a brief overview of climate justice movements. I start by tracing climate justice's genealogy from environmental justice movements and aligned principles associated with each movement. Next, I write about environmental justice movements (EJ), what they

organize on, and their impacts on addressing environmental injustice and racism. Similarly, I write about climate justice (CJ) movements, common principles, and what they organize on. This section therefore provides a baseline for what to expect out of climate justice movements.

Today's climate justice movement moves in concert with and as an evolution out of the environmental justice movement (Agyeman et al., 2016). Tracing the development of climate justice from environmental justice, Schlosberg and Collins (2014) suggest that environmental justice activists sought to locate and strive for "justice" in climate change politics and policy since at least the early 2000s. At several catalyzing moments, such as the 2000 United Nations Climate Change Conference and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, environmental justice extended their analysis of disproportionate burdens of environmental degradation to climate change (ibid). Because of the direct influence of environmental justice on climate justice, the two movements align in their principles and demands.

Scholars suggest that the environmental justice movement coalesced and began forming its demands in the early 1980s and drew inspiration from several other movements. Put simply, environmental justice is a paradigm that frames injustice, especially environmental racism, as the cause and outcome of environmental degradation (D. E. Taylor, 2000). The environmental justice movement traces its genealogy to movements ranging from environmentalism, Black civil rights, Black Panther Party, and the farmworkers movement (Perkins, 2021).

As such, EJ's core principles are also wide-ranging and include addressing challenges to disproportionate environmental degradation along race and class lines, anti-imperialism, cumulative impact, the precautionary principle, and diversity within

environmental organizations (Sandler & Pezzullo, 2007; Sze & London, 2008). Operationalizing these principles, the environmental justice movement has developed a wide-ranging issue agenda that focuses on contesting Cancer Alley pollution (Lerner, 2004) and centering labor rights (T. Smith et al., 2006). After decades of organizing, the environmental justice movement has won some corporate and state concessions such as the EJ Executive Order 12898; however, scholars point out that environmental injustice remains because activists have been preoccupied with targeting the state (Pulido, 2017; Pulido et al., 2016).

Climate justice builds upon the foundations of environmental justice, both in principles and in its organizational bases (Tokar, 2014). Core principles of the movement, like environmental justice movements, include paying ecological debt, making the most responsible for climate change act, building transnational movements, and redistributing resources from mainstream environmental organizations to frontline community organizations (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014; Tormos-Aponte & García-López, 2018; Warlenius, 2018). Climate justice movements across the globe have fought for many issues including agrarian/peasant and Indigenous food sovereignty and land autonomy (Claeys & Delgado Pugley, 2017) and First Nation opposition to tar sands oil pipelines (Tokar, 2014).

What are queer & trans movements?

In this section, I describe queer & trans movements by first covering what some scholars call the mainstream gay rights movement, and second expounding upon queer & trans liberation movements. First, I give a brief overview of mainstream gay rights movements in terms of their principles and issues. I then provide a similar overview of queer

& trans liberation movements. Like the last section, I see this section as setting expectations for queer & trans movements in the U.S.

The gay rights movement consists of advocacy organizations that mostly organize around contesting homophobia. The modern era of gay rights movement organizations, such as the National LGBTQ Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, and GLAAD, coincides with the rise of neoliberalism and the nonprofit structure, starting around the 1970s (Ferguson, 2018; Hindman, 2018). Issue-wise, the gay rights movement focuses on assimilation and inclusion into U.S. institutions and has over the past decades, fought for inclusion into marriage and the military (Mucciaroni, 2008, 2017). Organizationally, the gay rights movement relies upon advocacy organizations, or paid staff to lobby and negotiate with policymakers, which has consequently depoliticized and dampened the possibilities for a grassroots-driven queer & trans movement in the U.S (Hindman, 2018). With that said, although it is difficult to assess the exact causal role of gay rights movements in changing conditions, public policies and public opinion on gay rights have rapidly shifted in the United States (Valelly, 2012).

The queer liberation movement contrasts to the gay rights movement in their values and principles, what they organize on, and how they organize (DeFilippis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017). Queer liberation movements commit themselves to intersectional analyses suggesting that solely addressing homophobia is inadequate and does not help queer & trans people of color and other intersectionally marginalized people in the queer & trans community (Ferguson, 2018). As such, the queer liberation movement's agenda has covered racial, gender, and economic inequality. For example, the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries unfurled their banners at a Young Lords protest against police repression in

1970 (Ferguson, 2018) and the Audre Lorde Project's "Safe Outside the System" work builds community infrastructure to respond to violence instead of relying upon police (DeFilippis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017). In summary, in the queer liberation movement's eyes the "wins" of the gay rights movement are inadequate and do not serve their constituency's needs, thus necessitating continued grassroots movement building emerging from the marginalized within the queer & trans community.

Intersectional Frameworks

In this section, I introduce the frameworks that guide the dissertation research, including critical environmental justice and queer of color critique. Both critical environmental justice and queer of color critique center and trace their genealogy to intersectionality. As such, I first describe and define intersectionality. Second, I outline the core pillars of critical environmental justice, which are also applicable for interpreting and analyzing climate justice. Third, I turn to queer of color critique and its insights. This section sets me up for the following sections where the theory I present combines insights from critical environmental justice and queer of color critique.

At its core, intersectionality seeks to understand how different layers of individuals' privileges and oppressions interact with one another to inform their lived experiences. This literature builds on the works of Black feminists interested in understanding how race and gender oppression affect women of color (P. H. Collins, 2000; P. H. Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw (1989) solidified the term through her metaphor of a four-way traffic stop. She argued that power axes are like roads. Movements and institutions may address one axis of power such as racial injustice, but they tend to ignore the conditional effects of other power axes, such as gender (Crenshaw, 1991). As a result, those who exist at

the nexus of these two power axes, women of color, tend to be left behind, sitting at the intersection.

David Pellow describes critical environmental justice (CEJ) as having four pillars: 1) intersectionality, 2) multi-scalar analysis, 3) problematizing the role of the state, and 4) indispensability (Pellow, 2016, 2017). All of these pillars are crucial, but for this section, it is worth drawing out the first pillar of intersectionality and how it is situated within the CEJ framework. For example, analyzing the case of Black Lives Matter, Pellow (2016, 2017) argues that state violence, in its multiple forms like policing and environmental racism, cannot be separated out and has intersectional impacts that compound inequalities. I therefore use the CEJ framework because of its attention to *all* devalued and disadvantaged groups, including queer & trans people, as subject and resistant to intersecting injustices, including environmental and climate.

Queer of color critique is a framework that interrogates race, sexuality, and political economy. The framework provides an intersectional critique that focuses on two key pillars: 1) liberalism constructs racialized nationalism and 2) sexual and gender normativity prop up the state and capitalism (Ferguson, 2004). The critique is inherently intersectional by pointing out how propping up gay rights, or the operationalization of sexual normativity, legitimates racialized state violence (Reddy, 2011). For example, analyzing the decline of a multi-dimensional, intersectional queer liberation, Rod Ferguson (2018) argues that mainstream U.S. gay institutions such as the Advocate and the Task Force turned movement energy exclusively toward homophobia, and in the process, ignored how the pivot obscured and propped up racial capitalism. Therefore, I use a queer of color framework because of its

vigilance toward false solutions and key insight that studying queer politics cannot just be about homophobia.

Overview of the Argument

In this section, I provide an overview of the dissertation's argument and what tools I used to make the argument. First, I articulate the gap in the scholarly literature that my dissertation seeks to partially fill. From this gap, I break down my overarching research question into four sub questions. Second, I briefly preview and describe my argument as well as where I locate the contributions of the dissertation. Third, I describe the analytical concepts that help me make my argument and summarize the methods I used to gather and analyze the data to answer the research questions.

Filling the Gap – Presenting the Research Question

Critical environmental justice studies get us closer toward a fuller understanding and explanation of how social and ecological crises intertwine and set expectations for comprehending how these crises impact queer & trans people. Under a system of cis-heteronormative capitalism, environmental and climate injustice disproportionately impacts queer and trans people relative to straight and cisgender people (Goldsmith et al., 2021). For instance, we know that neighborhoods with heavy concentrations of same-sex couples tend to experience increased exposure to hazardous air pollutants. This results in a cancer risk for same-sex partners that is 12.3 percent greater than heterosexual partners (T. W. Collins et al., 2017). Similarly, queer and trans people, particularly youth, are at a disproportionate risk in the aftermath of natural disasters made worse by climate change: between 20 and 45 percent of unhoused youth identify as LGBTQ and have fewer shelter options. Moreover,

surveys show that LGTBQ+ people have higher rates of anxiety and depression during disasters due to their heightened pre-existing mental health problems from social and political marginalization (Gorman-Murray et al., 2017). In sum, sexual and gender marginalization occur alongside racism, classism, and ableism to produce environmental injustice, as critical environmental justice frameworks predict.

However, existing frameworks cannot fully explain how queer & trans people exercise their agency in contesting the uneven impacts of climate change. This leads to the need for the research question of this dissertation "How do queer & trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement?" Breaking this question down further into narrative and strategy, I ask:

1) How do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?
2) To what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?
3) How do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?
4) To what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?

Argument in Brief

Queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies and narratives by first injecting play into the movement, changing conceptions and analyses of vulnerability, and bringing models of survival and resilience. From this point, a fork in the road emerges. On the one hand, what I call the ecohomonormative road sees queer & trans climate organizers align with the state by taking neoliberal, rights-based LGBTQ frames to the climate movement. In effect, while attempting to mobilize queer & trans people toward climate justice activism, the ecohomnormative path does not challenge sexual normativity and reinforces inequality. On the other hand, the queer climate justice path sees intersectional

queer & trans climate organizers expand what climate justice means and is by targeting mainstream LGBTQ institutions for replicating inequality.

However, there are barriers that constrain the extent to which queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies and narratives. First, climate justice narratives do not acknowledge queer & trans vulnerability to the climate crisis. While climate justice narratives such as "frontline communities" appear inclusive, they are containers for potential exclusion and *not* acknowledging that queer & trans people are at risk. Second, climate justice strategies block queer & trans perspectives because of an unclear sense of how to implement them in practice. In other words, organizations invest in discursive strategies to symbolically suggest that queer & trans perspectives matter for climate justice but do not know how to put these connections into policy action.

This dissertation contributes to calls to develop a deeply intersectional critical environmental justice agenda by engaging with gender & sexuality (Malin & Ryder, 2018; Pellow, 2017). While the extant literature expands environmental framing to new terrains, constituencies, and frames, such as reproductive justice, disability justice, abolition, and total liberation, no one has systematically analyzed the ways queer & trans activists bridge climate justice to queer liberation (Clare, 1999; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Krauss, 1993; Pellow, 2014; Sasser, 2018). In my analysis, I expand the stakeholders relevant for climate justice research to include houseless shelters, gay bars, and Pride parades. In other words, the social and political infrastructure, such as those found within queer and trans communities, are just as important as the fossil infrastructure that has long occupied environmental justice research.

Framing as Perspective

I use social movement studies tools, specifically framing analysis, to tease out different queer & trans perspectives toward climate activism. In this section, I first describe what framing is and how social movements use framing to fulfill their strategic goals. Next, I go further by specifying what social movement scholars call frame alignment processes. I surface one frame alignment process called frame bridging and explain its purpose. Finally, I articulate how I see and use framing as perspective.

Social movement scholars have long used theories of framing to explain how social movements talk about themselves and the problems they face, as well as how they appeal to new activists (Benford & Snow, 2000). Put simply, a frame encapsulates how social movements interpret what's going on in politics and how to respond (Snow & Benford, 1988). Through frames, social movements produce meaning and constructed views of reality that mobilize existing and new constituents to fight for social change.

Collective action frames are one type of frame, specific to social movements and political activism (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014) and generally divide into three parts: first, a diagnostic frame that identifies the key issue at stake and lays the blame; second, a prognostic frame that articulates solutions and alternatives to the problem; and third, a motivational frame to encourage and drive people toward action (Benford & Snow, 2000). Differences in how social movements articulate their diagnostic and prognostic frames lead to splits between social movements or organizations within a movement (Snow & Benford, 1988; D. E. Taylor, 2000).

To build movements, social movements may try to appeal to new constituents through one or more frame alignment processes (Snow et al., 1986). Social movement

organizations use separate frames to interpret the world; therefore, to bring these contrasting interpretations together, they engage in a number of frame alignment processes that forge a type of "glue" between the frames (ibid). Frame bridging, of most relevance for this dissertation, refers to the process of merging or linking two or more ideologically congruent frames. Benford and Snow (2000) point out that social movements can engage in frame bridging to multiple targets, including "between a movement and individuals, through the linkage of a movement organization with an unmobilized sentiment pool or public opinion cluster, or across social movements" (624). Fundamentally, frame bridging attempts to find the common denominator between two or more frames to make a social movement more appealing.

To summarize, there are several core elements to framing, including diagnostic and prognostic framing, and frame alignment processes help link together frames from different movements. I view and analyze frames and associated constructs of this section as perspectives, by which I mean "lenses through which people view issues…they influence interpretations by suggesting which categories are useful for making sense of the world" (Walsh, 2004, pg. 2). In other words, I analyze how diagnostic and prognostic frames are perspectives or lenses through which queer & trans people and organizations make sense of the world that shape interpretations of climate justice narratives and strategies.

Methods

To answer my research questions, I used a qualitative multi-method analysis of queer & trans climate organizing in the United States. I used two qualitative methods—content analysis and semi-structured interviewing—to collect and analyze data spanning different times, cities and organizing structures. I use these two methods together because by

complementing the broad and public nature of content analysis and the specific and relatively more private nature of interviewing, I achieve both breadth and depth.

I use grounded theory methods to guide my data collection and analysis because of its guidelines toward constructing theory as it emerges from the data. Grounded theory methods guide researchers to move from the data into analysis and back again to ensure that concepts and theories are 'grounded' within the data (Charmaz, 2006). Following these grounded theory guidelines, I did not neatly cut off data collection from data analysis and instead worked on both concurrently.

For content analysis, my data collection procedures unfolded in two ways. First, I gathered newspaper articles, op-eds, blog posts, and social media to capture a broad overview of queer climate change narrative and strategy across the United States. These data sources span from 2005 to 2020 and showcase the development of queer climate organizing over time as well as contain differences in how the nexus between queer and climate politics is framed. Second, as a matter of theoretical sampling, or collecting more data to fill the gaps of theory (Charmaz, 2006), I collected further newspaper articles, op-eds, blog posts, social media, and emails about the specific cases—queer climate organizing in New York City and Washington D.C.—I was analyzing *after* interviewing had already started.

After the initial content analysis, I zoomed into two specific cases that showcase ideological and identity difference within locally centered queer climate change organizing: in the New York City case I collected data about the Queer Bloc's efforts to mobilize LGBTQ people during the People's Climate March and in the Washington D.C. case, I collected data about a queer dance party for climate justice and a blockade of the Capital Pride Parade. I also zoomed out into four mainstream cases that exemplify the outcomes of

queer-climate connections on the national level: the Sierra Club, 350.org, the National LGBTQ Task Force, and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Here, I relied upon my interview methods to start data collection. I used semi-structured interview methods to conduct 39 interviews in total. I used a semi-structured interview protocol to guide my questions. That is, instead of completely pre-determining my questions ahead of the interviews or coming into the interview without any questions, I used an approach in between these poles. I determined some questions and agenda items I wanted to cover and probed during the interview if I wanted to learn more about something a respondent said. I used a "snowball sampling/respondent driven sampling" (SS/RDS) where I asked initial interviewees to connect me with other potential interviewees to build out my interview sample (L. A. Goodman, 2011).

I analyzed my data through two cycles of coding by using the qualitative coding software NVivo 12. First cycle coding entailed going through the initial content analysis data and interviews with three methods, including in vivo coding, process coding, and initial coding, on a paragraph-by-paragraph level (Saldaña, 2009). In other words, I went over my data and attached concise descriptions or labels, known as codes, to paragraphs. Then, I got off the software, and used paper to diagram and sort codes and categories. Finally, in second cycle coding, I continued revising my coding to solidify that I was capturing insights in the data that address my research questions and went back through all the data again. Throughout this process, I wrote analytical memos, or relatively brief written notes, to revise codes, categories, themes, and theory. These cycles of coding and memo writing helped me develop and solidify the argument and theory I presented in the previous section.

Outline of the Dissertation

I develop the argument in this dissertation by providing some grounding as to what other scholars have researched, explaining how I made my case through my methods, and then taking the story through four empirical chapters. The first third of the dissertation are my theory and methods chapters. In these chapters, I explain my theory and my methodological choices. In the middle portions of the dissertation, I go through four empirical chapters that each gradually builds the theory I presented in the introduction. Finally, in the conclusion, I summarize the contributions of the dissertation and present an actionable model of queer climate justice.

In chapter two, I summarize existing scholarship on social movements, climate justice, queer & trans studies, and intersectionality. After summarizing these literatures and defining key concepts relevant for the dissertation, I outline a critique of the existing literature. I then present my theory as addressing these gaps. In the process, I set up how my primary theoretical contribution is to engage critically queer & trans studies, specifically queer of color critique, to fill in environmental & climate justice frameworks. The theory I describe in greater detail in this chapter is the glue that threads together the empirical findings of the dissertation.

In chapter three, I describe my methodology, which encompasses methods (the tools I use) and epistemologies (knowability) and justify my choices as appropriate for the dissertation. This chapter lays out my process for collecting and analyzing data, as well as how they fit in with each other. I also provide further details about sampling, selection, and my own subjectivity. This chapter, therefore, by saying explicitly what I did, sets up the

context and information necessary for judging the quality of my work in the following empirical chapters.

In chapter four, I identify how queer and trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives. I compare queer and trans organizing against climate change to provide an overview of how queer and trans activists are similar and different in framing the problem of and solutions to climate change. I argue that recent U.S. queer and trans climate organizing has converged around three shared ways in framing the queer-climate nexus by talking about vulnerability, contributions, and play. However, two contingents—the mainstream LGBTQ climate change frame and the radical queer climate justice frame—do differ in their diagnostic and prognostic of how to address climate change. This chapter sets the scene and previews some tensions that reverberate throughout the rest of the dissertation.

In chapter five, I assess to what extent queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives. I focus on 2014's People's Climate March held in New York City and the conflicts that unfolded from defining "frontline communities," a common climate justice narrative. Frontline communities were placed at the front of the March. The Queer Bloc's placement at the back of the March and the ultimate decision that they were NOT a frontline community exemplify tensions in intersectional organizing. This chapter shows a mismatch between climate justice narratives, which should theoretically encompass queer & trans people, and the exclusionary reality that emerged.

Moving from the first two chapters, which focus on the narratives, the next two focus on concrete strategies and the implementation (or not) of queer climate justice. First, in chapter six, I identify how queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies. Here, I expand upon the queer climate justice frame, which I introduce in Chapter 4, by analyzing

a series of 2017 protests in D.C. Rather than diluting or mainstreaming intersectionality, the queer and trans (mostly of color) climate organizers in chapter six are committed to tying together movements to tackle multiple crises. These organizers situate themselves in a radical queer & trans liberation tradition more critical of race, class, empire, and nation than the mainstream LGBTQ climate change perspective.

In chapter seven, I assess to what extent queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategy. This chapter focus on four national advocacy organizations and determines if, in the past, queer & trans perspectives had purchase in shaping climate justice strategy. All the organizations I analyze in the chapter symbolically "come out" as either environmentalists or in support of queer and trans people through sign-on letters or statements. However, these mainstream LGBTQ organizations and environmental/climate organizations largely fall short in substantively advocating for the climate and queer & trans people, respectively. While the story I tell in this chapter is not promising, some hope remains due to what the organizations have begun or are considering working on in the future.

Finally, in chapter eight, I conclude by summarizing the core findings, the implications, the limitations, and the future research directions of the dissertation. I also point to the dissertation's contributions and identify some ways both mainstream and radical climate organizers could learn from my research to help build movements and power. While the dissertation is not a joyful read, I end with a model of queer climate justice and some steps toward realizing a different world than the one in which we live.

Chapter 2. Theory

This dissertation's main research question is "How do queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement?" To situate my research question, we need an understanding of the literature across multiple fields, including social movements, environmental and climate justice studies, queer and trans studies, and intersectionality. Exploring and bridging these literatures is crucial for determining what I mean when I say "queer and trans," "climate justice," and "movements." By the end of this chapter, I hope to have established a shared framework for relating these seemingly disparate concepts.

In this chapter, I summarize several disparate but related literatures, scope out the gaps of these literatures, and present my theory as an answer that addresses these gaps. First, I describe four sets of literatures—social movements, environmental and climate justice, queer and trans studies, and intersectionality—and articulate what I see as gaps, or the unrealized potential of queer & trans studies and environmental & climate justice studies. I am primarily interested in what a queer of color framework brings to critical environmental justice, and vice versa. Second, I describe what I see as the climate injustices that get in the way of justice. Finally, I present the answer to my research question as a theory of queer climate justice.

Social Movements

In this section, I outline key concepts and terms associated with social movements that contextualize the analysis and findings that follow in the empirical chapters. First, I define and describe social movements and what functions they serve. Second, I articulate how social movement scholars conceptualize strategy, which is key to the research sub

questions I posed in the introduction. Finally, I speak to how social movement scholars conceptualize play, which likewise threads through the theory that I present later in the chapter.

What are social movements? I subscribe to the definition of social movements as "collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, or world order of which they are a part" (Snow et al., 2004).

Social movement organizations (SMOs), in turn, are the vehicles for movement change because "for the movement to survive, insurgents must be able to create a more enduring organizational structure to sustain collective action" (McAdam et al., 1996). Going down from the organizational level to the individual level, we know that organizational structures develop and make activists (Han, 2014). According to traditional social movement theory, social movements strive to turn individual and organizational adherents into constituents to sustain themselves and achieve change: "Adherents are those individuals and organizations that believe in the goals of the movement. The constituents of a SMO are those providing resources for it" (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

One of the ways that social movements can appeal to adherents is by framing. Social movements use frames as perspectives through which to view the world and encourage others to adopt these perspectives as well. As I noted in the introduction, the framing approach is what I use to capture queer & trans perspectives as lenses through which to view the world (Snow et al., 1986). Frames help social movements conceptualize the problems they confront, the solutions that might work, and the call to action for others to join the

movement (Snow & Benford, 1988). Additionally, whereas individuals and organizations might already share values, they need cognitive and discursive tools to tie the dots between issues before they mobilize (Snow et al., 1986). This is called frame alignment, when two or more frames are brought into conversation with each. Frame alignment processes provide "glue" between previously unconnected frames.

Framing also has influence over strategy, insofar as framing is a bridge between a social movement's collective identity and the tactics that they use (Smithey, 2009). To define strategy, I use Meyer and Staggenborg's (2007) conceptualization of strategy as demands, arenas, and tactics identifies core elements of strategy and describes how they relate to each other. Activists make strategic decisions by identifying: "the **demands** or claims made by collective actors; the **arenas** or venues of collective action; and the **tactics** or forms of collective action. All of these choices imply the selection of particular targets of collective action" (Meyer & Staggenborg, 2007, pg. 5). Tying these concepts together, consider, for example, how in motivational framing, social movements attempt to motivate activists to engage in collective action or tactic (Einwohner, 2002). Prognostic framing may also spell out remedies in terms of which strategies and tactics get closer to the ideal solution (Snow and Benford, 1988).

Finally, I end this section by positioning play as crucial for social movements and activism. Play is a container for advancing individual and collective pleasure and joy in social movements. Benjamin Shepard defines play as "a term for drag, ACT UP zaps, pranks, the use of food and mariachi bands in the Latino community, dance dramaturgy, culture jamming, the carnival, and other creative community-building activities. It is the exhilarating feeling of pleasure, the joy of building a more emancipatory caring world"

(2011, pg. 4) As opposed to being "unserious" or "detracting" from conventional organizing campaigns, playful politics becomes a survival mechanism, as in the case of ACT UP, or as a means of forging shared culture, in the case of the Young Lords (Shepard, 2011).

This section has provided some grounding for core concepts of the dissertation. That is, I concern myself with social movements, or groups of people working in some form of collective action to enact social change. Analytically, I intend to use the social movement framing approach to look for and interpret the different queer & trans perspectives. In turn, I intend to follow the frames and how they shape narrative and strategy. I have also defined play, which is a core part of the theory that I presented in the introduction and comes at the end of this chapter.

Environmental and Climate Justice Movements

My research question concerns the climate justice movement so, in this section, I provide a brief history of climate justice movements, their principles, and what they organize around. But first, I describe environmental justice movements, because in many ways, the climate justice movement evolves out of and is in constant dialogue with the environmental justice movement. For example, the devastating impacts of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 cemented the relevance using an environmental justice lens to analyze climate change (Bullard & Wright, 2009; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). In other words, the impacts of climate change are not felt equally. So, while the climate justice movement is distinct from the environmental justice movement, the two movements often move in parallel and continue to influence and inform one another.

What is the environmental justice movement? In contrast to mainstream environmentalism, environmental justice paired an analysis of social injustice to

environmental degradation and pollution (D. Taylor, 2000). While scholars disagree about when the environmental justice movement began, many see the Warren County, North Carolina protests in 1982 against polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) dumping in a predominantly African American community as a watershed moment for the movement (Perkins, 2021). This series of protests exemplifies a key claim of environmental justice movements that race and class marginalized communities disproportionately face environmental pollution (Mohai et al., 2009). In response, the environmental justice framework works to ensure all communities have protection from environmental degradation, procedural justice, distributive justice, and lives where environmental racism is eliminated(Schlosberg, 2007; Walker, 2012).

What is the climate justice movement? Much like the environmental justice movement, the climate justice movement hews closely to confronting the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color and poor/working class communities but on a global scale in response to the global nature of climate change (Sultana, 2022). Key climate justice initiatives such as the Bali Principles in 2002 and The Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change's (EJLFCC) Principles in 2008 are a clear and direct evolution from environmental justice principles (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014; Tormos-Aponte & García-López, 2018). Much like environmental justice frameworks, climate justice frameworks are therefore committed to opposing false solutions, such as carbon trading, that exacerbate health disparities and ensuring protections for the least responsible and costs for the most responsible actors in climate change (Schlosberg, 2012).

In summary, climate justice movements evolved out of and work in concert with environmental justice movements. As such, these movements have aligned analyses and

principles, such as confronting the disproportionate impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on marginalized communities. However, climate justice movements, despite their commitment to multi-ethnic, multi-racial politics, are less attentive to gender and sexuality analyses (Sultana, 2022; Terry, 2009). In the next section, I turn to queer and trans movements to trace how analyses of gender and sexuality marginalization and resistance are crucial for all movements.

Queer &Trans Movements

In this section, I review how queer and trans people have shaped movement principles, demands, agendas, and framing. But first, why do I say, "queer & trans," instead of "LGBTQ?" First, I am interested in political goals ***and*** lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities. That is, I frame and use queer as a challenge to heteronormativity, and I frame and use trans as a route toward gender democratization (Connell, 2009; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016). In this way, I align with Cathy Cohen's hope for the radical potential of queerness: "I envision a [queer] politics where one's relation to power, and not some homogenized identity, is privileged in determining one's political comrades… [and] located in its ability to create a space in opposition to dominant norms" (Cohen, 1997, pg. 438). At the same time, I also use queer and trans as a means of capturing a diverse range of embodied sexual and gender experiences and identities. Second, by contrast, the category of "GLBT," is primarily an identity-focused term that prioritizes sexual orientation over and above race, class, and gender identity marginalized people within "GLBT" (Murib, 2017). The umbrella term "LGBTQ" is therefore limited and functions in a similar way by focusing attention on white, cisgender gay men.

What do queer and trans liberation movements do and what are their principles? In contrast to what Rod Ferguson calls a one-dimensional approach exclusively focused on sexuality, queer and trans liberation movements have long advanced an intersectional, multi-dimensional politics concerned about race, class, gender identity, and sexuality (Ferguson, 2018). As opposed to the "trickle-down" approach of mainstream LGBTQ organizations, queer liberation movements work from a "trickle-up" approach that asserts first, mainstream LGBTQ organizations oppress the most marginalized in the queer community and second, the most oppressed should be at the center of agendas and organizing (DeFilippis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017). As a result, they organize intersectionally about issues that concern sexual orientation, race, class, and citizenship (DeFilippis, 2015, 2018).

In summary, queer and trans liberation movements advance a politics rooted in intersectionality and critique how a sexuality-only approach to organizing is at best, inadequate, and at worst, a danger to marginalized queer and trans people's lives. However, queer and trans liberation movements and scholars of these movements often do not attend to the environment as contested battlegrounds of liberation, with some exceptions (Seymour, 2018). In the next section, I describe how climate justice movements expand outward beyond race and class and how queer and trans liberation movements expand outward beyond sexual orientation and gender identity, but they do not come together.

Intersectionality

In this section, I begin bringing together the previous literatures by writing about intersectionality. In other words, I write about intersectional social movement efforts in environmental & climate justice and queer & trans liberation. First, I ground this section in

an understanding of intersectionality and social movements. Second, I describe an emergent critical environmental and climate justice framework and movement that concerns itself with more than race and class. Third, I describe a queer of color framework and movement that concerns itself with more than sexual orientation and gender identity. Finally, I articulate the gaps that justify my dissertation.

Intersectionality and Social Movements

As a product of Black feminism (Nash, 2011), intersectionality is a framework for analyzing oppression and privilege and therefore is fundamentally about power—who has the power to make decisions versus who is silenced and disproportionately the target of violence. Whereas popular depictions of intersectionality might reduce intersectionality to the intersection of identities, Kimala Price (2017) writes "intersectionality is not just about intersecting *identities*; it is also about the intersecting nature of *oppression* (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism/homophobia) and *privilege*" (85).

How does intersectionality function in social movements? Scholars have analyzed how intersectionality is a mechanism for coalition building in reproductive justice and for negotiating difference and sameness under the "women of color" banner (Luna, 2016, 2020). Other scholars have argued that intersectionality can be a collective action frame that diagnoses the issues movements face and mobilizes people to action (Terriquez, 2015; Terriquez et al., 2018). Further still, scholars have demonstrated how wider community interests have catalyzed Black and Latina women's intersectional activism because single-issue approaches do not address their wider communities' needs (Montoya, 2021; Montoya & Seminario, 2022; Perry, 2016).

However, intersectional praxis, or how social movements themselves practice intersectionality, is not without limitations (Townsend-Bell, 2011). Social movements are increasingly well-versed in the language of intersectionality and to some extent the "doing" of intersectionality but struggle to identify how mainstream, neoliberal approaches to intersectionality threaten sustained, powerful coalitions (P. H. Collins & Bilge, 2020; Strolovitch, 2007; Ward, 2008). For example, the Women's March in 2017 immediately following Trump's inauguration was an enormous undertaking with an expansive policy platform that included reproductive justice, environmental justice, and economic justice. The March's intersectional framing created the possibility for mobilization outside of one group's single axis, e.g. race or gender, interests and in solidarity with a wider range of interests (Fisher, Dow, et al., 2017). Similarly, surveys of the People's Climate March in 2014 suggest that nearly 40 percent of the March participants were attending their first protest or demonstration in the past five years likely because of its intersectional sensibility in framing the March as important for addressing human rights, racism, and labor (Fisher, 2015; Fisher, Galli, et al., 2017).

Even as social movements adopt an intersectional sensibility through their agendas and framings, they can fail to address unequal power dynamics by solely attending to issues or identities to the exclusion of other dimensions of power, such as cultural and disciplinary (P. H. Collins & Bilge, 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2016). Thus, while the ideal of intersectional praxis is to identify and work through power differentials across all domains, the implementation of this vision is much harder (Luna, 2016) For example, specific axes are often privileged, such as race, class, and gender, in the context of multi-issue organizing (Townsend-Bell, 2011; Ward, 2004). As Zakiya Luna (2016) argues in the context of

reproductive justice movements, exclusively attending to one or two markers of difference can: "produce a homogenization of experience that fails to account for axes of oppression besides race and gender such as ethnicity, ability, and immigration status" (785). This means that the presence of a multi-issue, intersectionally organized coalition is not a substitute for realizing an intersectional praxis that is attentive to power differentials and distinct domains of power.

Intersectional Environmental & Climate Justice Movements

Building upon a first generation of environmental justice research, which focused almost exclusively on the distribution of environmental ills and analytically on *one* lens of race, ethnicity, or class, David Pellow's (2017) critical environmental justice framework centers intersectionality as its first pillar—environmental racism, the central outcome in early environmental justice research, intersects with heteropatriarchy, classism, and speciesism, among other axes of power, to produce differential life outcomes. Malin and Ryder (2018, 4) add that a deeply intersectional environmental justice lens must be multi-scalar (across space) and temporal (across history) or "explicitly recognize and iteratively analyze the contextual/historical, often mutually reinforcing, inseparable, and multiple oppressive structures that intersect to control and dominate marginalized individuals and communities while simultaneously privileging powerful actors." In the context of research on environmental justice social movements, notable recent interventions have analyzed gender and its intersections with motherhood and citizenship status, ableism and speciesism, and settler colonialism in Palestine (Jampel, 2018; Larkins, 2018; McKee, 2021; Pellow, 2017; Pellow & Brehm, 2015).

Intersectional analyses of environmental justice movements point to differences among stakeholders and how intersectional consciousness and praxis strengthens organizing. Examining divergent ecological visions among Palestinians, McKee (2021) finds that class, gender, and the rural/urban divide structure different agendas in the context of Israeli occupation creating an unjust distribution of water. For example, while the nonprofit EcoPeace focused on development projects on the Jordan River, poor rural Palestinians were most invested in procuring spring water. Analyzing the Standing Rock protests, LeQuesne (2019) argues that the Water Protectors practiced "intersectional populism," by forging cross-cultural rituals and divisions of labor to disrupt the sameness and difference dilemma of many social movements. As we might expect, different configurations of identities and experiences, lead to different strategies and analytical frameworks.

Intersectional Queer & Trans Movements

In response to the siloed development of queer studies and ethnic studies, queer of color critique emerged as an intersectional corrective to prior one-dimensional frameworks. In this section, I first use this framework to guide the critique of one-dimensional approaches to queer and trans organizing. Second, I preview studies that analyze intersectional queer and trans organizing. And third, I describe how a queer of color approach contributes to social movement organizing.

What is queer of color critique? Queer of color critique is a framework that integrates studies of sexuality with race and political economy (Ferguson Oxford article). According to Ferguson (2004), queer of color critique "interrogates social formations as the intersections of racial, gender, class with particular interest in how those formations correspond with and diverge from nationalist ideals and practices. Queer of color analysis is

a heterogeneous enterprise made up of women of color feminism, materialist analysis, post-structuralist theory, and queer critique" (149). As such, a key claim of queer of color critique is that sexual normativity colludes with the liberal state and capital to bolster racial capitalism (Ferguson, 2004).

Queer of color critique challenges scholars to reconsider how they approach knowledge production and the marginalizing ways studies erase lived experience at the intersections of race and sexuality (Brockenbrough, 2016). However, political science and sociology scholars have been slow to use an intersectional lens in studying LGBTQ politics. In an analysis of LGBTQ political science research since the late 70s, researchers find that over 80 percent of abstracts do not emphasize salient identities such as race and gender alongside sexuality (Tadlock & J. Taylor, 2017). While LGBTQ identities always intersect with race, class, and gender, scholars tend to flatten the LGBTQ community into a white, gay, and lesbian constituency (Armstrong, 2002). For example, in Gary Mucciaroni's (2008) analysis of gay rights struggles and explanation of differential policy success across issues— marriage, adoption, and hate crimes— people of color are erased from the narrative. Due to data constraints and likely bias against intersectional approaches, we lack an understanding of how intersectional LGBTQ identities shape agendas, strategies, and consciousness.

Nonetheless, some scholars, especially since the late 2000s, have begun "marking" race, gender, and class in LGBTQ politics to unearth how intersectional experiences lead to different concerns than what are contained in white LGBTQ agendas (Adam, 2017; DeFilippis, 2015; Mayo-Adam, 2020). For example, analyses of queer reproductive justice find that queer people of color see the connections between LGBTQ lives and reproductive justice whereas gay white men struggle to articulate the connection (Price, 2017, 2018).

Analyzing the conditions under which LGBTQI social movement organizations develop an intersectional consciousness, Ayoub (2019) argues that financial crisis catalyzes the need for transnational movement building across difference. Finally, building upon structural and identity explanations for why people participate in social movements, Labelle (2021) argues that marginalization at the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality mobilizes racialized activists to participate or contest the whiteness of the LGBTQ movement.

And while intersectional analyses of LGBTQ politics are relatively recent, it would be a mistake to assume that one-dimensional, sexual orientation approaches were the first and only LGBTQ social movement response. Rod Ferguson (2018), for example, in re-examining Stonewall and what actors such as Sylvia Rivera themselves said about their involvement in multi-issue movements, finds that, from the beginning, queer and trans of color activists would not and could not separate out anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-racism from their struggle. For example, the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) first displayed their banner in a Young Lords-organized protest against police repression. In theory and praxis, such as forging rhetorical solidarity with the Black Panthers (Corrigan, 2019), queer of color approaches were and are committed to intersectional politics.

In summary, intersectionality has solidified in activist practices and academic studies because of its attention to navigating power and privilege. First, movement toward a critical environmental justice framework signals greater attention to intersectional environmental & climate justice movements. Second, queer of color critique similarly turns our attention to intersectional queer & trans of color activists, who have long practiced multi-issue politics. Taken together, analytical frameworks and movement interventions in each issue space

showcase an intersectional turn. However, critical environmental justice and queer of color frameworks do not cross often, thus leaving a gap that I speak to in the next section.

Critique of Existing Literatures

In this section, I articulate a critique of the existing literatures, which I summarized in the previous sections. In essence, environmental justice scholars studying intersectional organizing take a gender and sexuality-identity neutral stance whereas queer & trans studies scholars studying organizing ignore the environment and climate. I start this section by articulating the sites of marginalization and resistance that environmental justice scholars miss by taking a gender-identity and sexuality neutral stance. Next, I speak to how queer & trans social movement scholars treat the environment as an afterthought. Here, I describe how analyses of multi-issue queer & trans organizing are incomplete without environmental analyses. Finally, I describe key insights from queer ecologies scholarship to serve as a partial bridge between environmental justice studies and queer & trans studies.

First, as I noted in the section on intersectional environmental and climate justice movements, a critical environmental justice framework positions intersectionality as a key pillar and therefore calls for an analysis of how gender and sexuality produce environmental justice (Pellow, 2016). However, with some notable exceptions (Sbicca, 2012), few EJ empirical studies have taken up this call to action. In the process, environmental justice scholars, despite their deep attention to infrastructure, miss queer infrastructure or "protections, organizations, social spaces, and service programs for overcoming homophobia and transphobia" (Brochu-Ingram, 2015, pg. 228). Studies demonstrate that queer infrastructure facilitates redistributive organizing (Brochu-Ingram, 2015) and sometimes perpetuates racism (Broad, 2020), but the same attention has not traveled to how

queer infrastructure constrains environmental organizing or environmental racism. Without an analysis of cultural infrastructure within queer & trans populations, analyses of environmental racism and injustice miss how queer infrastructure could serve environmental justice organizing and how queer communities themselves produce environmental injustice.

Second, queer and trans studies scholars ignore the environment and climate in their analysis of social movement organizing. In comparative analyses of social movement organizations, Joseph DeFilippis and his colleagues argue that a contemporary queer liberation movement differentiates itself from the gay rights movement through its attention and centering of an intersectional, multi-issue agenda focused on economic and racial justice (DeFilippis, 2015, 2018; DeFilippis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017). In the process, queer and trans studies and movements miss how climate change and environmental degradation constrain core pillars of queer and trans liberation to oppose the criminal justice system or influence immigration policy. For example, an emerging body of work in prison ecologies ties the connections between mass incarceration, human rights abuses, and environmental pollution (Bradshaw, 2018; Pellow, 2019). Without an analysis of the environment, queer and trans scholars miss the opportunity to strengthen their analysis of multi-issue politics and overarching challenges to capitalism, the military, and the prison industrial complex.

We could turn to queer ecologies scholarship to bridge queer & trans studies and environmental justice studies. On the one hand, queer ecologies studies suggest that constructions of the environment harm queer and trans people—policies, institutions, and movements adopt heteronormative lens to how they tackle LGBTQ and environmental issues (Hogan, 2010; Mortimer-Sandilands & Erickson, 2010a). Similarly, Greta Gaard's (1997) theory of queer ecofeminism examines how Christian hegemony paired with an

imperialist logic drives colonization of queers and nature and therefore makes the case that queer liberation requires ecofeminism and vice versa.

Queer ecologies scholarship also takes environmental justice movements to task. Despite the environmental justice movement's challenge to mainstream environmentalism, some environmental justice activists are nonetheless guilty of producing eco(hetero/cis)normativity (Di Chiro, 2010). For example, Di Chiro (2010) argues that at the same time environmental justice activists fight against toxic contamination, by framing the problem of toxics as creating disability and gender difference among animals, they reinforce a pure/impure binary and align queer and trans people with the impure. This framing to mobilize comes at a cost: "[by] appeal[ing] to pre-existing cultural norms of gender balance, normal sexual reproduction, and the balance of nature" (Di Chiro, 2010, pg. 224). Conceptually, I view eco(hetero/cis)normativity as expanding beyond the specific issue of toxic contamination to encompass the privileging of gender and sexual normativity within environmental movement contexts.

On the other hand, recent studies suggest that marrying queer aesthetics to environmentalism energizes environmental politics (Gaard, 2019). The collective Queers for the Climate's campy use of drag, memes, and videos and the ecosexual tactic of marrying mountains paint environmentalism as irreverent, frivolous, and "eco-camp." This stands in contrast to the humdrum doomsday rhetoric of most environmental activism (Seymour, 2018; Sprinkle et al., 2021; Whitworth, 2019). Methodologically, existing research on queer and trans climate and environmental interventions are, however, limited by their examination of a single or small number of cases (Bell, 2010; Sandilands, 2002; Sbicca, 2012)—a gap I fill with a more systematic social movement studies lens. In the same way

that queer theory developed separately from queer activism, queer and trans ecologies scholarship has mostly developed separately from queer and trans environmental activism. Because of their intervention against mainstream environmentalism, the few activism-based studies do not tend to tease out ideological variation within the movement (Gaard, 2019; Seymour, 2018).

Moreover, queer ecologies scholars do not spend as much time on homonormativity or a process where some sexual minorities are able to gain rights via conforming to traditional gender roles or fighting for assimilation into heteronormative institutions, such as marriage and the military. Homonormativity excludes and sucks the political oxygen away from more radical causes such as healthcare for all (Duggan, 2002). We must break up and analyze difference within queer and trans climate activism because social movement organizations, even as they try to resist climate injustice, may still reproduce inequality. For illustration, at their worst, in the process of facilitating ***some*** queer subjects—the patriotic, gender conforming, respectable citizens—toward life, LGBTQ institutions push queer racialized subjects to die via contrast, i.e. Western gays are liberated, but "terrorists" are sexually repressed and therefore justifiable targets for the "War on Terror" (Puar, 2007).

Even as Western gay male travelers visiting other countries, for example, attempt to escape the marginalization they experience back home and practice their sexually liberated lives elsewhere, they uphold and frame a neoliberal gay politics of consumerism or individual pleasure while ignoring how race and class make leisure inaccessible to most (D. Collins, 2009; Ward & Schneider, 2009). At once, these narratives *disavow* heteronormativity and *avow* global inequality. In the same way that queer and trans subjects perform a neoliberal subjectivity in the context of immigration, migration or tourism,

neoliberalism may also circulate in queer and trans climate activism (Aizura, 2012, 2018; D. Collins, 2009; Spade, 2015).

In summary, there are limitations within environmental justice studies and queer & trans studies as they operate and develop in their separate lanes. First, scholars of environmental justice social movements divorce their analysis of political economy, race & class, and environment from sexuality. As a result, environmental justice scholars miss key cultural sites of environmental injustice and privilege. Second, scholars of queer & trans social movements divorce their analysis of political economy, race & class, and sexuality from the environment. As a result, queer & trans studies scholars miss the ways that the environmental injustice is a constraint on queer and trans liberation. While queer ecologies help us integrate some insights between environmental justice studies and queer & trans studies, it falls short in explaining and describing the praxis of queer climate activism. In the last section of the chapter, I present a theory, which I call queer climate justice, that pairs insights from environmental justice studies and queer & trans studies to fill the gaps that I articulate in this section.

Defining Climate Injustice

But first, we cannot understand justice without an understanding of injustice. This section considers the question "What is at the root of climate injustice?" Climate injustice, as an extension of environmental injustice of differential vulnerability and privilege, is state-sanctioned violence. In other words, which groups are poorly equipped to adapt to and weather the climate crisis is by design and never by chance. According to critical environmental justice scholars, for social movements to adequately address climate

injustice, they must pivot from solely looking at uneven racial *outcomes* to theorize racial *production* (Pulido, 2017). Settler colonialism, slavery, and the exploitation of people of color were and are foundational to the maintenance of a system of climate injustice that places some, particularly Indigenous people, at greater risk and erases how they experience and tend to the environment (Whyte, 2016). This system commodifies both humans and the environment to assign more worth to some (i.e., more deserving of climate mitigation and adaptation) and less worth to others (i.e., less deserving of climate mitigation and adaptation). According to David Pellow (2007), this means that groups of people and their environments are assigned market values:

> "Human beings and nature lose their inherent worth and are defined mainly in market value terms. For indigenous persons, people of color, and women, such a system is additionally burdensome because their "market value" (the wages and salaries they can command) is further degraded as a result of ideologies that define them as socially and culturally worth less than others" (52).

Queer and feminist scholars argue that climate violence is a gendered and sexualized phenomenon rooted in cis-heteropatriarchy (Gaard, 2019; MacGregor, 2009, 2010). For example, prominent ecofeminist Greta Gaard argues that masculinist ideologies are a root cause of the extraction that drives climate change and suggests that masculinist ideologies also circulate in technocratic climate solutions (Gaard, 1997, 2015). Normative race, gender, *and* sexuality require environmental devastation—on the one hand propping up a militaristic, extractive straight white cisgender masculinity while using this to justify processes of wastelanding that are core to settler colonialism (Voyles, 2015, 2021). For example, ongoing gender violence works in tandem with extraction when more and more Indigenous girls, women, and Two-Spirits go missing or are murdered by men in “man camps” who come chasing oil rigs and developments (Dhillon, 2019). We cannot

disentangle gender violence, settler colonialism, and white supremacy because they all prop up climate injustice.

We must also turn toward social reproduction to understand the roots of climate injustice. To gain a theoretical hold on social reproduction, queer and feminist scholars also provide a rich scaffolding (di Chiro, 2008). In response to limitations in traditional Marxist approaches, which focus exclusively on production and accumulation, Marxist feminists argue that processes of social reproduction make production and accumulation possible by placing the, often unpaid, labor of emotions, child-rearing, carework on racialized and gendered workers (Bhattacharya, 2017; Laslett & Brenner, 1989). Importantly, some women and girls perform this work more often than others within a global system of unequal power, where women of color perform reproductive labor for white women who possess the capital to ask others to do this work. Furthermore, social reproduction also reproduces social and cultural inequalities by teaching, reinforcing, and therefore naturalizing social differences and hierarchies like race, class, and sexuality.[1] Providing a political economic analysis of heteronormativity, Nguyen (2021) positions social reproduction as a key means through which heteronormativity serves white supremacist capitalism through the maintenance of the neoliberal gay subject who aspires for the "good life." For example, warning against the liberal progress narrative that mainstream gay and lesbian organizations propagate, Nguyen (2021) argues that corporations' support of issues like same-sex marriage give them a license to disrupt global economies:

> "[Corporations'] support for same-sex marriage and nondiscrimination in hiring is merely a technique to reinforce capitalist's rights to hire, to buy, to sell, and to control an institution that supports social reproduction and divisions of labor… In

[1] To be clear, social reproduction can also be a source of coalition where environmental justice and reproductive justice movements, for example, unite around making the Earth survivable for this generation and generations to come (di Chiro 2008).

> courting the support of these "enlightened" and "progressive" capitalists, LGBT activists end up conferring legitimacy and enabling them to grow evermore influential" (14)

In this way, accepting corporations as part of the LGBTQ coalition and "allies" in the fight for equality is akin to taking a poison pill—mainstream LGBTQ organizations and people take the pill that corporations offer but, in the process, toxins enter the entire LGBTQ community. Such an exchange is subtle, and reflects movement toward a neoliberal, sexual regime of governance, which Lisa Duggan (2003) describes as homonormativity. In other words, while the gradual state and corporate inclusion of sexual and gender diversity appears to be a win for LGBTQ people, it is only a win for some who possess the capital to think about and benefit from marriage. Those who uncritically accept issues such as marriage equality and military inclusion as wins engage in homonormativity by simply changing the contours of heteronormativity as opposed to challenging it.

To bring these threads of environmental justice and critiques of hetero/homonormativity together, consider the example of the Dakota Access Pipeline, Wells Fargo, and Pride that will come up often throughout the dissertation. In 2016, Indigenous activists and their allies captured the world's attention when they mounted resistance to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. As several activists and scholars have convincingly argued, the fight against the pipeline was a matter of climate justice because of how extraction (production) was and continued to take place on Tribal lands and waters (Whyte, 2017). Wells Fargo, among many other banks, was a key financial backer of the Dakota Access Pipeline, AND in recent decades, a key contributor to LGBTQ Pride Parades. Pride organizers uncritically allowed and honored Wells Fargo as "allies" to LGBTQ equality but also simultaneously served capital by engaging in homonormative

social reproduction—LGBTQ equality simply comes at the cost of reinscribing environmental racism and settler colonialism.

Therefore, a comprehensive environmental justice analysis must attend to cis-heteronormativity, and vice versa. To summarize, systems of racial capitalism and settler colonialism create a market where resources in addition to people are valued. Environmental racism and injustice are constituent of this system. This means that the state and corporations exploit entire groups of people to produce and therefore maintain the system. To continue producing, an idealized citizen and subject is created and maintained, often through gendered, racialized, and classed processes of social reproduction. In the context of neoliberalism, gender and sexual minorities make a bargain—in exchange for assimilating into the market, they throw racialized queer and trans people under the bus. However, even as the state targets these groups, capital necessitates their existence as "surplus populations" (Ferguson, 2004). This positioning serves as a standpoint from which valuable queer (of color) environmental/climate critiques can be made.

A Theory of Queer Climate Justice

How do queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement? In this section, I present a theory of queer climate justice, based on the empirical findings that follow in the rest of the dissertation, in response to this question. I present and divide my theory into two parts, corresponding to the two categories of sub-questions I presented in the introduction. First, in response to the sub questions concerning "How" or "How do queer and trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives and strategies," I tell a story of critique and resistance. I summarize this part of the theory in Figure 2.1 below. Second, in response to the sub questions concerning "To what extent" or "To what extent do queer and

trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives and strategies," I tell a story of trouble implementing queer climate justice strategies in practice. I summarize this argument in Figure 2.2.

Queer Climate Justice

In summary of part 1 of my argument or Figure 2.1., vulnerability, survival & resilience, and play constitute the portal or entry point for considering how climate change impacts queer & trans people and how they contribute to the battle against climate change. After crossing this portal, the story becomes more complex. On the one hand, the portal may lead queer & trans people on an ecohomonormative path. Here, while ostensibly reaching for equality, queer & trans people end up reinforcing inequalities. As a result, queer & trans people of color are left behind. On the other hand, the portal may lead queer & trans people on a queer climate justice path. Here, queer & trans people reject the false promises of narrow equality visions (critique) and implement an intersectional vision of climate justice (resistance). The rest of this subsection breaks down each of these elements.

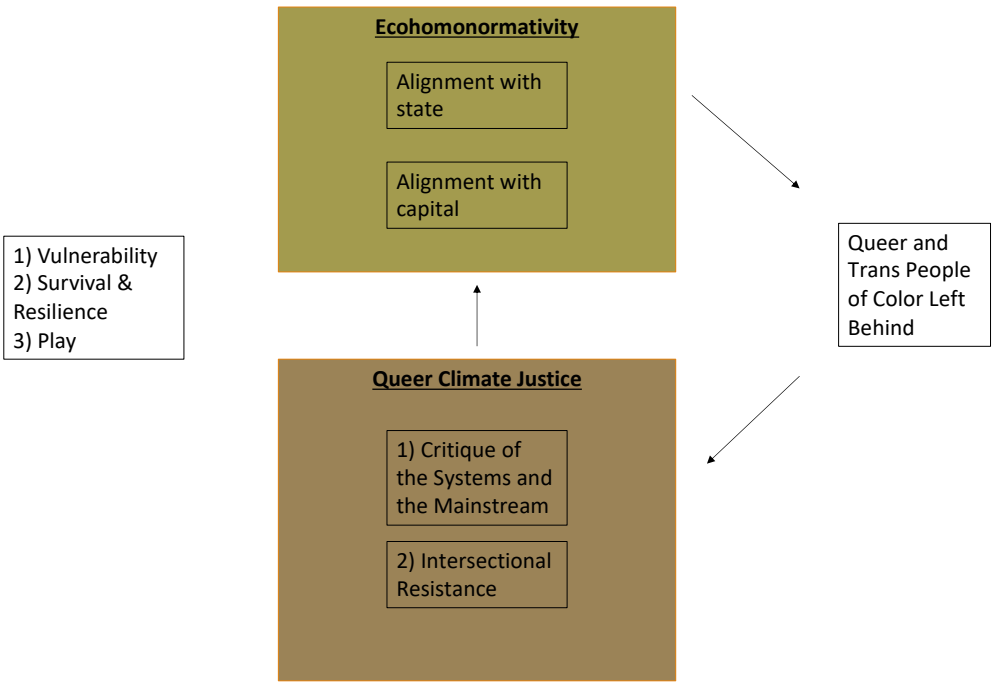

Figure 2.1. Queer Climate Justice

First, entering the portal, we learn about the stakes of climate injustice for queer & trans people and common threads of their resistance. Queer & trans perspectives adjust narratives of climate injustice to suggest that queer & trans people are especially vulnerable to the climate crisis. However, queer & trans people have learned to survive and created models of resilience that can teach other people to endure the impacts of climate change. Finally, queer & trans people use play as a mechanism for their own healing. They also position play as a creative intervention in climate justice and a portal itself that invites onlookers to join the climate justice movement.

After entering the portal, some queer & trans perspectives go on an ecohomonormative road. Ecohomonormativity is a process of normalization and neoliberal inclusion. This road operates with two on-ramps. On the first on-ramp, some queer & trans climate activists bring an assimilationist lens to their framing, such as looking favorably

upon marriage equality, and in the process, align with the state and marginalize queer & trans people of color. On the second on-ramp, mainstream LGBTQ institutions such as Capital Pride align with fossil capital and likewise cast aside the marginalized within the queer & trans community.

Built alongside and in response to the ecohomonormative road, a queer climate justice framework, in the middle bottom of Figure 2.1. above, asserts a critique of the ecohomonormative road and outlines a path of resistance that rests on intersectional strategies. Hence, the arrow pointing from the middle bottom box of Figure 2.1. points upward to represent a queer and trans of color response to the violence of ecohomonormativity as shown in the middle top box of Figure 2.1. Like the ecohomonormative road, the queer climate justice road has two on-ramps:

1) **Critique:** interlocking systems of oppression AND narrow visions of equality throw queer & trans people of color under the bus and threaten their survival
2) **Resistance:** target the institutions, whether state or internal to the queer & trans community, that threaten survival

Barriers to Queer Climate Justice

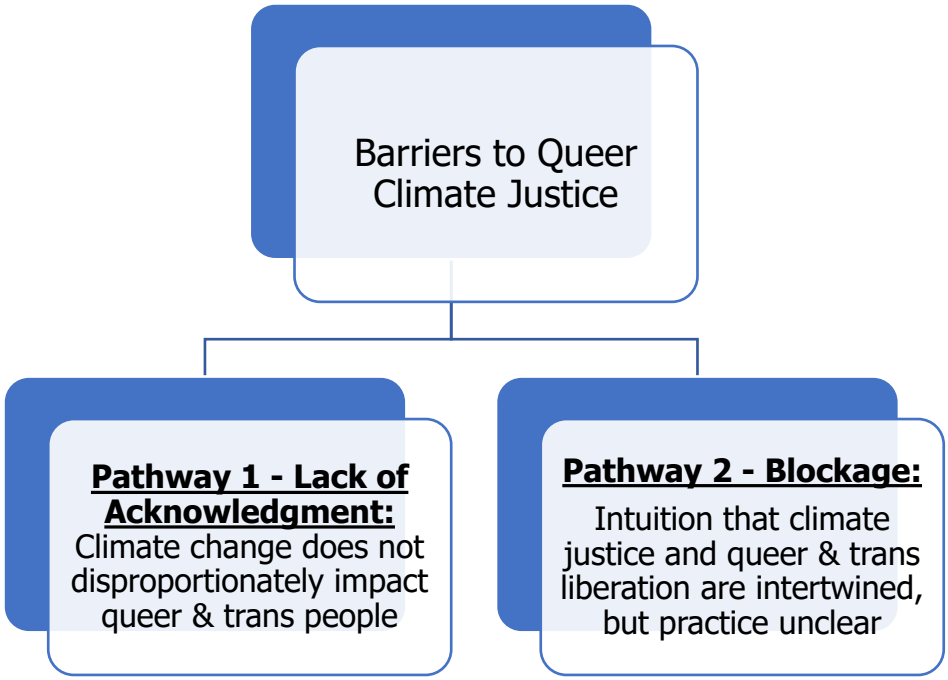

Figure 2.2. Barriers to Queer Climate Justice

The second part of the theory concerns a response to "to what extent queer and trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies and narratives." I articulate two pathways that ultimately result in marginalizing queer & trans people of color. The two pathways stem from differences in approaching the process of qualifying and identifying the frontlines of the climate crisis or which issues "disproportionately impact" queer & trans people. The first pathway concerns a complicated identity politics in climate movements. Queer & trans people have not faced "enough" disproportionate impact to be a frontline community to the climate crisis. The second pathway concerns resources and institutional support. National advocacy organizations create rhetorical solidarity between queer & trans liberation and climate justice but fall short in identifying strategic campaigns at the intersection of the two

issues. Both pathways marginalize queer & trans people of color because they offer single-axis analyses that erase the impacts of climate change on intersectionally marginalized people.

In the first pathway, on the left side of Figure 2.2. above, climate justice narratives are not inclusive of queer and trans perspectives. As I noted in the environmental & climate justice section of this chapter, environmental & climate justice movements use the metric of disproportionate impact to guide their organizing; however, queer and trans people often do not fall under the narrative umbrella of being a "frontline community" hit first and worst by the climate crisis. As a result, climate justice narratives collapse and therefore marginalize queer and trans people with varying experiences of privileges and oppressions.

In the second pathway, on the right side of Figure 2.2. above, climate justice strategies are not inclusive of queer and trans perspectives. While some organizations may acknowledge that queer & trans and climate crises are interrelated and forge rhetorical solidarity between LGBTQ and climate movements, they stop at this stage. However, because of a more rudimentary analysis of how climate injustice and homo/transphobia interlock as well as how climate justice and queer & trans liberation interlock, strategy, as defined in the social movements section of this chapter, does not change. Like the first pathway, the second pathway also leads to the marginalization of queer & trans people who do not see climate justice strategies meet and address their needs.

The theory I have presented in this section suggests that 1) queer & trans perspectives bring new climate justice narratives and performative tactics, 2) an ecohomonormative road takes us away from a more liberatory road, and 3) barriers block the influence of queer & trans perspectives on climate justice narratives and strategies. Across

the activist efforts I studied, queer & trans perspectives emphasize common narratives and practice a playful politics imbued with pleasure, joy, and fun. However, queer & trans presence in climate activism does not necessarily imply a radical politics. Furthermore, a number of barriers constrain the ability for queer & trans perspectives to make inroads in climate justice narratives and strategies.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed four related sets of studies, drew out concepts core to the dissertation, articulated the limitations of them operating independently, and presented my theory as filling some of the limitations. First, I outlined how and why I define and use terms such as "climate justice," "queer & trans," and "strategy." Next, I identified some gaps in environmental & climate justice and queer & trans studies and argued that bringing them together could fill their respective gaps. Finally, I described my two-pronged theory that describes what queer & trans perspectives bring to the climate justice movement and some barriers that constrain their wider acceptance.

In the chapters that follow, I describe each segment of the theory that I presented in this chapter. In chapter 4, I address "how do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?" This chapter corresponds to the three areas of convergence and the ecohomonormativity that I display on Figure 2.1. In chapter 5, I address "to what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?" I zoom into New York City and the case of the Queer Bloc within the People's Climate March of 2014 to explicate the first pathway described in Figure 2.2. In chapter 6, I address "how do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?" I take our narrative to Washington D.C., where I analyze two cases in 2017 to exemplify queer & trans contributions to shifting

climate justice demands, targets, arenas, and tactics. This chapter builds out the middle bottom box of the theory in Figure 2.1. In chapter 7, I address "to what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?" This chapter explains why national advocacy organizations do not substantively work at the intersection of climate justice and queer & trans liberation. I use this chapter to build out the second pathway in Figure 2.2. By the end of the empirical chapters, I complete the story of the theory presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Recall, my research question is "How do queer and trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement?" I divided this central research question into four additional sub-questions that guide my inquiry and are each the subject of the empirical chapters that follow. I use qualitative multi-method analysis of queer and trans climate organizing in the United States to answer these questions. I collected and analyzed data spanning different times, cities, and organizing structures using two qualitative methods- content analysis and semi-structured interviewing. I achieve both breadth and depth by complementing the broad and public nature of content analysis and the specific and relatively more private nature of interviewing. Such an approach of combining more textual analysis with interview methods is established in studies of gender and sexuality (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

This chapter discusses how and why my research design and methods are appropriate for answering my research questions. First, I explain how I designed the dissertation research and why I made my choices. Second, I outline how I collected the data to answer my research questions and why these are the most appropriate methods. This section also describes the characteristics of the data I collected. Third, I explain my data analysis procedures and my cycles of coding. Fourth, I express my epistemological commitments and standpoint and how these inform how I approach data collection and analysis.

Research Approach

Why a qualitative multi-method approach to address the research questions? To address this question, I start by answering, "why not quantitative approaches?" First, I am not seeking to make generalizable claims, an objective well-suited for quantitative inquiry

(Polit & Beck, 2010). Furthermore, and related to the goal of generalizability, I am not testing a theory. I, therefore, do not aspire to develop theory linearly, generate hypotheses, collect data, and evaluate the hypotheses(Y. S. Park et al., 2020). Second, quantitative scholars often do not collect additional data once they start data analysis. In contrast, qualitative scholars "can add new pieces to the research puzzle or conjure entire new puzzles—while we gather data—which can even occur late in the analysis" (Charmaz 2006, pg. 14). Third, the phenomenon of interest—a queer and trans climate justice movement—has narratives and strategies that are highly context-dependent and therefore are difficult to capture under quantitative inquiry.

By contrast, I use grounded theory methods to guide my data collection and analysis because of their flexibility but rigorous belief in constructing one theory rather than one objective truth. Grounded theory methods "consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves… data form the foundation of our theory, and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct" (Charmaz 2006: 2). These guidelines include labeling initial data with codes that provide a level of abstraction beyond specific data points, collecting additional data based on what piqued interest in initial coding, developing categories after further periods of coding and analytic memo writing, and ending with a 'grounded theory' that emerges from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

I specifically use interpretivist, as opposed to positivist, grounded theory methods. An interpretivist has different goals than a positivist. I align with the following definition and goals of interpretive research: "we seek to understand what a thing "is" by learning what it does, how particular people use it, in particular contexts. That is, interpretive research

focuses on context-specific meanings, rather than seeking generalized meaning abstracted from particular contexts" (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2013, p. 23). I view queer climate movements as the "thing" under inquiry for this dissertation. As opposed to a positivist methodology that might assume that one truth can be established during research, a constructivist-interpretivist methodology believes that there are multiple truths that researchers, respondents, and their larger social worlds intersubjectively construct (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

Research Design & Methods

I organized my research around three cleavages: 1) broad vs. specific, 2) early actors vs. later, and 3) national vs. local. The first empirical chapter addresses: **how do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?** This chapter covers the "broad" approach to queer & trans climate organizing across the U.S. by providing analysis based on blog posts, newspaper articles, and more external-facing material in roughly the past 15 years. The second empirical chapter addresses: **to what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape the narrative?** Here, I go into a "specific" and "early" case in the Queer Bloc, a contingent consisting of Queer Planet and Queers for the Climate, which worked toward addressing what a queer response to the climate crisis entailed in the lead up to the People's Climate March in 2014. The third empirical chapter addresses: **how do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?** Continuing the "specific" thread, I speak to the why, how, and so what of two queer and trans climate protests in D.C. These represent the "later" actors insofar as they follow three years post the Queer Bloc's organizing. Finally, the fourth empirical chapter addresses: **to what extent do queer &**

trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies? Here, I analyze "national" advocacy in nonprofits to contrast the last two chapters' local emphasis.

Data Collection

I used a qualitative multi-method approach to data collection using content analysis and semi-structured interviews. In this section, I justify and describe the data collection procedures for each method. This section follows the chronology of my data collection process insofar as I start with defining the content analysis before discussing my semi-structured interviews. While this section concerns data collection, I should clarify that data collection and analysis proceeded concurrently. I analyzed each data source through several qualitative coding and memo writing stages and collected further data as research sub-questions emerged (Charmaz, 2006).

I relied upon various data sources for the dissertation, including interview transcripts, emails, media coverage, external-facing publications, blog posts, social media events, and Tweets. Following grounded theory guidelines, I continued to collect data well into analysis for the dissertation research. In practice, I continued to collect interviews and gather additional media documents or social media data to make my puzzles less puzzling. I describe the data sources below in Table 3.1.

Chapter	Data Sources
Four– What is Queer Climate Justice?	22 Interviews 113 Publicly available secondary sources
Five – Intersectional Climate Praxis	9 Interviews Emails, External Articles, Social Media, Blog Posts, and Op-eds
Six – Pride for Whom?	8 Interviews Social Media, External Articles, Blog Posts, and Op-eds
Seven – Coming out of the Closet; coming out as Environmentalists	17 Interviews External Articles, Blog Posts, and Op-eds

Table 3.1 Data Sources by Chapter

Content Analysis

First, I wanted to achieve an overview of how queer and trans perspectives were shaping climate justice narratives and establish a baseline of which individuals and organizations were working at this intersection. I, therefore, started with a content analysis of movement-generated blog posts, newspaper articles, and website pages published between 2005 and 2020.

Why content analysis? To understand how queer and trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives, I sought to capture the more public, externally mediated

interpretations using content analysis. Social movement actors face contrasting "speech situations" in which they calibrate their framing to adjust to different purposes. For example, "public situations mean wider diffusion and suggest constraints that derive from persuasion, recruitment, and countermovement strategy… less public situations may limit diffusion of the message to movement participants, as in organizational meetings, or to prospective recruits" (Johnston, 1995, pg. 223-234). Analyzing both public and private situations is necessary for capturing the totality of how social movement actors tell narratives. Because content analysis is often reliant upon publicly available data, such as newspapers or policy bills (Murib, 2020; Westbrook & Schilt, 2013), I thus capture the public side of the equation.

I relied upon three databases. First, following the approach of several social scientists (Ghaziani, 2014; Westbrook & Schilt, 2013), I gathered data for the content analysis through the Nexis Uni database and searched by different combinations of three terms: I used "LGBT" as the first term for all of my searches; I varied between "environmentalism," "environmental activist," "climate justice," "environmental justice," "ecojustice," "environmentalist," "green," and "eco" as the second term; and I varied between "queer," "gay," "lesbian," and "two spirit" as the third term. To supplement the data from Nexis Uni, I also searched ProQuest and Google using the same methods.

I time-locked my parameters by searching within the window of 2005 to 2020. I chose 2005 as the earliest time I could select data as a somewhat arbitrary starting point; however, I knew that organizations such as OUT 4 Sustainability began forming in the late 2000s. Therefore, choosing 2005 as the earliest time allowed me to capture any efforts before OUT 4 Sustainability's formation. I bound 2020 as the latest period for my search because I started the content analysis in September of 2020.

To include data sources for analysis, I read the summary previews and included the pieces that explicitly drew attention to the intersections of queer and climate politics. If I was still unsure, I skimmed the full article. In total, the search process yielded 151 sources for analysis. Upon deeper reviewing the articles, I dropped 38 sources, leaving 113 articles for the second round of analysis, including media-produced reporting on queer climate activism, movement-generated blog posts & op-eds, publicly available interview transcripts, and magazine articles. I summarize and provide examples of the data sources under each category I kept for the content analysis in Table A.1 in Appendix A.

I opted for a purposive strategy instead of representative sampling for two reasons (Ghaziani, 2014).[2] First, searching within mainstream publications such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* would be ineffective because, in contrast to gayborhoods, queer climate activism has not mainstreamed to the same extent. Second, a general search process encompasses the publication outlets most likely to be tied to social movements. For example, *Grist* is a standard outlet for the environmental movement and serves a similar function as the *Advocate* does for the LGBTQ movement (Hindman, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews

If the content analysis allowed me to capture how social movements handle "public speech situations," semi-structured interviews and additional data collected during this stage allowed me to analyze relatively more private speech situations. To complement the content analysis, I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with queer climate activists based in New York City and Washington D.C. because the content analysis revealed that queer and

[2] A representative sampling approach might, for example, randomly select articles from newspapers such that there are representative articles across the ideological spectrum. For more on this approach, see Ghaziani (2014).

trans climate interventions were most common in these regions (I used an additional five interviews with queer & trans climate activists for the second chapter).

Why interviews and why semi-structured interviews? What are the advantages of using these methods? First, the interviews fill some of the limitations of the content analysis and reduce some of the bias associated with publicly oriented documents. For example, Blee and V. Taylor (2002) argue that social movement studies that exclusively draw upon archival interviews or publicly available interviews risk reproducing gender, class, and leadership biases because men, upper-class, and leaders are more likely to be represented in the public record. Accessing rank and file social movement participants, women, or other gender marginalized participants, and those that the media and leadership marginalize through semi-structured interviewing serves to correct these biases.

Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews impose flexible guidelines on the researcher, which allow the researcher advantages in pursuing context, meaning, and change over time (Blee & V. Taylor, 2002). As opposed to asking the same questions of each respondent, the researcher can ask different questions within common themes and make choices to probe when appropriate. Therefore, researchers can produce context-specific knowledge about social movement actors that help explain activists' motivations, beliefs, and actions in a longitudinal way. For example, David Pellow's studies of the total liberation movement relied upon several semi-structured interviews with activists who were involved with several earth liberation and animal liberation organizations over time, an aspect of the methodology that lends itself to identifying why and how the total liberation frame emerged (Pellow, 2014; Pellow & Brehm, 2015).

Sampling and Selection

As a matter of theoretical sampling, or the process of collecting data to construct and fill gaps in a grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), it became necessary to study different cases because they differed in their racial constituency, with predominantly white queer and trans people organizing within the Queer Bloc in New York City and mainly queer and trans people of color organizing in the Washington D.C. actions. Starting in early 2021, I reached out to organizers affiliated with or in proximity to these organizations to request interviews. See Table A.2 in Appendix A for the list of interviews I conducted among these groups.

To select and interview respondents, I used what scholars refer to as a "snowball sampling/respondent-driven sampling" (SS/RDS) in a hard-to-reach population strategy (Gile & Handcock, 2010; L. A. Goodman, 2011). It was not possible, nor did it make sense, to randomly sample who to interview. Instead, the content analysis helped me determine the initial "seeds" from which to sample (Goodman, 2011). I first reached out to organizers who publicly wrote about or named their affiliation with the actions under analysis. After initial interviews, each person recommended further potential respondents of interest. This first "wave" of respondents after the initial seed interviews then recommended more people to interview, constituting the second "wave" (ibid).

Starting in Washington D.C., I conducted eight interviews with WERK for Peace, No Justice No Pride, and 350 DC organizers because of their varying leadership and participation in protests explicitly framed at the nexus of queerness and climate during two actions in 2017. The first action was a queer dance party for climate justice outside Ivanka Trump's house in April. The second action was a blockade of the Capital Pride parade at three points and targeting three actors—the police, Lockheed Martin, and Wells Fargo.

Similarly, in New York City, I interviewed activists who planned the Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet contingent during the 2014 People's Climate March and coordinators involved in the overarching decision-making for the March. In sum, I conducted nine interviews during this stage. I focused primarily on recruiting and interviewing Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet organizers. They worked on various pre-March campaigns and created art and festivities in the immediate days before and during the day of the March.

Finally, because my previous chapters primarily focus on local-level queer and trans interventions, I zoom out in the fourth empirical chapter to the national level to determine if there was any space for mainstream advocacy organizations to bridge the queer-climate nexus. This chapter relied on 17 semi-structured interviews with current and former staffers at the Sierra Club, 350.org, the National Center for Transgender Equality, and the National LGBTQ Task Force. The four organizations—two climate/environmental and two LGBTQ—were purposively chosen because of their contrasting histories and strategies yet commitment to some cross-movement action from the climate/environmental movement to queer/trans movement or vice versa. For example, 350.org is an explicitly grassroots climate organization. In contrast, the Sierra Club represents the historical image of mainstream environmentalism with an inside-the-beltway strategy but has recently ventured into the climate space.

What did purposive sampling look like in practice? First, I determined the range of organizations I could select cases for this chapter. I compiled lists for two broad categories of national advocacy groups: environmental and climate organizations and LGBTQ organizations. The Sierra Club, 350.org, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth were among

the possible environmental and climate organizations. Among the potential LGBTQ organizations were the National LGBTQ Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Second, I sought to select two organizations under each category that focused on slightly different causes and had contrasting organizational histories. I determined which organizations varied in terms of the time of founding and purpose to make my decision. The period of founding is crucial because, as interest group scholars argue, an organization's initial goal and identity can become path-dependent (Engel, 2007, 2016b). Therefore, on the one hand, I selected the Sierra Club and the National LGBTQ Task Force as the oldest standing national environmental and LGBTQ organizations, respectively, which fight for general purpose "environmental" and "LGBTQ" goals. On the other hand, I chose 350.org and the National Center for Transgender Equality as national environmental and LGBTQ organizations, respectively, founded in the 21st century and working toward specific category sub-issues of climate and transgender rights, respectively.

After selecting these organizations, I began tracing a general history of each organization's cross-movement action. I used Google keyword searches to create a preliminary account. For the environmental organizations, I searched the organization's name alongside "queer," "lgbt," "lesbian," "gay," or "trans." For the LGBTQ+ organizations, I searched the organization's name alongside "environmental," "climate," or "climate justice." These search actions yielded the last three tables, B.1 to B.3, in Appendix B. These tables are not meant, by any means, to be representative of the organization's entire history on the matter. I used these histories as bare-bones, from which I could add on via the interviews.

Therefore, I next reached out to the authors of press releases and solidarity letters requesting interviews. I used the same snowball sampling/respondent-driven sampling to construct a larger dataset of interviews (Gile & Handcock, 2010; L. A. Goodman, 2011). Each person I initially interviewed offered names of other people I could interview, some of whom became part of the sample.

Interview Protocol and Data Management

For each interview in the dissertation, I used an interview protocol described in detail in Appendix A, with familiar topics and some suggested questions under each topic. I typically started each interview by asking respondents to give a brief history of their activist or advocacy journey before going into conceptual questions such as "what are the connections between queer liberation and climate justice?" The middle section of each interview focused on campaigns, actions, or solidarity letters. In this section, I asked respondents to tell me about the rationale, lead-up, process, and outcomes of the actions. In the last section, I typically asked respondents about barriers and conflicts in their organizing before giving each respondent the chance to expand upon an earlier point or raise an issue that we did not cover in the rest of the interview. I interviewed all participants over Zoom due to the constraints of the pandemic. The interviews ranged, but the average length was one hour.

During each interview, I took extensive written notes. I approached my note-taking similarly to how ethnographers approach taking field notes (Emerson et al., 2011). In other words, I wrote out descriptions of what each respondent talked about and used a system where I starred critical points for which I wanted to probe and drew arrows back to previous comments to thread the narrative together. After I ended an interview, I either immediately

or later wrote what Emerson et al. (2011) call "in-process memos" to distill critical takeaways from the interview, comparisons to other interviews, and what was still puzzling after the interview. I viewed the purpose of these memos, titled simply with the respondent's name, as "identifying, formulating, and elaborating the theoretical import or implications" (Emerson et al. 2011, pg. 123) of my interviews.

I recorded each interview and transcribed them verbatim before uploading them to the NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software. I transcribed the interviews in various ways, including sending them to a transcription service such as GoTranscript for human-generated transcriptions and uploading them to software such as Descript for AI-generated transcriptions. To ensure that the quality of the transcripts was comparable, I would go back through the AI-generated interview transcripts to correct errors because the human-generated transcripts were generally more accurate. No one besides me had access to the full interview transcripts.

Supplemental Data Collection

During the semi-structured interviewing stage of the dissertation research and initial rounds of analysis, which I explain in detail in the next section, I realized that I needed to collect further data to strengthen my analysis and the development of my categories. According to grounded theory methods guidelines, researchers using theoretical sampling collect additional data when their categories have gaps or are thinly supported (Charmaz 2006). For some grounded theorists, theoretical sampling might entail re-interviewing respondents with questions clarifying concepts emergent from the data or going back into the field (ibid). However, I relied upon gathering media articles, social media posts, and emails for my purposes.

For example, during the initial coding of transcripts of Queers for the Climate/Queer Planet interviews, a category called "Measuring Stakes" emerged; however, I realized that this was more about who counted within "the Frontlines." With additional data, particularly with the listserv that Queers for the Climate/Queer Planet used to organize, I could further identify the properties within the "the Frontlines" category into "Qualifying the Frontlines" and "Labeling the Frontlines." For the Queers for the Climate/Queer Planet chapter, I gathered 33 email threads from the Queers for the Climate listserv, external-facing videos, social media events on Facebook, blog posts, and media coverage.

I followed a similar procedure after conducting initial interviews with queer dance party for climate justice and D.C. Capital Pride blockade organizers. For example, two respondents who were part of D.C. Capital Pride blockade told me that Tweets showed how organizers were thinking about success and reacting to the backlash of their action. I then collected Tweets from several of the organizations involved in these actions. In total, I gathered Tweets from 350 DC (involved in both protests), WERK for Peace (queer dance party for climate justice), the Trans Women of Color Collective (involved in both protests), and GetEQUAL (D.C. Capital Pride blockade) within the window of late 2016 to 2019.[3] I chose this wide time frame because I knew that the protests occurred in 2017 but sought to capture any planning slightly before 2017 and then went until 2019 to see if anything notable emerged after the 2017 protests. I also gathered Facebook event pages, blog posts and press releases, and media coverage concerning the two actions of interest—queer dance party for climate justice and the blockade of Capital Pride—that organizers mentioned in their Tweets.

[3] GetEQUAL ceased operations in 2018; therefore, the end point of Tweets for that organization came in March 2018.

Data Analysis

I used a ground theory and frame analysis method to code, categorize, and theme my data on the qualitative coding software NVivo 12. I did not start the analysis with a pre-determined list of codes and categories. First, I used several "first cycle coding methods," including in vivo coding, process coding, and initial coding, on a paragraph-by-paragraph level, to map out the data gathered for the content analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Because I applied two or more codes or methods to the data, I also engaged in simultaneous coding to capture multiple meanings (Miles et al., 2014). These methods are beneficial for gathering an inventory of documents' contents and understanding the range of perspectives. Concurrent with this coding process, I wrote analytic memos to describe conceptual connections between codes and process emerging patterns. The memo process helped refine my coding and distill the theoretical impacts of the research.

Next, I started a transitional phase before the second cycle of coding, where I wrote memos, code mapped and diagrammed codes. As a result, I narrowed down the number of codes, particularly the redundant ones or those with one datum, and sorted the remaining codes into categories. I sorted some codes into three categories relevant for social movement frame analysis: 1) the key issues; 2) the diagnostic (problem definition) and prognostic (solution); 3) and the symbols and historical reference points (Fuks, 2001; Ryan, 1991). Next, I applied these refined codes to the 113 secondary data sources and proceeded to focused coding, where I diagramed the relationships between categories and wrote memos to compare across data sources (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009). I applied the refined set of codes to my interview data and compared across both datasets to generate core themes for the first empirical chapter.

Empirical chapters two and three relied upon subsets of data from the first empirical chapter; however, I re-coded the data to achieve more specificity about the Queer Bloc in the second empirical chapter and queer dance parties for climate justice and the shutdown of D.C. Capital Pride in the third empirical chapter. I performed initial coding by hand for a small selection of interviews, social media event pages, and media reports for both chapters. I categorized and cut down the codebook to a manageable number from these initial codes and then applied them to all the data that I had for each chapter. This constituted the first cycle of coding. After transitional and focused coding to create tree diagrams that relate the codes and categories to each other, I again went through the data for each of these two chapters. Upon completing these second cycles of coding, I then put together the narrative for each chapter. Finally, for the last empirical chapter, I repeated the same process: I used initial coding to build the skeleton narrative, transitioned coding to refine categories, and then used focused coding to complete the narrative.

How did I relate the memos and coding process to each other? After initial coding, which I conducted on NVivo 12 software, I concurrently wrote more memos on NVivo 12 and diagrammed them on paper. First, I wrote memos to go deeper into my existing categories' theoretical implications and limitations. I then pulled up all the memos and "clustered" them thematically, sorting, comparing, and contrasting their insights (Charmaz, 2006). On paper, I moved around the codes or "bones" from the initial coding in ways that were more in alignment with all the data. The memos helped guide this process. Then using this new structure that I diagrammed, I would go back through the data to confirm that I had adequately arranged the categories and properties.

Finally, I performed “member checks” by asking respondents for feedback on the initial draft of the dissertation. Member checks are a standard procedure in qualitative research to ensure the credibility of quotes and, to some extent, the representation of people and organizations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I incorporated member checks into my procedures because I sought to adequately capture respondents’ perspectives and ensure they had more agency in the analysis and interpretation of the dissertation (Thomas, 2017). In practice, I emailed the dissertation draft to all respondents (I reached all of them except for one) and asked them to review the quote(s) associated with them and then reflect upon the analysis and interpretation. I sent two reminder emails, one coming a week before the deadline and the final reminder coming the day of the deadline. Out of 37 unique respondents, 21 responded within the requested time window. Of those who responded, most did not have any substantive comments. Some suggested minor edits to praising in quotes or mistakes in how I referred to them or their organizations. However, some provided feedback asking for greater clarity on the dissertation's overall argument, which were helpful in my last edits.

Limitations of Research Design and Methods

Any research design requires choices, which come with benefits and limitations. Because I spent most of the chapter focusing on the benefits and justifications of my choices, this section covers the limitations. I start by tracing the limitations of my sampling procedures and how who I interviewed constrains the findings of this dissertation. Next, I speak to the challenges of studying difference within queer & trans communities and how my choices do not go far enough to capture how queer & trans of color resistance to climate injustice is not monolithic. By explicitly laying out the limitations of the research design and

methods, this section acknowledges my recognition of the dissertation's flaws and areas of improvement.

First, my sampling and interview selection procedures privilege "key" players or leaders involved in actions over participants. After I reached out to and interviewed people visibly associated with actions, they often recommended other "you have to talk to" people who were crucial in organizing. Official leaders may be more likely than participants to downplay challenges in organizing, romanticize the actions they help organize, or overemphasize the favorable outcomes of their efforts (Benford, 1997; Blee & V. Taylor, 2002). Interviewing participants, in contrast to leaders, offers a lens into, for example, interactions between elites and non-elites and the resonance of framing (Benford, 1997). If I had spent more time in sampling participants or non-leaders, I could have addressed some of the elite biases associated with mostly interviewing leaders.

Second, the research collapses important differences within queer & trans climate justice activism. Because of my attention toward scoping out queer & trans climate justice generally, I did not go as in-depth into internal differences. For example, I interviewed Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer activists involved with the No Justice No Pride blockade; however, this action is, of course, not representative of all Two-Spirit climate interventions. Similarly, I do not spend much time on Asian American queer & trans climate justice and cannot tease out the many political differences and contributions within Asian American organizing (Fujino & Rodriguez, 2022; Maeda, 2011; Wei, 1993). For these reasons, I frame the dissertation as moving us *toward one* conceptualization of queer climate justice. We can reasonably assume that the contours of queer climate justice change based on differences within queer & trans communities under study.

This section has covered the limitations of my research design and methods. As a result, I make clear that my research design and the findings from this dissertation are far from perfect. By making choices to point my research lens toward certain areas of inquiry, particularly in wanting to interview leaders and generally scope out differences between white and POC-led queer & trans climate justice efforts, I also made the choice to shine less light on inquiries that are just as worthwhile. This section therefore identifies the tradeoffs from my choices, even while I stand by the ways that I designed and gathered data for the dissertation.

Epistemologies

I enter this research as a scholar-activist, and identifying my standpoint is a core embodiment of this identity—research cannot serve or get us on the path toward liberation if the researcher does not understand how knowledge is power. A standpoint is a researcher's understanding of how their life experience's situatedness within an overarching system of power influences their knowledge production. Standpoints, as intersectional feminists theorize (Anzaldúa, 1987; P. H. Collins, 2000; Haraway, 1988), serve two critiquing functions: "[F]irst, of interesting systems of oppression, and second, of the knowledge produced and legitimated with those systems" (Grzanka, 2019, pg. 57). In other words, as Haraway (1988) argues, acknowledging and reflecting upon how knowledge produced from research comes from someone, within a particular time, from a specific place. This dissertation is no different, and I include this section to acknowledge from where I come.

Feminist reflexivity must be wary of essentializing or naturalizing one's "womanhood" as a universal experience or lens to view truth claims or knowledge (Hemmings, 2012). For example, critical ethnographers caution against static reflexivity, or

in other words, simply noting part of one's standpoint as aligning with those under research (Bhavnani et al., 2014). The researcher must be in constant dialogue with their standpoint in data collection and analysis. This means mapping how power circulates historically and in the micro field of researcher/researched interactions. For example, lesbian sociologist Dana Collins thought that she had greater access to Filipino gay hosts but quickly learned that her foreigner status revealed her limited location for knowledge production (D. Collins, 2012). In my work, I did not assume that simply because I am queer-identified that I am a better researcher of queer groups than a straight researcher.

My positionality as a queer Asian scholar-activist enabled and constrained my research. On the one hand, my positionality constrained the research process because my life experiences did not align with the most salient factors in gaining the trust of research participants. For example, activists in D.C. perceived me as more of a scholar rather than a scholar-activist because I was not from the area, nor had I lived there for many years to contribute to and participate in organizing efforts. In a political context where far-right activists or police were known to infiltrate leftist or radical spaces, this guardedness was valid. On the other hand, my positionality gave me a lens through which to diffract data collection and analysis. Over the past few years of student-worker, abolitionist, and climate justice organizing, I accumulated first-hand knowledge of race/gender/sexuality marginalization. In the context of interviewing, for example, while I cannot match the exact "pitch" of what interviewees said, I could "harmonize" because I located how organizers or academics failed to meet calls for accountability in my own life. Additionally, participating in or organizing in other movement spaces in D.C., outside of the queer and climate

intersection, brought me into contact with organizers I wanted to interview and gave me a semblance of how the movement ecosystem worked.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines how I empirically addressed the dissertation's research question and sub-questions. I designed a qualitative multi-method dissertation rooted in a grounded theory methods. To collect my data, I relied upon content analysis and semi-structured interviewing and supplemented these initial data with more data after the initial rounds of analysis. To analyze my data, I coded my data in two cycles: during the first cycle, I built an initial skeleton of a theory; during the second cycle, I completed coding based on refined categories and codes. To communicate how I entered the research, I identified my standpoint and how my lived experience enabled and constrained the dissertation's data collection and analysis.

The following four chapters present the empirical findings from the procedures outlined in this chapter. First, in the next chapter, I prominently feature the content analysis results and complement these with quotes produced during the semi-structured interviews. In chapter five, I focus on presenting findings from a subset of the interviews and taking the dissertation to New York City. Similarly, in chapter six, we go to Washington, D.C., where I prioritize findings from interview data and make my case with Tweets, blog posts, and newspaper coverage. Finally, in chapter seven, analysis based on interviews with national advocacy organizations take center stage.

Chapter 4. What is queer climate justice?

Many consider Dr. Robert Bullard the father of environmental justice. He even lists the descriptor on his website (Bullard, n.d.). Contemporary environmental justice scholars are indebted to Dr. Bullard and the first wave of groundbreaking environment justice research and activism that focuses on environmental racism and the vulnerabilities of poor racial & ethnic communities to ecological hazards (Bullard 1983). But what of the climate justice activists who see Marsha P. Johnson or Sylvia Rivera, traditionally associated with queer & trans movements, as their intellectual and movement ancestors?

This chapter addresses the sub-question "How do queer and trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?" I address this sub-question because I seek to understand how queer & trans framing choices move the stories that climate justice movements tell in new directions, such as paying homage to Marsha P. Johnson or Sylvia Rivera. This chapter identifies how queer & trans activists converge in framing climate justice and previews points of divergence and challenges that I explain in greater depth in the later chapters. In other words, this chapter sketches the bones of the queer climate justice theory I presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.1) by sketching a portal for understanding queer & trans perspectives in climate justice and previewing how the portal takes us to two potential roads.

I find that bridging the climate and LGBTQ movements share three elements: 1) intersectional analysis that centers queer and trans vulnerability to climate change; 2) survival & resilience as the source of queer and trans contributions to the climate movement; and 3) play in climate activism. Furthermore, queer climate activists converged around a shared set of issue bridges or issues connecting the two movements. Activists frequently raised houselessness, insecure housing, & housing discrimination by referencing the high

proportion of unhoused youth who are queer and trans. This vulnerability intersects with racism and classism as the linking issue for climate and LGBTQ movements. In addition to naming their vulnerability, queer climate activists argued that queer and trans people have survived crisis upon crisis, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and have built informal resilient institutions that cisgender and heterosexual people can model to survive the climate crisis.

However, I argue that two frame bridging processes occur and thus suggest divergence: first, a queer climate justice frame bridges the queer liberation frame to the climate justice frame; second, an LGBTQ climate change frame bridges the LGBTQ rights frame to the climate change frame. These frames diverge in what social movement scholars call diagnostic and prognostic framing, or naming the problem definition and solution, respectively. Primarily queer, trans, Indigenous people of color advance a queer climate justice frame, which consists of a diagnostic that the entire system—cis-heteronormativity interlocking with capitalism, white supremacy, settler colonialism, and imperialism—is at fault for climate change. Their prognostic prefigures a non-extractive world built upon queer mutual aid and collective care that lends itself to survival during climate crisis. On the other hand, primarily white, gay men advance an LGBTQ climate change frame that diagnoses the government as simply not doing enough to address climate change and offers a prognostic that creative strategy and direct action perfected in fights against Don't Ask Don't Tell and for marriage equality will pressure the government to get climate policies right. From this divergence, I developed a theoretical critique called ecohomonormativity.

I develop my argument by providing a background in queer & trans and climate framing, moving into the first part of my argument organized around "convergence" and ending with the second part of my argument called "divergence." First, I describe what

scholars see as different queer & trans, and climate movement frames. This section summarizes specific examples of frames that I wrote about in the introduction and theory chapters. Second, I develop part 1 of my argument by drawing upon my empirical data to describe points of convergence across queer & trans climate activists. Third, in part 2 of the chapter, I describe key framing differences between the LGBTQ climate change frame and the queer climate justice frame. The differences hinge on contrasting orientations to ecohomonormativity.

Climate and Queer & Trans Frames in Scholarship

In this section, I identify the climate frames and the queer & trans frames within academic literature. This section helps me contextualize how two separate movements follow a similar trend insofar as mainstream activists are more amenable to one frame, whereas radical activists adopt another. I describe core findings from social movement studies of framing in the climate movement, including the climate change frame and the climate justice frame. I supplement the two subsections that follow with other studies, while not per se framing studies, describe the core ways that climate and queer & trans movements interpret problems and solutions. As depicted in **Table 4.1** below, scholars generally divide frames within movements as aligning with more reformist/mainstream ideologies or more radical ideologies.

Table 4.1 Climate and Queer & Trans Frames

	Mainstream	**Radical**
Climate Frames	Climate Change Frame	Climate Justice Frame
Queer & Trans Frames	LGBTQ Rights Frame	Queer & Trans Liberation Frame

The discussions below expound on the frames found within Table 4.1. For the rows, I have the issue areas corresponding to climate frames in the top row and queer & trans frames in the bottom row. The columns reflect ideological stances, with the mainstream on the leftmost column and with radical on the rightmost column.

Climate frames

The climate movement bifurcates into using two common collective active frames: climate change and climate justice. While the frames align in the issues they are concerned about—the climate crisis and its impacts on vulnerable communities—they diverge in their diagnostic and prognostic framing. On the one hand, the climate change frame strives for more moderate, reformist, and institutional changes, e.g., "green economy," while leaving the global economic, political, and social system intact (Della Porta & Parks, 2014). On the other hand, the climate justice frame diagnoses the capitalist system as responsible for the climate crisis and advances calls for a dismantling of the global economy. The climate justice frame extends core tenets of environmental justice by focusing on local impacts, inequitable responsibility to solve the crisis, and inequitable vulnerability to the crisis as well as procedural or democratic justice in calling for sovereignty (J. Goodman, 2009; Jenkins, 2018; Lima & Gupta, 2013; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). Strategically incentivized to expand to new constituencies and movements to tackle a shared economic system, climate justice frame proponents bridge to a broader set of frames such as anti-war and global justice frames (Della Porta & Parks, 2014).

Queer & Trans frames

Similarly, scholars argue that the mainstream and radical flanks of the LGBTQ movement produce different frames: LGBTQ rights and queer and trans liberation. Once again, both converge in some ways, such as identifying how homophobia and transphobia affect the life outcomes of LGBTQ people but diverge in diagnostic and prognostic framing.

On the one hand, an LGBTQ rights frame primarily focuses on sexuality to the exclusion of race, gender, and class and calls for equality under the law, couched in "gay is good" sentiments, and assimilation into heterosexual institutions (Armstrong, 2002; Hindman, 2018). On the other hand, a historical gay liberation frame and a more contemporary queer and trans liberation frame rejects a reformist solution, advocates for a dismantling of white supremacy, the criminal justice, and the immigration system, and therefore bridges between queer, abolitionist, and anti-racist frames (Broad, 2020; DeFilippis, 2015, 2018; Spade, 2015; Valocchi, 1999).

The fight for same-sex/gay marriage exemplifies the tensions between LGBTQ rights and queer & trans liberation frames. Critics of marriage equality and the legal rights inclusion strategy have long argued that fighting for inclusion into the institution of marriage sustains heteronormativity, diverts attention away from more pressing social & economic issues, and does not benefit intersectionally marginalized LGBTQ people (DeFilippis, 2015; DeFilippis & Anderson-Nathe, 2017; Duggan, 2003; Spade, 2013, 2015; Vaid, 1996, 2012).[4]

[4] Dara Strolovitch (2007)'s concept of "intersectionally disadvantaged issues" is helpful for understanding the linkage between intersectional marginalization and representation. She finds that advocacy organizations reinforce inequality by a) not attending to issues that affect groups within a broader constituency that are further socially or politically marginalized and b) compounding this inequality by spending a disproportionate amount of resources on issues affecting the advantaged within the constituency.

Despite these criticisms, research suggests that advocacy organizations frame marriage equality as a trickle-down issue or that the benefits will eventually go beyond white, middle-upper-class gay people (Strolovitch, 2007). By contrast, queer liberation activists frame their organizing as a "trickle-up" endeavor whereby the most marginalized set the agenda, targets, and tactics (DeFilippis, 2018).

Other scholars, however, suggest that the fight for marriage equality is more nuanced than solely reifying pre-existing inequalities. Studying LGBTQ and immigrant rights movements in Arizona and Washington State, Erin Mayo-Adam (2020) argues that coalitions formed between the two and consequently expanded each movement. However, even as these coalitions expanded some political horizons, they also closed off the political horizons that most benefit intersectionally marginalized constituents. Thus, while mainstream reformist framings help achieve rights-based wins or cross-fertilize movements regarding organizational resources, tactics, & participation (Fisher, Dow, et al., 2017), they also leave many behind. For this chapter, we must read frames as expanding **and** constraining movement horizons.

Identifying Frame Bridges through Content and Interview Analysis

In the remaining part of the chapter, I identify and describe frame bridges based on my content and interview analysis. Recall frame bridging is bringing together two or more ideologically aligned frames (Snow et al., 1986). I start by summarizing how queer & trans climate activists are aligned in framing the climate crisis before articulating differences in framing. Based on my analysis, the frames differ in what framing scholars call diagnostic or prognostic framing (Snow & Benford, 1988). Going in more depth into the narratives

resulting from the frames, I suggest that queer & trans people in the climate space are not uniform and showcase internal division in framing the climate crisis.

Queer & trans approaches to climate activism divide into two camps: 1) what I call the LGBTQ climate change frame bridge combines the LGBTQ rights and climate change frames; 2) what I call the queer climate justice frame bridge combines the queer liberation and climate justice frames. As I depict in **Table 2.2** below, the LGBTQ climate change frame bridges the ideologically congruent, mainstream frames. In contrast, the queer climate justice frame bridges the more radical queer liberation and climate justice frames. However, the two frame bridges do converge around three shared elements—queer and trans vulnerability to the climate crisis, survival & resilience, and play—and reference similar issues. The frame bridges diverge in their diagnostic of the problems and the solutions to address them, resulting in intra-movement tension. Although I generally divide the frame bridges into the more mainstream LGBTQ climate change frame and the more radical queer climate justice frame, both are more nuanced in their analysis and contributions to the fight against climate change.

Table 4.2 Frame bridges

Queer and Trans Frame	Frame Bridge	Climate Frame
LGBTQ Rights	LGBTQ Climate Change Frame Bridge	Climate Change
Queer Liberation	Queer Climate Justice Frame Bridge	Climate Justice

Part 1: Frame Convergence

Before I describe the differences among queer & trans climate activists regarding the LGBTQ climate change frame bridge versus the queer climate justice frame, I summarize

three areas of convergence and report on the issue bridges between queer and climate frames. In other words, despite crucial differences that I explain later in the chapter, there is consensus in several areas on how to bring queer & trans people into the fight against climate change. The three elements of convergence are 1) vulnerability to the climate crisis; 2) queer and trans contributions to fighting climate change come from survival & resilience; and 3) play in climate activism. I outline properties within each element below in Table 2.3. In this section, I describe each element and provide several examples to illustrate what each element means.

Table 4.3 Shared Frame Elements

Vulnerability	**Survival & Resilience**	**Play**
Intersectional inequity & invisible vulnerability	Crisis (e.g., HIV/AIDS) survival	Body politics
Social (housing, wages, healthcare)	Chosen family	Fun
Environmental (natural disasters, sea-level rise)		
Policing, religious institutions, houseless shelters		

1) Vulnerability to the Climate Crisis

Queer & trans climate activists argued that queer and trans people are intersectionally vulnerable to climate change—that is, not only will the climate crisis impact queer and trans people, but the disadvantaged subgroups within the queer and trans community, such as queer and trans people of color, are even more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. For instance, Adrien Salazar suggested that inequalities queer and trans people already face leave them even more vulnerable to climate change:

> "Queer and trans people who are houseless are going to be on the streets when there are storms and flooding. When we have heatwaves, they have no place to go to stay cool. When you talk about the continued impacts of pollution and climate crisis on our health, people who have less access to healthcare [including queer and trans people] will have more difficulty enduring those crises." (A., Salazar, personal communication, April 15, 2021).

In the quote above, Adrien spoke to how structural trends, such as low access to healthcare and high rates of houselessness, among queer & trans people exacerbate climate impacts. This suggests that queer climate activists recognize that cis-heteronormative institutions, such as police and houseless shelters, combined with natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, produce queer and trans climate vulnerability (see Table 4.3, Figure 4.1).

As a result, vulnerability reflects a core tenet of climate justice – that socially marginalized communities, including queer and trans people, are disproportionately vulnerable to the climate crisis. In other words, because queer & trans people face homophobia and, transphobia, and discrimination in numerous domains such as housing and healthcare and are also members of other disadvantaged groups, queer & trans people have a clear stake in climate movements. By articulating the intersectional vulnerability queer and trans people experience, activists seek to expand the climate movement's constituency to a new audience.

2) Survival & Resilience

Several articles and interview participants articulated a theme of queer and trans survival or of picking up skills in weathering crisis that inform their political contributions. Anthony Torres noted that queer climate activism is not merely about highlighting the impact of climate change on the queer and trans community but rather is "actually centering

the knowledge that LGBTQ people in our communities have to offer to this planet." (A. Torres, personal communication, February 15, 2021). These contributions largely stem from the history of survival and resilience that members of the LGTBQ+ community have developed both as a memory of the AIDS crisis and the importance of choosing your own family.

Tying "survival and resilience" to previous political fights, activists most frequently referenced the U.S. AIDS crisis of the 80s and 90s and the ensuing resistance from groups such as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). These activists identified the policy outcomes resulting from the activities of resistance groups during the AIDS crisis as an example and model of how LGBTQ people could contribute to fight against climate change. Several people I interviewed mentioned the similarities between the AIDS crisis and the climate crisis by noting similar patterns: government silence on or denial of the problem, the global scale of the issue, and the life-or-death stakes.

Finally, many activists spoke about how queers bring emotional survival tools in the form of chosen families that bridge to the food and shelter lens of the climate frame. One activist asserted that "In the climate movement, the word survival means food and shelter, and it should. I think that the histories of queer organizing and queer lives bring to the table an idea of what it will take for us all to survive" (R. Schragis, personal communication, April 1, 2021). Thus, in line with theories of tactical diffusion and social movement spillover (Meyer & Whittier, 1994; Soule, 1997; Terriquez, 2015; Wang & Soule, 2012), activists use frames and tactics from LGBTQ rights and queer liberation struggles to inform their climate framing and organizing.

3) Play

For queer climate organizers, play in activism is both instrumental and a solidary, world-making practice. The typical climate protest might be theatrical, where organizers might have a huge prop resembling an oil pipeline and snake it through the streets. However, through queer climate justice dance parties or "Save the Straights" campaigns during Pride, climate activism becomes more than another protest to evolve into a celebration of queer and trans existence. We see this through the ideational infusion of playful politics within queer and trans climate protests, which rely on body politics and the logic of fun.

We see evidence of body politics through a queer dance party for climate justice held in April 2017. Here, organizers, which included WERK for Peace, Queer Resistance, the Trans Women of Color Collective, and 350 DC, targeted Ivanka Trump because they believed the media framed her as a moderating social and environmental force within the Trump administration.[5] By dancing in front of Ivanka's house in the form of queer theatricality, organizers amplified a new narrative that climate justice and queer liberation were interlocking by naming how both movements had shared enemies (Sisley, 2017).

Beyond a mere protest demonstration, the dance party was a moment to celebrate bodies. One organizer noted, "I think about how our movements are about creating both self and collective care to preserve and honor our bodies. I think the same about Mother Earth as well" (F. Nasr, personal communication, April 20, 2022). This suggests a similar experience for queer and trans bodies and the body that is Mother Earth—and a need to move from violence toward bodies to preservation of bodies. Such protests, then, represent queer & trans communities fighting back against the violence enacted upon their bodies.

[5] At the time, Ivanka positioned herself as an LGBTQ ally and climate change believer within an LGBTQ hostile, climate change denying administration.

Organizers have brought similar theatrics, light-heartedness, and fun to hosts of other climate protests. For instance, in the early 2010s, Queers for the Climate generated buzz ahead of the People's Climate March in 2014 by launching tongue-in-cheek campaigns such as Save the Straights or It Gets Wetter, a social media campaign where queers jokingly posted about what they would lose if sea-level rise continued (e.g., pasta) (J. Huff-Hannon, personal communication, October 27, 2021). Organizers sought to have more fun with their organizing, all while highlighting the unique contributions of LGBTQ people in climate organizing. Both efforts unified around a shared logic that play is symbolic and instrumental in its fun and mobilizing potential.

In opposition to an environmental and climate movement driven by throwing facts and statistics at new audiences, the findings outlined above suggest that queer and trans climate organizers play with new affective horizons and exemplify the crucial role of affect in strategy (Gould, 2009; Seymour, 2018). As a symbolic and solidary practice, queer climate tactics forge new bonds and produce a new narrative—yes, queer and trans people have a lot to contribute to the fight against climate change. What is more: they can fight climate change in a fun way. In the context of the mounting pressures of the climate crisis, these interventions are worth considering in climate mobilizations down the road.

Issue Bridges

If the three elements of convergence provide cognitive pathways for connecting queer & trans and climate frames, then issue bridges offer the more practical narrative glue. In this section, I describe and analyze the issue bridges, or the issues named to connect queer and climate frames that I discovered from my content analysis. The issue bridges ranged

from traditional environmental problems such as air & water pollution to traditionally social/economic justice issues such as poverty & low income or religion. **Figure 4.1** breaks down how frequently I coded a statement under each issue bridge. By naming what issues connect queer & trans and climate frames, activists build bridges on which coalition-building can rely.

Some issues are more likely to be the bridge between queer & trans and climate frames. For example, houselessness, insecure housing, & housing discrimination, which I coded 45 times, was the most prevalent issue bridge. One statistic rose to the fore as a dominant talking point (appearing nine times); because about 40% of unhoused youth are LGBTQ+ identified, according to cited studies from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, the Williams Institute, and True Colors United, this vulnerability becomes exacerbated when climate-change-powered natural disasters strike. Naturally, this meant that "hurricanes & storms" was the next most prevalent issue bridge. Since the LGBTQ rights movement has long had houselessness, or at least fighting for housing nondiscrimination, on its agenda to varying degrees of importance (Beam, 2018; Mucciaroni, 2008, 2017), the prevalence of the houselessness, insecure housing, & housing discrimination issue bridge, and its connection to hurricanes & storms, is not surprising.

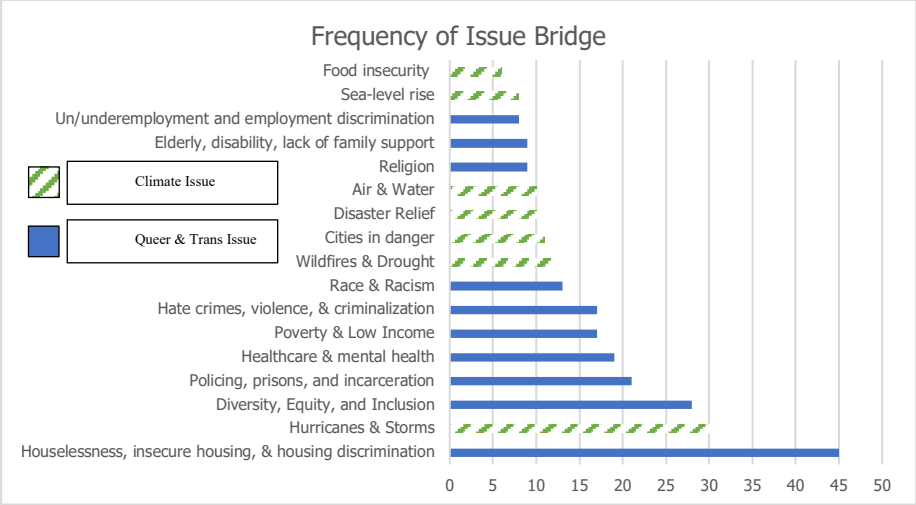

Figure 4.1 Frequency of Issue Bridge – Issue bridges colored with green stripes signal an association with climate movements, whereas issue bridges colored in blue signal an association with queer and trans movements

That said, many of the less frequently appearing issue bridges connected back to some variation of comments about queer and trans vulnerability to housing insecurity and hurricanes, storms, and natural disasters. For example, one standard narrative within the houselessness issue bridge suggested that because queer and trans people are overrepresented relative to straight and cisgender people in the unhoused population, when natural disasters strike, queer and trans people are disproportionately impacted due to transphobic and homophobic shelter and emergency staff who enforce gender binarism and sometimes deny services because of clients' gender identity. Building upon the fundamental point that unhoused queer & trans are exposed to climate change, the narrative about unhoused shelters speaks to how institutions and organizations act as an intermediate, marginalizing force that further places queer & trans people in danger.

Many issue bridges tell an intersectional story that is not reliant upon a gender-identity or sexuality-only analysis. For example, those using the policing, prisons, and incarceration issue bridge pointed out that police have disproportionately arrested trans

people of color for using the restroom of their choice in the aftermath of hurricanes. Others named how Black trans people are overrepresented in prisons and are left behind during evacuations or how elderly, disabled queer & trans people cannot easily access relief stations during extreme weather.[6] These findings extend the terrain of climate injustice to incorporate how housing shelters, police, and prisons marginalize intersectionally disadvantaged queer & trans people.

My findings suggest a queering of climate movements as opposed to a greening of LGBTQ movements. Historically and symbolically, the coded articles suggest that activists were more likely to reference historical events and symbols traditionally associated with queer liberation or LGBTQ rights instead of traditionally environmental or climate events or symbols (see Figure 4.2). Nearly fourth/fifths of the historical references and symbols are usually associated with LGBTQ/queer movements. This pattern suggests that, for the most part, queer and trans climate activists traced their genealogy and inspiration to LGBTQ rights and queer liberation fights. Moreover, activists framed this bridging as starting from LGBTQ and queer struggles to inform and bolster climate justice, instead of the opposite directionality of climate activists framing, for example, Standing Rock as informing queer movement strategy. In terms of understanding social movement spillover (Meyer &

[6] However, an open question remains—why did housing as opposed to policing or healthcare & mental health rise to the top as the most common issue bridge? While my existing analysis cannot address this exact question, I expect that neoliberal queer forces influence this trend, specifically the neoliberalization of LGBTQ nonprofits. Within the context of the nonprofit industrial complex, and a withdrawal of state social services, LGBTQ nonprofits fetishize unhoused queer & trans youth, especially queer & trans people of color, to receive funding by appealing to a rich, primarily white LGBTQ donor class (Beam, 2018). These crisis politics are not unique to LGBTQ nonprofits but the logic is particularly pernicious in mobilizing extremely precarious youth without necessarily investing in those youth. Future research could explore the extent to which LGBTQ nonprofits fetishize unhoused queer & trans youth ***and*** the environment.

Whittier, 1994; Terriquez, 2015), this finding points to discrepancies in how one movement informs another.

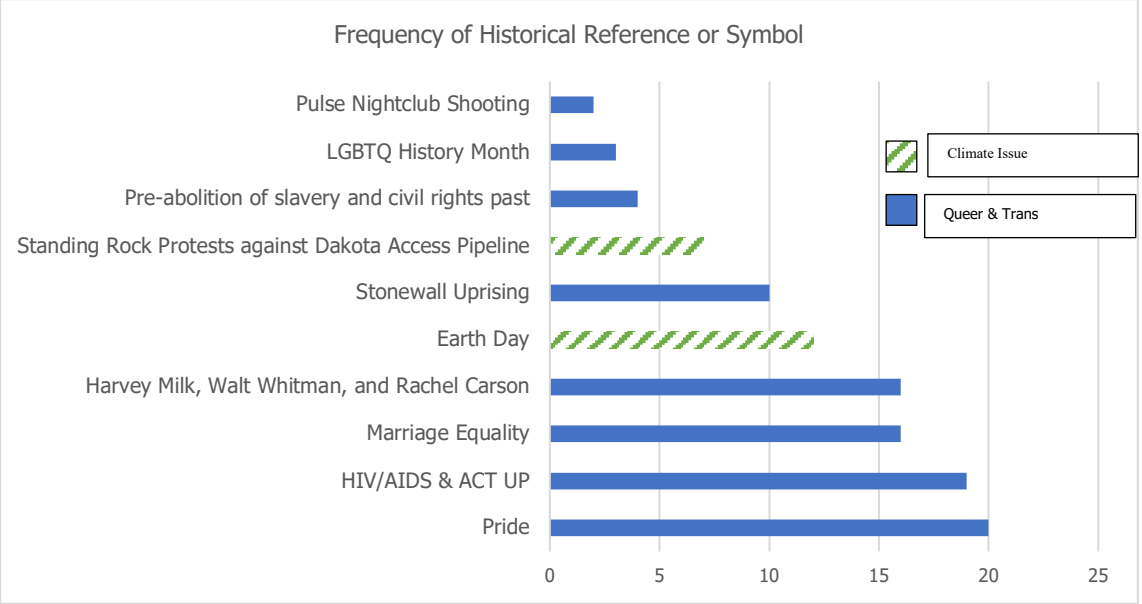

Figure 4.2 Frequency of Historical Reference or Symbol - Historical references or symbols colored with a green stripe signal an association with climate movements, whereas historical references or symbols colored blue signal an association with queer and trans movements.

Lessons from environmental and climate movements do not carry the same urgency, relevance, or purpose in shaping issues traditionally claimed by LGBTQ rights movements. In contrast, lessons from queer & trans struggles appear to carry more weight in shaping climate narratives. For example, a common talking point suggested that strategies learned from the fight against HIV/AIDS, mainly conceptual interventions such as storytelling, symbolic messaging, and direct action, apply to the battle against climate change. **Figure 4.2** shows that I coded statements about Pride and HIV/AIDS & ACT UP at nearly the same rate, or 20 and 19 times, respectively. Activists converged around a shared meaning of using HIV/AIDS & ACT UP as a reference point for queer climate politics—queers survived the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 80s and 90s. This past lends lessons for the contemporary fight

against climate change in concert with present-day queer resilience practices. By contrast, the few references to Earth Day, an environmental symbol, simply conveyed a motivational framing for queer & trans people to practice environmentalism and climate justice. Therefore, the most compelling narratives flow from queer & trans perspectives to climate movements, as opposed to the other direction.

Part 2: Frame Divergence

In this chapter section, I develop part 2 of my argument. While queer & trans climate activists are similar in framing the climate crisis, several key differences divide the framing choices. I split this section into two parts. First, I cover how the two frame bridges differ in diagnostic framing. Second, I describe how the two frame bridges differ in prognostic framing. Diagnostic framing refers to how activists define the problem or what is wrong with the world, and prognostic framing refers to how they define the solution and how to address the issue (Snow & Benford, 1988). This section is crucial for the chapter because it distinguishes between queer & trans narratives that align and misalign with climate justice.

Queer & trans climate activists do not frame the climate crisis the same way. I argue that two frame bridging processes unfold within the queer climate movement space. First, a mainstream queer climate movement bridges LGBTQ rights frames to climate change frames. These activists, organizations, and collectives challenge neoliberal organizing to some extent but offer diagnostic and prognostic framing around marriage equality and policing that is fundamentally reformist and attentive to power structures of sexuality to the exclusion of other intersecting power structures. Second, a radical queer climate justice movement bridges queer liberation frames to climate justice frames. In contrast to the mainstream queer climate movement, queer climate justice organizers call for a dismantling

of the current economic system and practice an intersectional politics that views liberation work of all stripes, such as abolition and disability justice, as interconnected.

Moreover, these contrasting frame bridges clash with each other to produce tension. Building upon the earlier section, which takes climate movements to task for not attending to queer and trans vulnerability and contributions to the climate crisis, the findings in this section signal that LGBTQ people and institutions ***themselves*** create climate injustice through what I refer to as ecohomonormativity. I describe ecohomonormativity in two ways: 1) normative LGBTQ people and institutions such as Pride cloaking their complicity with climate injustice, and 2) more subtly, LGBTQ climate activists taking neoliberal, rights-based LGBTQ frames to the climate movement and consequently reifying pre-existing inequalities.

Diagnostic Framing Differences

While the LGBTQ climate change frame names the vulnerability of queer and trans people to the climate crisis and identifies how disadvantaged subgroups within the coalition are impacted in differential ways, it nonetheless remains shallow in its intersectional analysis of the problem of climate change. For example, organizers with Queers for the Climate, the collective that organized campaigns such as It Gets Wetter and a queer contingent during the People's Climate March in New York City in 2014, do not entirely name the ways that heteronormativity interacts with other systems and produces climate injustice. In talking about the impacts of climate change, co-founder of Queers for the Climate Joseph Huff-Hannon noted in a public interview:

> "Climate change will primarily screw the poor and people in the developing world first, but even if you wanted to be more self-interested about it, global warming and

> sea-level rise will also, in the medium term, doom some of the cities that LGBT people have historically moved to, created robust communities in, or traveled to for leisure and partying: Amsterdam, New York, New Orleans, London, Miami, Rio, Shanghai, etc." (Merchant, 2014).

In the quote above, Joseph does note that LGBT people will be impacted by climate change soon because of their high presence in coastal cities. However, this logic only extends to a white, gay male subjectivity with the material and cultural capital to travel and party globally. The quote solidifies a homonormative narrative that aligns with what Dana Collins (2009) refers to as homonormative mobility. In this process, primarily white gay males frame their transnational mobility as traveling away from heteronormativity to a foreign place where they can practice "sexual freedom." Absent from the framing in the quote above is the acknowledgment that the ability for gay men to travel to these areas for pleasure is predicated on global inequality. Modifying practices of homonormativity and eco[hetero/cis]normativity, this ecohomonormative narrative paints a universal, privileged picture of who can travel and escape, to some extent, the climate crisis.

By contrast, because of the deeply intersectional lens that sits at the core of queer climate justice, the narrative of climate justice shifts, particularly in selecting targets for action. For example, in June 2017, a collective of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit organizers of color shut down Washington D.C.'s Capital Pride Parade because organizers allowed Wells Fargo, among other corporations, to sponsor the event, despite the bank's support of the Dakota Access Pipeline.[7] The organizers also targeted the police, and Northrop Grumman floats. According to Anthony Torres, who organized with 350 DC at the time, the shutdown of Pride represented a turning point in the local queer and trans community:

[7] In 2016 and 2017, in opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline, Indigenous climate justice organizers and their allies mobilized at Standing Rock where the pipeline would cross to stand for Indigenous sovereignty.

> "[I]t was an evolution in the LGBTQ community as well of an understanding that there was a group of predominantly white, gay, men in the leadership of the community and its institutions, whether it be its nonprofits, whether it'd be its cultural establishments, bars, that were either complicit in supporting some of the very forces that aligned with say someone like Trump, or contributed to that, or of course, other actors who are fueling the exploitation of communities around fossil fuels, fueling policing that harms our communities, fueling weapons manufacturers" (A. Torres, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

The action represents a deeply intersectional queer protest that centers on climate justice while also targeting the police's and the weapons manufacturer Northrop Grumman's floats. Repeating "fueling" in the last sentence of the quote above, Anthony clarifies that the systems of heteronormativity and cisnormativity are interlocking with white supremacy and imperialism. They ***fuel*** policing. They ***fuel*** weapons manufacturers. He also hits the overarching themes of the gay/queer liberation frame—more than the state is responsible for the oppression of queer and trans people, homonormative white, gay, cis men maintain cultural institutions, e.g. Pride and gay bars, with the same normative goals of the state. Organizers thus name and call out LGBTQ nonprofits and bars, while ostensibly less violent than the Trump administration, for their support or collaboration in climate injustice.

Finally, in line with other radical groups engaging in frame bridging, queer and trans climate justice organizers build upon earlier bridging efforts by bridging climate justice to queer liberation while also framing their protest in opposition to an imperialist and settler-colonial capitalist economy:

> "Just a few years before, Gaza was being bombed in 2014 by Israel [hence the attention to weapons manufacturers]. There was a very important need to draw parallels between our communities and what's happening abroad" (N. Mokuena, personal communication, March 2, 2021).

This internal community critique is consistent with a queer liberation frame that diagnoses the establishment LGBTQ infrastructure as being complicit with racism (Broad,

2020) but bridges to a new frame by naming the ways that cis gay people, through their implicit support of fossil fuels and Wells Fargo, are ecohomonormative, or a form of homonormativity that sustains eco[hetero/cis]normative institutions (di Chiro, 2010; Duggan, 2002). That is, queer climate justice organizers criticize privileged LGBTQ members and infrastructure for reinforcing a depoliticized culture that sustains the fossil fuel economy instead of challenging it. Even as the queer targets of the blockade attempt to escape heteronormativity and cisnormativity in the context of Pride, they are ecohomonormative because they ignore how their agency and sexual "freedom" is built upon extractivism and environmental racism.

Prognostic Framing Differences

Because of their varying investment in the existing political, economic, political, and social system, the LGBTQ climate change and queer climate justice frames diverge in their prognostic framing. In particular, the frames clash in their stance toward the state and inclusion in institutions such as marriage. The LGBTQ climate change frame either looked favorably upon or was agnostic about marriage equality. On a good note, Queers for the Climate co-founder Joseph Huff-Hannon and prominent queer climate activist Peterson Toscano both refer to marriage equality as a metric of success for the LGBTQ movement and as relevant for the fight against climate change. In trying to translate marriage equality strategies toward climate organizing, however, the LGBTQ climate change frame obscures the intra-LGBTQ community divisions around marriage.

Organizers using the LGBTQ climate change frame temporalize the fight for marriage equality and the climate crisis to resemble an "It Gets Better" story narratively.[8] Now that queer and trans people have won more rights, they can move on to fighting against climate change. As Joseph Huff-Hannon noted in a public interview, the LGBTQ movement has ostensibly achieved many successes. It can now take on the climate crisis, saying, "the idea was to take all the really impressive successes of the LGBT rights movement in the last 20-30 years and apply them to the climate change battle" (Cortes, 2014).

On the one hand, this framing expands the movement horizons to mobilize queer and trans people previously uninvolved with climate organizing. Many straight and queer climate organizers noted that, at a minimum, there are instrumental lessons to be learned from how the LGBTQ movement tackled marriage equality. The "change hearts and minds" reformist advocates argued that the marriage equality fight, as well as the AIDS crisis, taught activists how to shift the collective culture. LGBTQ climate change advocates argued that the same strategy of hitting at people's heartstrings by encouraging them to think about the lack of recognition that LGBTQ people in their lives faced without marriage is transferable to empathetically encouraging them to think about those impacted by climate change. In line with other examples of cross-movement solidarity (Price, 2017), this framing unites the LGBTQ and climate movements around shared principles and histories of oppression.

On the other hand, the LGBTQ climate change leaves intact and invests in an unequal social structure along gender, race, and class lines. Specifically, when marriage is

[8] The It Gets Better Project features videos of LGBTQ adults sharing their experiences with identity and coming out. The videos tell a message of hope—LGBTQ youth's lives will improve.

invoked in the fight against climate change, the narrative suggests that state-granted rights are compatible with addressing climate change. For instance, Peterson Toscano created a meme ahead of the People's Climate March, showing a picture of two sets of gay white couple dolls we might see on a wedding cake and writing, "Now that we are married—wanna save the world? #Queers4Climate." The meme, therefore, implies that marriage was the only goal for LGBTQ people, and now that LGBTQ has met their goal, climate change is next.

I characterize much of what I described above as ecohomonormative because, much like homonormativity (Duggan 2002), heteronormativity remains and, in this case, simply becomes environmentally friendly. As I noted in the theory chapter, Lisa Duggan (2002) critiqued marriage equality as homonormative because it provided cultural cover for neoliberal economic policies—with marriage and family afforded to gay people, the state can continue redistribute resources upwardly. The meme and quote from Joseph earlier in the section are ecohomonormative. They show a contradiction and a misguided belief that narrow LGBT equality can be compatible with a world in which climate change is no longer an issue. We cannot at once, as the logic of marriage equality implies, turn toward a benevolent state and also fundamentally challenge the state as environmental justice scholars recommend (Pulido, 2017).

Proponents of the queer climate justice frame offer a contrasting prognostic that critiques the LGBTQ climate change frame and presents a different narrative. As a critique, the queer climate justice frame forecasts the risk of being agnostic about the homonormative and white-washed ideological roots of learning from marriage equality. At the time of the People's Climate March in 2014, Ceci Pineda organized with the Audre Lorde Project.

Responding to a primarily white contingent at the March, Ceci critiqued Queers for the Climate's messaging and participation at the March as appealing to middle-class white gays, i.e., the broader support of marriage equality and erasing the day to day survival of queer and trans people of color to achieve better healthcare or to abolish prisons:

> "Where 'Queers for the Climate' offers the climate movement mainstream LGBT organizing for victories (i.e., marriage) QT*POC liberation work and critical trans politics offers long legacies fighting for survival on a day-to-day basis" (Pineda, 2015)

Many activists who saw their constituencies as queer and trans people of color noted that, for them, crisis happens every day and did not solely refer to the HIV/AIDS crisis as the ***only*** time in which the queer and trans community faced extinction. The heavy reliance on referring back to the HIV/AIDS crisis under the LGBTQ climate change frame obscures how queer and trans people of color's resistance to cis-hetero-patriarchy started far before that crisis (I. Cohen, 2020). As the Two-Spirit climate organizer Thomas Tonatiuh Lopez Jr. argued, "two-spirit people have largely been ignored by the LGBTQ+ community…In order to truly understand who we are, we have to go back prior to colonization" (*Meet the Advocate's 104 Champions of Pride for 2019*, 2019). This suggests that addressing the climate crisis as it concerns queer and trans people must also address settler colonialism and how it intersects with other systems of power. Similarly, Ceci Pineda wrote that queer and trans people of color have a far longer history of practicing climate justice and seek flourishing outside of the state:

> "When we work to make our communities more safe and resilient, we are preparing ourselves for the impacts of climate change. When we fight to create safety outside of police and carceral systems, we imagine and build a future based on collective care and accountability, rather than systems of state violence and control (which we know is how the state will opt to respond to climate crises)…In these actions and every time we fight to survive, we practice climate justice" (Pineda, 2015).

In the quote above, Ceci creates a contrasting narrative to the LGBTQ climate change frame by bridging climate justice, abolition, and transformative justice frames. Because police and prisons kill and violently attack queer and trans communities of color, queer and trans people of color create alternative systems of safety and care that forge the resilience to survive the climate crisis. Following the logic that the system of racial capitalism and cis-hetero-patriarchy are interlocking, queer climate justice organizers suggest that any liberation work forges community resilience and, in turn, is climate justice practice.

Similarly, Kei Williams believes that abolition is a core bridge between environmental justice and queer liberation that, much like climate justice visions, gets us closer toward not just surviving but thriving:

> "When we're looking at environmental racism, and we're looking at abolishing prisons, police, and jails, those two directly overlap. Part of me being queer is having that queer lens of environmental racism and a queer lens of abolition and [understanding] how they intersect. Because for me, that is a huge part of queerness—understanding the fullness of oneself—and getting able to show there's a whole person based on lived experiences, and that my lived experiences have led me to have an abolitionist lens" (K. Williams, personal communication, April 11, 2021).

In the quote above, Kei speaks to a Venn diagram between various lenses that culminates in a queer abolitionist environmental justice frame. As Kei notes, addressing environmental racism and abolishing the carceral state and policing are intertwined, as several scholars have established (Bradshaw, 2018; Pellow, 2019). Similarly, the prison industrial complex disproportionately impacts queer & trans people and contributes to maintaining gender conformity and heteronormativity (E. A. Stanley et al., 2012; E. A. Stanley & Smith, 2015). Thus, the intersections of these impacts necessitate an intersectional

frame in the form of queer climate justice. In other words, if organizers misdiagnose the problems, they get the solutions wrong too.

By contrast, more mainstream queer climate organizers accept cis-heteronormative institutions of the state as capable of reform. For example, Peterson Toscano and other proponents of the LGBTQ climate change frame call for trans rights interventions, such as calling for police to receive anti-bias training so that they do not arrest trans people for using the restrooms of their choice in the aftermath of natural disasters (Toscano, n.d.). As a result, the frame closes off the possibilities of an abolitionist horizon even as it builds bridges between the climate and LGBTQ movements.

Conclusion

Instead of solely turning to Dr. Bullard as the inspiration for their analysis, queer climate organizers turn to figures such as Marsha P. Johnson and Harvey Milk. Because the climate crisis has risen on the public agenda in the past decade, queer climate activists are advancing new frame bridging efforts based on the logic that queer and trans constituencies are vulnerable and have contributed to the fight against climate change. Based on my content analysis and interviews with organizers, I find that nearly all queer climate organizers converge around three elements in articulating the connections between queer and climate politics: 1) intersectional queer and trans vulnerability to the climate crisis; 2) queer and trans survival and resilience have lessons for all in the fight against climate change, and 3) play in climate activism. However, I also argue that two frame bridging processes unfold and lead to divergence within queer climate organizing. On the one hand, a queer climate justice frame bridges queer liberation to climate justice frames. On the other hand, an LGBTQ climate change frame bridges LGBTQ rights to climate change frames.

While “queering” occurs for both bridging processes, the LGBTQ climate change frame reinforces hegemonic narratives about queer and trans people.

In a time of continued climate crisis, queer climate activists say that queer and trans people are vulnerable and that they bring several tools in the fight against climate change. Climate change and climate justice activists would do well to hear their calls. While these interventions are notable, several interview participants told me that work at the nexus of queer liberation and climate justice has fallen off and needs to move beyond narrative to focus on relational organizing. For mobilization and organizing, the LGBTQ rights, climate change, queer liberation, and climate justice movements can reference activists’ work and the analysis in this chapter to bridge a relatively un-mobilized and unorganized climate constituency. Policy-wise and community-wide, queer and trans representatives and community institutions can look inward and practice intersectional advocacy by pushing for policies that address queer and trans climate vulnerability and confronting their complicity with the climate crisis.

Chapter 5 – Intersectional Climate Narratives: Frontline Communities & the Queer Bloc

I think it's a complicated question about "Are queer people frontline?" No, I don't think so. I think some are, and some aren't. I think rich white male gay guys with lots of money are not <laugh>. They have the resources. I think it's more of, depending on people's economic status and gender, and race, especially. – **(J. Huff-Hannon, personal communication, October 27, 2021).**

How are we not [frontline]? We know that, disproportionately, disease affects all of these groups. We know that disproportionately, violence is at a higher level in all of these groups. We know that disproportionately, suicide is at a higher rate in all of these groups. How are we anything…? How are we? How are we at the back of a parade full of people with straight privilege? – **(B. Barefoot, personal communication, January 14, 2022).**

Are queer people a frontline community facing climate change's first and worst impacts? On the one hand, Joseph Huff-Hannon's quote featured in the epigraph suggests that queer people are not frontline, seemingly because race, class, and gender are more salient factors in determining that status. On the other hand, Bizzy Barefoot responds with anger, given all the violence and oppression that queer & trans people have experienced: how can there be any answer but "Yes" to whether queer and trans people are frontline communities? Both are members of the LGBTQ+ community and work on queer climate activism, yet they gave different responses. I argue that the range of these responses matters for understanding the implications of queer and trans perspectives on climate justice because they reveal how marginalization operates in the climate movement.

Whether queer people counted as a frontline community was an intersectional question that People's Climate March organizers struggled to answer. There's no doubt that the climate movement has changed, particularly following the massive People's Climate March in 2014 (subsequently the March), which was ground-breaking in its size and the intersectional coalition it built—big green environmental organizations, environmental and climate justice basebuilding organizations, and labor unions, among many more actors

different along race, class, geography, and nation lines. In contrast to prior efforts, the March identified and attempted to rectify how the environmental movement reproduced racism ***AND*** classism. However, as I argue in this chapter, even as the People's Climate March solidified an intersectional praxis at the scale the climate movement had never seen, the question of "are queer people a frontline community?" reveals cracks in the foundation of an additive version of intersectional praxis or outsized attention to how (or how not) oppressions add or stack on additional environmental harms (Hancock, 2007). How organizers answered this question is crucial because it reveals who counts as the "we" in the climate movement, who deserves to be not just at the table but the head of the table, and who is left out.

In this chapter, I address the second sub-question of the dissertation, "To what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives?" In the last chapter, I discussed how queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice narratives, but it is a different question whether these narratives can travel beyond queer & trans spaces. The bulk of this chapter revolves around analyzing the narratives attached to "frontline communities," a term that climate justice activists and scholars use, and the degree to which the narratives encompass queer & trans perspectives. The chapter is important because it is the first chapter of the dissertation to develop the "barriers" (Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2) to seeing queer & trans perspectives shaping the climate justice movement.

I find that mainstream views of intersectionality, race, gender, and sexuality devalued the importance of the queer climate contingent and pushed them to the back. Despite all the energy that Queer Bloc organizers invested into mobilizing people to the March and creating stunning elemental drag queen puppets, the contingent's contributions

were hardly part of the overarching March narrative. Yet even as the March marginalized queer climate organizers, the predominantly white members of the Queer Bloc marginalized queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people of color climate organizers through their framing and choosing, not being pushed, to be in the back of the March. While the March and Queer Bloc adopted a climate & environmental justice and intersectional lens, new tensions around the political legitimacy of who counts as a "frontline community" emerged.

In this chapter, I start by situating the People's Climate March within a historical context of the early 2010s and explain how and why it emerged in 2014. Moving into my findings, I begin by describing the contributions of queer and trans people during the People's Climate March. I then explain the tensions that emerged around not labeling the queer contingent as a "frontline community" and the resultant critique from a queer & trans of color lens. Finally, I conclude by offering my thoughts on whether the terminology and lens of "frontline community" are redeemable or should be scrapped in favor of other analytical frameworks.

Background

Creating the People's Climate March

This section provides a brief background on creating and organizing the People's Climate March in 2014. Organizers of the March, like any other protest, were trying to tell a story. However, going beyond this fundamental purpose of the demonstration, they were using the line-up of the March itself as a storytelling device. Because queer & trans people were an explicitly named contingent in the March, questions about where to place them get to the heart of assessing to what extent queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice

narratives. To understand where the Queer Bloc ended up (the back), we need to know what goals March organizers had, how (and why) planners set the ordering of the March in the way they did, and what they ultimately decided. In what follows, I go through each of these points.

The People's Climate March of 2014 was held in New York City to apply pressure on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Paris. In contrast to prior organizing efforts, environmental justice organizations and coalitions, such as the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Climate Justice Alliance, were core in the strategic process, alongside national advocacy organizations such as 350.org, Avaaz, and the Sierra Club. The March's theory of change was simple. By building a big tent of people and organizations never seen together in unity, the climate movement would force governments and the United Nations to act on climate.[9] To some extent, the March was successful insofar as it brought together a climate coalition of unlikely bedfellows, ranging from scientists to beekeepers to yoga instructors, and by some estimates, about 400,000 people, the largest number of protestors for a climate mobilization in history at the time, were out on the streets of New York City (Fisher, 2015). Moreover, as the co-coordinators of the March, Paul Getsos and Leslie Cagan argued during our interviews, relationships, and coalitions, such as the Blue-Green Alliance, built upon that initial coalescing.

[9] The simplicity of the March was also a source of critique for outsiders and internal organizers alike. For example, the Climate Justice Alliance had reservations about the March's decision to not coalesce around specific demands and sought to impact New York City and New York state policy agendas (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014). For more, see "It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm – The People's Climate March 2014: A Climate Justice Story."

Why the People's Climate March?

But why 2014? Why was there not a colossal climate mobilization before that point? The March was monumental and arose when it did because of the failure of conventional institutional strategies, the shifting political moment, and the increased power of the environmental justice movement (and recognition on their end that they needed to leverage the resources of the mainstream climate movement) (Young, 2015). In the half-decade before the People's Climate March, the climate movement appeared to be in a moment of seeding itself, with the founding of 350.org in 2007 and gradually moving toward a movement culture of mass, disruptive actions such as risking arrest outside of the White House to protest the Keystone XL Pipeline. Concurrently, the fossil fuel industry and partners such as the Koch Brothers were able to ward off climate legislation successfully. Without the support of a wide-ranging, grassroots climate movement, the "beltway class" of environmental advocacy organizations could not pose a threat and pass cap and trade legislation in the U.S. in 2010 (McAdam, 2017; Skocpol, 2013).

Despite inopportune political conditions, the early 2010s forecasted shifting tides with the rise of global, transnational social movements, such as Occupy Wall Street, in response to mounting inequality, environmental degradation, and authoritarianism. Specifically, in the climate justice movement, activists organized disruptive actions at international climate convenings that were harbingers of a more populist approach than the beltway crowd had advanced. These tactics built the foundation for what was to come later in the decade. The climate movement has shifted toward using more disruptive tactics than lobbying to now prominently feature school climate strikes (Fisher & Nasrin, 2021).

Finally, from a movement ecosystem perspective, the environmental (and climate) movement has long marginalized environmental justice organizers, who are predominantly more likely to be race/class/gender marginalized and represent those communities (Rainey & Johnson, 2009).Tired of this treatment and seeing the protest as a moment to change climate narratives, such as the outsized emphasis on polar bears, New York City environmental justice organizations ranging from UPROSE to the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, sought to explicitly leverage the resources of the national organizations toward realizing the needs of the "People" (Bosworth, 2020). For example, the Building Equity and Alignment Initiative started in 2013 and created the institutional structure to address funding discrepancies between mainstream and climate justice organizations (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014; Young, 2015). So, despite the historical trauma that climate justice organizers had experienced from when big greens prioritized false market-based solutions and had mistreated marginalized organizers (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014), conversations among frontline climate justice organizations seeded collaborations with big green organizations that made the People's Climate March possible.

The "How" of the People's Climate March

Even as these factors helped make it ***possible*** for the People's Climate March to materialize, the ***how*** of building a big tent where stakeholders could come together was a different question. First, March organizers wanted to rectify historical mistrust between Big Greens and frontline community organizations by centering on leadership. This meant having environmental and climate justice organizations at the table and expanding to

stakeholders such as labor, students/youth, and energy transition impacted communities. To ensure that mainstream climate organizations did not recreate the unequal power dynamics of the past, the People's Climate March created a Mobilization Support Team where climate justice organizers and mainstream organizations were equally represented to set the overarching strategy and make decisions. Additionally, to facilitate big greens' learning curve in working with environmental justice organizations, local E.J. groups pushed for the adoption of the Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing to make decision-making more accountable to frontline communities (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014).

The spatial strategy of how these stakeholders would march together was crucial because preexisting divisions do not simply disappear into thin air when organizations come together. A team of cultural organizers came up with a thematic narrative to organize the big tent and iterated with the Mobilization Support Team to determine the order.[10] Figure 5.1 visualizes the final order of the March below, with six contingents, each representing a different theme. Again, to rectify historical marginalization, environmental justice organizations led the March under "Frontlines of Crisis, Forefront of Change." There were additional negotiations about who would be at the front of the frontline contingent within the frontline contingent. Organizers ultimately landed on this ordering:

> "The youth delegation—specifically young people of color and Indigenous youth under the age of 24—were at the very front, and the rest of the frontlines contingent marches in the following order: representatives of local communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy, Indigenous Peoples' Block, member groups of CJA [Climate Justice Alliance] and other environmental justice communities from across the U.S., other storm-impacted communities, anti-poverty groups, representatives of global

[10] This was a complicated process: "Avaaz wanted to actually have the Pope, Al Gore, Ban Ki-moon, and the actor Leonardo DiCaprio to basically go hand in hand and arm in arm and be the opening of the People's Climate Mobilization. We said, 'Hell fucking no.' We said, 'Absolutely not'" (C. Wiesner, personal communication, August 27, 2021).

south movements, domestic workers, farmworkers, immigrant rights groups and the migrant justice contingent" (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014, p. 12).

Of course, the Mobilization Support Team could not resolve all preexisting movement tensions, so to maintain the coalition, they spatially separated some groups from each other to downplay their differences. For example, the Mobilization Support Team placed pro-fracking labor unions away from anti-fracking environmentalists (P. Getsos, personal communication, February 16, 2021).

Figure 5.1 The People's Climate March's Six Themes in 2014, designed by Gan Golan (from Peoplesclimate.org)

A point of tension: To Change Everything, We Need Everyone

The last contingent, "To Change Everything, We Need Everyone," is the most important for this chapter, outside of the "Frontlines of Crisis, Forefront of Change" because it is where the Queer Bloc marched. As a closer, "To Change Everything, We Need Everyone" does appear effective. Throughout the March, the spatial narrative weaves from

people most impacted (protagonists) alongside fellow heroes in Themes 2 and 3, who then face off against responsible actors (antagonists) and win the debate (as seen in Theme 5). But the story is not over, so the spatial narrative goes, we need everyone, including LGBTQ people.

As depicted in Figure 5.1 above, the description of "To Change Everything, We Need Everybody" reads, "Here comes everybody! LGBTQ, NYC Boroughs, Community Groups, Neighborhoods, Cities, States, Countries & More." I believe the description is notable for two reasons. First, "LGBTQ" is placed alongside more geographic identity markers and seems oddly out of place with those groups. Second, despite there being more identity groups within that contingent, such as "Women for Climate Justice," "LGBTQ" is the one that is emphasized and positioned in the description. In Figure 5.2 below, a segment of an art project reflecting upon the March and giving more insights into the contingents, the green signpost indicates the other groups found within the "It Takes Everyone" contingent, including women's rights and disability justice. Despite the valid argument that all these groups could fall into the preceding contingents, they were instead placed in the catch-all, last contingent.

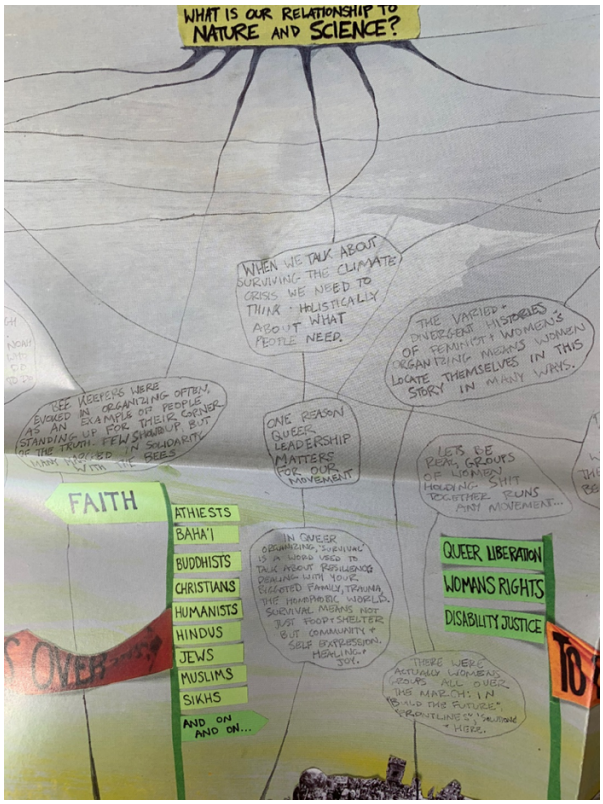

Figure 5.2 Portion of "Confronting the Climate: A Flowchart of the People's Climate March" by Rachel Schragis. The flowchart depicts the contradictions, tensions, and contributions of the March, organized by the March's thematic contingents

To summarize, the People's Climate March told a narrative through the ordering of their March. To rectify practices of exclusion, the March placed frontline communities at the front. However, having a front also means having a back. In other words, by rectifying some practices of exclusion by putting some in the front, there is a danger in excluding others by placing them in the back. And ultimately, the Queer Bloc landed in the back, but the story is more nuanced than a story of queer & trans exclusion, as I describe in the chapter's findings.

Defining the Frontlines

Before we move into the findings, we need to define how activists and scholars define frontline communities. On its face, most definitions of the frontlines demonstrate an intersectional sensibility that is not axis dependent, i.e., not just race. Across several institutions, coalitions, and activists, two core factors determine the front lines: 1) "exposure/vulnerability" or first and disproportionate impact relative to a privileged group because of systems of oppression and 2) "powerlessness" or a lack of resources to contest or rectify this disproportionate impact. Frontline communities are hit "first and worst" ***and*** cannot often fight back or contest their vulnerability.

For a concise summary of the first core factor in defining the frontlines, consider the definition that the Climate Justice Alliance, a core organizer of the People's Climate March, uses: "Communities that are hit first and worst by climate, economic or other crises" (Climate Justice Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, 2014). In other words, relative to relatively privileged communities, frontline communities are hit "first and worst." This factor is agnostic about the issue or crisis in defining the frontlines and does not differentiate the term as specific to climate change.

As for an example of the second related factor of powerlessness, consider this definition from the Georgetown Climate Center: "[frontline communities] have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to those [climate] risks (e.g., these people may lack insurance or savings, inflexible jobs, low levels of influence over elected officials, etc.)" (Ganthier et al., 2020). Once again, this definition is expansive. We can conceivably imagine that many factors, such as racism, homophobia, or transphobia, dampen political power and put several groups on the "frontlines."

Politically, the label of being on the frontlines confers the following: 1) the right to advance solutions because frontline communities know how to address their oppressions and 2) procedural justice in being at the forefront of strategizing under the general banner of "for us, by us." In these ways, labeling the frontlines is a mechanism for realizing environmental and climate justice. Those historically denied a seat at the table are now given the chance and space to shape what comes next ***AND*** that the marginalized speak for themselves (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014).

In summary, who is on the frontlines of the climate crisis is expansive and theoretically encompasses a diverse range of marginalized groups. For instance, using some of the arguments that we saw in Chapter 4 about how climate change disproportionately impacts queer & trans people, we can make the case that frontlines encompass queer & trans people. We could then make the case that placing queer & trans at the frontlines is a matter of realizing climate justice. However, despite the expansive definitions attached to "frontline communities," the narratives of climate justice organizers, in this case via the March, are a matter of interpretation. Next, I introduce the Queer Bloc and what they did for the March and then cover clashing narratives about the frontlines in the following sections.

Three Themes: Playing, Proving It, and the Obviousness of Climate Injustice

The story that I tell about the Queer Bloc in this section, based on my data, is mixed. The section contains an appreciation for Queer Bloc accomplished before and during the People's Climate March and how playful queer politics provide valuable lessons for climate justice. Yet, I balance these accomplishments by describing how the March and the Queer Bloc's engagement with frontline community narratives were exclusionary toward queer &

trans people. Here, I reveal how the gap between what climate justice narratives mean in theory and practice suggests the need to revise how we talk about climate injustice.

I divide the findings of this chapter into three themes: climate activism as playing, proving frontline community status, and the obviousness of climate change for some queer & trans people. First, I speak about what the Queer Bloc organized during the People's Climate March and why their efforts are essential for climate justice. Second, I move into the core tension of the chapter as to whether the climate justice narrative of frontline communities includes queer & trans people. Third, I describe reactions to how the Queer Bloc managed the frontline community decision to go ultimately go to the back of the March by featuring two responses that showcase contrasting conceptions of the frontlines. The themes suggest that queer & trans perspectives have much to go in influencing climate justice narratives, but there are suggestions to make this better.

Theme 1: Climate Activism as Playing

The Queer Bloc, consisting of Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet, was the only visibly queer presence at the 2014 People's Climate March. Their March aesthetics, of holding up four giant drag queen puppets representing the four elements of air, water, earth, and fire, starkly contrasted with other groups' colorful but conventional get-ups. I argue that the actions that Queers for the Climate took ahead of the March and what the Queer Bloc did during the March are examples of how queer & trans perspectives contribute to climate justice movements. They are contributions because, situated within a social movement culture that is overly serious, earnest, and humdrum, the Queer Bloc's openness and acceptance of playing as a queer virtue were so different from most approaches to climate organizing at the time.

The Queers are here to save the planet

The Queer Bloc of the People's Climate March drew together at least two organizing bodies, including Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet. This section describes a couple of campaigns, Queers for the Climate organized in the months ahead of the People's Climate March. Queer Planet planned events in the immediate days before the March, such as throwing a Queer Climate Chautauqua (Dax, 2014), and building and marching with four drag queen elemental puppets, among other props and costumes, during the March. Because Queer Planet's primary effort to build the drag puppets for the March is discussed in later sections, I focus in this section on Queers for the Climate and how they practiced playful politics in the lead up to the March.

Queers for the Climate formed around late Spring or early Summer of 2014. At the time, Joseph Huff-Hannon was working for Avaaz, one of the core organizers of the People's Climate March, and wanted to figure out ways to make the March appealing to queer people. With another collaborator named Andy, with whom Joseph had worked to plan theatrical protests for other issues, Queers for the Climate saw the March as an opening to inject the climate movement with some more cheekiness (J. Huff-Hannon, personal communication, October 27, 2021). For half a year, the group grew and planned several campaigns, including Save the Straights during New York City's 2014 Pride, the video and social media campaign called #ItGetsWetter, and an irreverent video trying to mobilize gay men on Fire Island to care about climate change (Huff-Hannon, 2014).

Queers for the Climate's designed their campaigns to inject cheekiness into the climate movement, and this contrast in affective approaches sits at the core of why they stood out: play is relative. The climate movement's go-to affective strategy forecasts doom

and gloom (Seymour, 2018). Such an approach amplifies the stakes of the climate crisis as severe and world-ending conditions which have led to what scholars call climate paralysis, anxiety, and grief (Cunsolo et al., 2020; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018). Given this context, where the climate movement defaults to pulling the heartstrings of its audience, and there is little room for joy, Queers for the Climate's playfulness stands out because the climate movement has so often ignored play.

The Queers for the Climate organizers wanted to say, "This is not our approach," by spotlighting how different their framing is from the traditional environmental approach. Speaking about the Queers for the Climate effort titled "Save the Straights" during NYC Pride, co-founder of the group Joseph Huff-Hannon explained that their Campaign was meant to play with conventional environmental messaging:

> "We made t-shirts, posters, and flyers, and we had a whole contingent marching in the Pride Parade. It was co-opting this typical environmental, like "Save the Polar Bears" thing and trying to make it a little more cheeky and say, "No, like 'Save the endangered straight people'" (J. Huff-Hannon, personal communication, October 27, 2021).

In the quote above, Queers for the Climate turn the logic of "Save the Polar Bears" on its head—as the normative privileged category, straightness conventionally does not need "saving,", especially in contrast to polar bears. But, by being somewhat serious, cheeky, and playful, they drew people into their cause.

Playing for Us

Play also served a crucial healing function for queer & trans people involved with the People's Climate March in 2014. Particularly for those who came of age when there was government inaction in addressing the AIDS crisis of the late 80s and 90s, play in climate

activism comes as a response to a deep historical and structural trauma that continues to haunt that generation:

> "I come from a generation that is straddling the AIDS crisis. The beginning of it and the current crisis being the acute crisis where everyone around me in the theater was dying.
>
> So I feel like I'm straddling this generational thing. I think this relates to climate stuff, too. Really any sort of linear idea or historical idea of forward-moving activism creates this amnesia problem. Generational amnesia sometimes occurs if there's not a sustained oral history or a clear written history if you've lost 80% of your generation.
>
> [It's] sad, terribly sad, to be frank. It's hard to even put words to the amount of trauma in that period. So, I consider this to be a period of rebuild. I have always considered myself a humble harbinger of reconstruction of queer community" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, January 14, 2022).

In the quote above, Bizzy Barefoot, one of the conveners of the Queer Planet art build, spoke about the importance of her joyful projects in re-connecting queer roots that the AIDS epidemic had separated. As I noted in the previous chapter, queer & trans climate activists in the U.S. converge toward a shared understanding that their contributions in the fight against climate crisis stemmed from forging resilience and learning how to survive systemic violence from the 80s and 90s. The time-locked nature of the talking point might suggest that there is no need to develop further models of resilience. But, as Bizzy points out in the quote above, trauma is neither individual nor one-off and instead persists for entire generations. While some activists might cast aside the playful nature of Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet's organizing, that play, whether in the form of Queer House Effect parties or cheeky messaging (Huff-Hannon & Bichlbaum, 2014; Robbins, 2014) is a salve for personal and collective healing.

Playing for Others

The play is for the queer & trans community, and organizers directed many mobilizing efforts at that audience. Still, *playing for others* is an equally important goal, bringing any person onboard through the fun they were modeling. On the one hand, the framing and tactics that Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet used were hyper-specific to the lived experience of some queer & trans people. On the other hand, this hyper-specificity appeals outward by drawing onlookers in with the joy and spectacle that it creates. In this way, the Queer Bloc's tactics are situated in a longer social movement history of using play, joy, and pleasure to challenge power structures by envisioning and practicing a better future (Shepard, 2011; Valdez & Bagby, 1967).

For example, in the days before the People's Climate March, Queer Planet held an art build to create four drag queen puppets, one of which referring to water is depicted below in Figure 5.3, to use in the March. Queer Planet organizers intended their build to be an embodiment of queer magic yet also build a coalition outside of the queer & trans community:

> "What we have made are 4 12' puppets representing the four elements (AIR, FIRE, WATER, and EARTH) and many beautifully related/themed signs and banners. These are elements personified, and more specifically, they are Queens, as seemed appropriate. Our intention is to give these natural elements the exaltation they deserve and to do so through a queer lens and aesthetic sensibility. Also, we knew the colors and scale would be stunning in the March and hopefully bring joy to the hearts of young and old, gay or straight, Republican or Democrat. No one can frown at a beautiful puppet, and we hope to bring a lift to the spirit of the day" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, September 20, 2014).

Figure 5.3 Photo from Quito Ziegler of the WATER "All of the Feelings" Drag Queen Puppet, Quito Ziegler (Left), Bizzy Barefoot (Right)

As the latter part of the quote above suggests, Bizzy meant for the beauty of the puppets to be awe-inspiring in a way that is perhaps not as possible with other framing choices. Climate change is a complex issue where advocates and scientists struggle to communicate the urgency and stakes of the problem in ways that are accessible and personal (Moser, 2010; Nisbet, 2009). Where other contingents, like the Scientists, might require a working knowledge of carbon tonnes and parts per million, the puppets and the "loudness"

of the Queer Bloc's imagery functioned as an invitation—we can save the world and look glamourous as we are doing it. As Bizzy told me during our interview, the Queer Bloc was trying to "make the revolution irresistible" for a wide-ranging audience.

Again, core to how and why the Queer Bloc's efforts were successful was to use their personal or lived experience to speak to those who shared similar circumstances but also to create a moment for bringing others in:

> "These giant elemental pieces of art that became eye-catching for the March reaffirmed what I consider to be queer virtues. These are attention to communication, attention to the personal, and communicating the personal in a compelling way that leads to larger-scale social change, and is fun and invitational" (P. Robbins, personal communication, November 29, 2021).

These "queer virtues" or "queer lens and aesthetic sensibility" mobilized against the climate crisis challenge and confronted historical legacies of casting queer & trans people as "unnatural." From Religious Right leaders who cast environmental devastation as a response to the sin of queerness or policies that frame queer and trans people as "crimes against nature," queer and trans people have long been told they are aberrations (Hogan, 2010; Mortimer-Sandilands & Erickson, 2010b).

In contrast to this marginalizing logic, what I have recounted so far from the Queer Bloc says that "nature" is queer. By tying each of the elements to some aspect of queerness, such as being in touch with one's feelings or feeding each other with good food and community, the Queer Bloc flips the arrow around and locates queerness in nature:

> "Air was air it out. Fire was fire in our bellies. Water was all of the feelings. And earth was feed each other" (Q. Ziegler, personal communication, April 29, 2021).

Summary of Climate Activism as a Form of Playing

In this section, I described how the Queer Bloc played their way into the fight against climate change. The Queer Bloc's efforts before the March and during the March

displayed how queer virtues of play served a self-healing purpose in allowing queer & trans communities to heal and rebuild. Their playful queer tactics, in framing climate change in cheeky ways or putting together a spectacle in drag puppets, also served as an invitation for people turned off by typical climate change narratives of doom and gloom. Despite these contributions, climate justice narratives, particularly about frontline communities, were not inclusive of queer & trans perspectives during the March. These tensions are the focus of the remaining sections of the chapter.

Theme 2: Proving it

This section describes how climate justice narratives of "frontline communities" are sites of negotiation, tension, and contestation. Although narratives of frontline communities can be inclusive and relatively straightforward, who counts as a frontline community is not set in stone. For some marginalized communities, they have clear "proof" that they are a frontline community to the climate crisis. But for others, including the Queer Bloc, because of which segments of queer & trans community they represent, it becomes less clear whether they fall under the frontline community banner. The Queer Bloc's placement in the back of the March shows the limitations of how far queer & trans perspectives can go in climate justice narratives.

Are queer & trans people a frontline community to climate change? This was the question that cultural organizers in charge of determining the ordering of the March asked the Queer Bloc. I summarize the responses to this question in Figure 5.4, but ultimately, the Queer Bloc answered no. On the one hand, some within the Queer Bloc did not believe that queer & trans people are a frontline community. On the other hand, others pointed to the high number of queer and trans youth represented in the unhoused population, a common

issue bridge discussed in Chapter 4, to argue that queer & trans people are a frontline community. In between these perspectives, several Queer Bloc organizers were uncertain. They qualified their responses to whether queer and trans people are frontline communities by saying they were not as a *group* of primarily white gay men. Much like how activists believe they must satisfy a "perfect standard" to claim an activist identity (Bobel, 2007), climate organizers think they must meet a high standard to claim they are a "frontline community" and, in the process, erase many out of the narrative.

In the rest of the section, I categorize and analyze each set of responses to the question of whether queer & trans people are a frontline community. I start, however, by describing how critical organizers in the March, who did not organize with the Queer Bloc, conceived of frontline communities. Next, I speak to the "No" responses and what factors guided their thinking. Similarly, I describe "Yes" answers and how their thinking contrasted with the "No" responses. Finally, I end the section by exploring the grey area between the "Yes" and "No" answers.

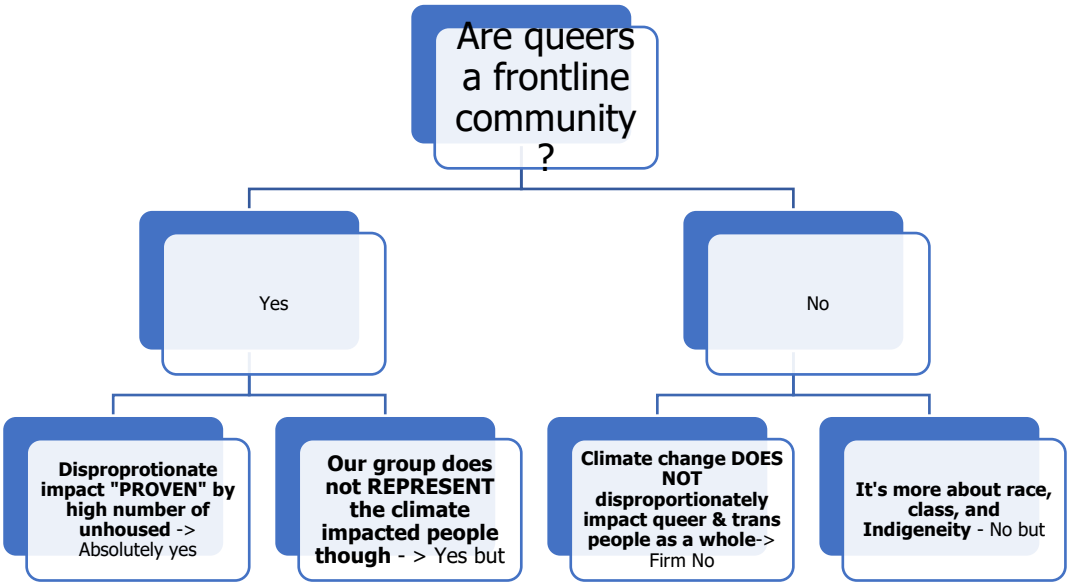

Figure 5.4 Are queers a frontline community?

Proving the frontlines and determining their narrative purpose in the March

According to most organizers, in addition to a disproportionate impact of a crisis on a group of people, proving frontline community status also meant articulating how factors such as geography and community resources put people in danger. Leslie Cagan, one of the co-coordinators of the 2014 People's Climate March, had this to say in qualifying the frontlines:

> "[Frontline] meant not only people of color communities but also often poor, white communities. Literally, those physical communities, the geography of it all… Most often, communities, under-resourced neighborhoods, that historically had not gotten the resources to have strong, literally strong institutions, like buildings that could withstand the winds. [Or] let alone the politics of those institutions" (L. Cagan, personal communication, March 22, 2021).

As the quote shows, while definitions of the frontlines are expansive, narratives about the frontlines are narrower. In other words, race, class, and Indigeneity are the critical variables above others for proving frontline community status for climate issues.

However, I should be clear that these factors were not exclusively how climate justice organizers thought about the frontlines. For example, Cindy Wiesner of the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance told me that the use of "frontline communities" to organize the spatial narrative of the March and for decision-making was about flipping the script:

> "It wasn't just about representation or like identity politics. It was about inserting a new narrative into the movement that I think we succeeded.
>
> Ultimately, we're like, "Who are going to be the ones that actually resolve these colliding crises? Who are the ones actually going to think of [solutions]? Who are the ones that are impacted but actually are part of movements and organizations that actually have the counterpoint to [the impacts]? I think that's where we train people around the frontline.
>
> It gets a little risky and dangerous because it comes back to just representation politics, which is not what we're talking about. It's about a strategic intervention" (C. Wiesner, personal communication, August 27, 2021).

The point was to emphasize a climate justice narrative and *not* get into the trap of identity politics or representation. According to Cindy and climate justice organizations planning the March, narratives about frontline communities placed people at the crossroads of crises at the forefront of solutions and movements. And of course, as I have covered, this was important because the mainstream environmental movement had long marginalized climate & environmental justice activists. Nonetheless, as Cindy indicates above, there was a danger to using the frontlines in resting on representation politics. The frontlines would simply be about ensuring the representation of marginalized people.

No, queers are not a frontline community

However, despite the intentions of March organizers to avoid identity politics claims, determining the frontlines had unintended consequences in spurring complicated questions about representation. For example, Queer Bloc organizers believed there was ***some***, but not a lot, of disproportionate climate impact on queer & trans people, or the first factor in determining frontline status. At the same time, some of the Queer Bloc organizers believed that they, as a collective, were not representative of a frontline community based on their race, class, and settler privilege. Both reasons led some Queer Bloc organizers to say, "No" we are not frontline. I describe some of these "No" responses in the rest of this subsection.

In an email thread discussing whether to march with the Frontline Community contingent or go with the "To Change Everything, We Need Everyone" contingent, one Queer Bloc organizer replied by expressing their discomfort with taking on a representative role on behalf of frontline communities within the queer & trans community:

> "I don't think I would feel comfortable marching in the front with the reasoning that I am ***representing*** [emphasis added] someone less fortunate than me just because we share certain values and sexual preferences" S., personal communication, September 14, 2014).

In some ways, this quote is valid—sharing sexual preferences does not mean that you are just as vulnerable as someone else is facing the dangers of climate change. Marching in the frontlines based on this reasoning would elide how race and class, for example, protect some queer & trans people and afford them environmental privilege. At the same time, the quote also does the work of erasing some of the climate change impacts that queer & trans people do face.

This quote and some of the following suggest that representation is crucial in "claiming" frontline status. Suppose an organization cannot claim they are inclusive of everyone within the broader queer & trans community or do not personally experience the impacts of climate change. In that case, they hesitate to represent the frontlines. Connecting back to a prior point about the salience of race, class, and Indigeneity in determining frontline community status, because organizers were either personally or assumed that the Queer Bloc was racially privileged, several did not feel comfortable marching with the frontlines. In the same email thread mentioned earlier, Joseph said:

> "I wouldn't feel right marching in the "front line" community block. It's hard to predict who will turn out to the LGBTQ contingent but judging by anecdotal evidence -- the people who come to our little meetings, signatories to the letter, etc. -- I wouldn't be surprised if it's white men in the majority, though I would prefer if it weren't. And I don't think a bunch of mostly white gay men marching in the "frontline community" bloc is a great optic" (J. Huff-Hannon, personal communication, September 14, 2014).

According to this quote above from Joseph, because it seemed like the Queer Bloc mainly consisted of white people, it did not "feel right" to answer "Yes" and march with the frontlines. This quote appears to directly contrast with the intentions of the frontline narratives that I covered with Cindy in the last subsection. Rather than concerning how the frontlines can be a vehicle for strategic interventions, or in other words, placing marginalized people at the forefront of solutions, the quote is concerned with the optics of representation. The point about optics is valid—because white gay men are some of the most privileged within the queer & trans community, it is reasonable to not place themselves in the contingent that represents people hit first and worst by climate change. Finally, as the quote suggests, the Queer Bloc knew that they were a racially privileged group. They called themselves the queer contingent, which should theoretically represent all queer & trans

people, and yet did not want to represent "those less fortunate." This is a contradiction that I explore in later sections.

This section has covered the "No" responses to whether queer & trans people were a frontline community that should go in the front of the March. To summarize, for the organizers covered in this subsection, queer & trans people in general and the Queer Bloc specifically did not meet the threshold of experiencing disproportionate impacts from climate change. Furthermore, some in the Queer Bloc did not feel comfortable representing some within their ranks who ostensibly "meet" the threshold of disproportionate impact because of their racial privilege. However, the Queer Bloc's acknowledgment that they were racially privileged leaves a question, why are they not representing frontline queer & trans people, to begin with? This question reverberates throughout some of the remaining sections of the chapter.

Yes, queers are a frontline community

Landing on the other side of the debate, some queer & trans organizers argued that the Queer Bloc should march in the frontline community contingent. Whether their group was representative or included a wide swath of directly impacted members, these organizers argued that, as the only explicitly queer group within the People's Climate March, they should be in the frontline community contingent. For example, in the same email thread discussing whether to march in the front, Bizzy argues that queer & trans people belong in the frontlines:

> "I think LGBTQ belongs with the frontline communities. Last night, I was ambivalent, but upon further consideration, I think we belong there for several reasons" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, September 11, 2014).

> "I just think that at the very least, our very large number of homeless queer youth across this country is rightly represented as a frontline community" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, September 13, 2014).

In the quote above, Bizzy speaks to how the high number of queer & trans youth in the unhoused population was "enough" to place LGBTQ communities at the front of the March. As mentioned in the last chapter, houselessness and housing insecurity was by far the most frequently mentioned issue bridge tying together the struggle against climate change and for queer & trans people. We can infer that Bizzy sees the issue as an effective bridge because the connection is easy to understand—queer & trans unhoused youth are out on the street. On top of the existing violence they endure, they do not have the same resilience structures when natural disasters strike.

However, the Queer Bloc's mostly white membership constrained their ability to claim legitimacy as a frontline community, even if organizers fundamentally believed that queer & trans people deserved to be in the front. Rachel Schragis, a lead cultural organizer for the People's Climate March, who helped determine the ordering of the contingents, similarly thought that it was evident that queer and trans people were a frontline community:

> "I said, 'Look, if you want me to push for you to be in the frontline contingent, I will do that. I'm a queer organizer. It's going to be a little bit of a fight because you're mostly white people.' They chose not to, and they said they'd go to the back. There are no photos of their beautiful puppets anywhere, and they waited eight hours for their turn to march. They should have been in the front because they were playing a very important piece of the story. It's a failure of the organizing that we didn't have the people in the rooms make clear…
>
> If I were to go back in time, I would have managed that moment differently and said, 'What can you do to bring the queer organizing in the city into partnership with you to correct the wrongs of who's showing up to the table? So that it's obvious that you all are in the frontlines contingent,' because we are" (R. Schragis, personal communication, April 1, 2021).

In the quote above, looking back at that moment, Rachel wished that the Queer Bloc had built time to practice how to make their contingent representative *before* asking whether they should have counted as frontline. In contrast to some of the quotes in the last subsection that simply took it as is that their contingent was racially privileged, this quote is concerned with the process and the organizing before the March. According to this logic, if the Queer Bloc had put in the work to organize outside of a white gay constituency, then some of those tensions I described in the last section would have been less of a concern.

Because of the salience of race to the People's Climate March, it became hard for the Queer Bloc to claim representative capital or that they were racially diverse enough to speak on and for the entire queer & trans community, some of whom were considered frontlines based on the metrics articulated earlier. Instead of ignoring their relative privilege, the Queer Bloc could have done more to identify those directly impacted by climate change within the queer and trans community and then determine the processes and structures to work alongside them. However, the quote I feature from Rachel in this subsection still rests on the same narrative logic—narratives about frontline communities are primarily about race. This adherence to a limited intersectional narrative about the frontlines reverberates through the remaining sections.

"No, But" and "Yes, But": Ambiguities, Contradictions, and Failures of Organizing

As I noted in the last chapter, one of the elements of convergence among queer & trans climate activists was to suggest that queer and trans people are vulnerable to the climate crisis. Paradoxically, many queer & trans organizers at once claimed vulnerability to the climate crisis, but in the case of the Queer Bloc, hedged that claim by saying, "Well, not

in all cases" or "Not us." At once, they tried to represent those directly impacted, but themselves were not directly or immediately impacted by climate change:

> "Catastrophic climate change has the potential to further destabilize already stressed societies. Queer people, like many minority or marginalized communities around the world, will be especially vulnerable. We believe that LGBTQ movements have a responsibility to address the climate crisis now, before our community is placed at further risk" (Queers for the Climate, 2014).

The quote above is an excerpt from Queers for the Climate's short manifesto titled, "It's Our Fight Too: An LGBTQ Response to Climate Change," circulated among New York City queer organizations and individuals to garner signatures of support among the queer & trans community for the People's Climate March. Notably, Queers for the Climate defines queer people in coalition with other "minority or marginalized communities" and, like those groups, as threatened by climate change. The manifesto aligns with the LGBTQ climate change frame, which I spoke to in the last chapter, by later centering marriage equality as a win or progress despite critiques from queer & trans people of color.

In addition to these complications of leaving queer & trans people of color behind, the group struggled to balance speaking about LGBTQ vulnerability with the inability for them to speak for ***the*** LGBTQ community. In an email thread determining what to name their manifesto, Queers for the Climate organizers went back and forth on using 'Queer vs. LGBTQ' and 'the LGBTQ or an LGBTQ' descriptors:

> "My concern with "LGBTQ Community" is that makes it seem like we are a single community and that our groups/collective represents that community's views on climate change. This is not true. We are providing an LGBTQ Response to Climate Change or we are a Group of LGBTQ people concerned by Climate Change or engaged in Climate Change Action. So I wonder about: This is our fight too: An LGBTQ Response to Climate Change" (P. Toscano, personal communication, July 17, 2014).

From their early days, Queers for the Climate were, therefore, conscious that they were not representative of ***the*** LGBTQ community but ***a*** small subset. The argumentation of the quote above is valid—there is no one single community with monolithic interests, nor is it possible for one group to represent that entire community. However, this reasoning, which we have seen in the preceding subsections, does some work to absolve the group from addressing some of the inequalities embedded in their organizing.

Similarly, the Queer Bloc, encompassing Queers for the Climate and Queer Planet, was ***an*** LGBTQ community that appeared, for the most part, not to be directly impacted by the climate crisis. Despite recognizing the inequalities within their ranks, the Queer Bloc did not do more to rectify who was showing up at the table, according to interviews with Joseph, Patrick, and Rachel. Without that prior organizing, their choice as to where they should go in the March led to ambiguity by design:

> "Where do we fall in here? It didn't feel right because the humans who were working on this—none of us are frontline people. We are not the people who live in Fiji…
>
> All of us, we waited on that corner for probably two or three hours before we started marching. We really felt that… I loved that phrase, "To change everything. It takes everyone." It felt true. For the people who were building that contingency together, as opposed to people who are impacted by storms and living on frontlines and islands that are washing away, it just didn't feel right to put ourselves in the same category as that. Yet, I wish there had been a way to slot us in closer to the front" (Q. Ziegler, personal communication, April 29, 2021).

The organizers faced a challenging situation—they wanted to be in the front of the March, but it also did not feel right to claim frontline community status. I argue that the narrative rigidity of the frontlines causes this ambiguity. For instance, organizers appeared to have a narrow image of who "counted" as a frontline community which obscured some within their group who may be impacted by climate change. Quito contrasts who they were

to the "typical" discursive imagery of who is on the frontlines in the first quote above. In this case, it is a racialized "other" people who live in an island nation like Fiji.

Similarly, Queers for the Climate co-founder Joseph Huff-Hannon, in an article speaking about why Queers for the Climate emerged, said that "But actually Fire Island homeowners (and visitors) have just as much stake as somebody living on the Maldives to try to help get ourselves out of this mess" (Merchant, 2014). In this quote, Joseph contrasts the most privileged among the LGBTQ community, wealthy gay men who are property owners on Fire Island, to the "typical" and, again, racialized imagery of who counts as a frontline community—in this case, those living in the Maldives. As a result, those in between the imagery of gay wealth and Global South communities are left by the wayside.

Because of who the Queer Bloc represented, it was not apparent to them that they were a frontline community. While there was alignment in using the disproportionate burden of the climate crisis as a critical metric for determining frontline community status and acknowledging some degree of this affecting queer and trans people, it was still nonetheless ambiguous to apply the label to their contingent:

> "Disproportionate burden of the climate crisis is really important to keep in mind. That was, I think, the standard by which a lot of people, certainly myself, were making the case. That was a term that people had... Felt ambiguous to apply to queer people.
>
> Because again, you can't really talk about this without talking about preexisting dynamics within the queer community and also like framing it solely in that way. [It] elides the fact that there are plenty of wealthy white queer folk who do not face the same kinds of housing instability, or insecurity, or lack of resources that compromise an individual's ability to deal with climate stressors" (P. Robbins, personal communication, November 29, 2021).

Again, the quote's reasoning is valid. Because of the preexisting dynamics within the queer community and the Queer Bloc's constituency, which appeared to reproduce optics of

solely representing white gay men, many organizers felt they could not unilaterally say that queer & trans people were a frontline community. As the quote shows, wealth and racial privilege reasonably move queer & trans people into a non-frontline status.

However, I believe this entire theme of "Proving It" has revealed that the narratives of frontlines communities are ambiguous and sometimes sidestep intersectional analysis. Ideally, intersectional uses of frontline community narratives should place all marginalized people at the front. Yes, the Queer Bloc's analysis of the group's privileges and oppressions moves them into non-frontline communities. And yet, why was it so "obvious" that Indigenous or POC-led organizations were rightfully representative of the frontlines? In other words, which communities are "obviously" or "ambiguously" frontline are constructions embedded with assumptions.

For example, cultural organizer Rachel told me that "There were some very clear pieces, like the Climate Justice Alliance and Indigenous Environmental Network, who were the Indigenous partner in that coalition. Obviously, they're in the front." Can we not expect that these organizations, despite being labeled as frontline, nonetheless replicate inequality along gender and sexuality lines? Representational logic in the frontline contingent and the Queer Bloc cases mask the privileges and disadvantages contained in both. Ultimately, the March organizers' choice to not center queer and trans (people of color) and the Queer Bloc's choice to not center people of color (queer and trans) function in marginalizing ways.

Summary of Proving It

To summarize, some organizers landed on opposite ends of whether queer & trans people are frontline communities. Still, many landed somewhere in-between, primarily

because they, as individuals or as a group of queer and trans people, did not feel comfortable representing people disproportionately impacted by climate change. Organizers of the Queer Bloc and People's Climate March saw the March as an intersectional one, attentive to the intersecting axes of race, class, and Indigeneity, and privileged these categories in their analysis. Such attention aligns with an intersectional praxis because it considers categories, e.g., race, class, and Indigeneity, that activists and scholars believe and have shown to be relevant in tackling climate change (Townsend-Bell, 2011).

At the same time, while I will not call the People's Climate March "unintersectional," the uncritical embrace of "obvious" categories for determining the frontlines are themselves constructions embedded with assumptions, contradictions, and failures. The limited frontline community narratives of the March meant that the Queer Bloc went to the back of the March, where far fewer people saw their effort and contributions, and they were erased from the main narrative of the March. This matters for external and internal coalition building, which I cover in the next section.

Theme 3: It's Obvious for Us

In contrast to many of the responses in the last theme, for some external onlookers and activists internal to the Queer Bloc, the answer of whether queer and trans people are a frontline community was an "obvious yes" because of the structural violence they had personally experienced. Externally, queer & trans people of color activists argue that the Queer Bloc's placement toward the back of the march erases the dangers that queer & trans people of color experience daily. Internally, some organizers within the Queer Bloc feel the contingent ignores their trauma by deciding to march in the back instead of with the frontline communities. Although the Queer Bloc's decision was responsible, given the

composition of their contingent, it nonetheless had unintended consequences of telling some within the queer & trans community that their pain did not matter.

This section describes more inclusive narratives of frontline communities and the reasoning behind the narratives. First, I describe the epistemic violence that queer & trans people of color experienced because of placing queer & trans people in the back of the march. Here, I also suggest that the frontline community narratives could expand their definitions of proof by engaging with lived experience. Second, I write about how traumas, seemingly unconnected to the climate crisis, place queer & trans people at the frontlines of the climate crisis. What I explore in this section contrasts the last theme and sets us up for paths forward that I describe in the conclusion of the chapter.

Placing the Queer Bloc at the back of the March is epistemic violence

When queer & trans people of color are centered, the narratives of climate justice shift, a point that I raised in the previous chapter when discussing the queer climate justice frame. It shifts because some queer & trans people of color climate organizers have personally experienced the struggle to survive or know those in their community who have that experience. Ceci Pineda, an organizer I highlighted in the last chapter, encapsulates the ethos of how lived experience is knowledge even as academics or other organizers ignore it:

> "As a queer, gender non-conforming person of color organizing in my community, it was not difficult to see all the harms climate change would bring to my beautiful QT*POC community. We do not need peer-reviewed studies, mainstream organizers, or journalists to tell us the violence we will experience, because we live and fight to survive it. Similarly, our struggles to increase our communal resilience, wellness, and ability to thrive are a daily reminder of how queer and trans* people of color liberation work is climate justice work" (Pineda, 2015).

In the quote above, Ceci challenges the assumptions behind how the responses from the organizers I featured in the last section focused on "proving" frontline community status. Whereas many of those organizers needed an apparent threshold of disproportionate impact on queer & trans people to call them frontline communities, Ceci articulates how lived experience is enough "evidence" of disproportionate harm. For Ceci, this means how queer and trans* Black, Indigenous people of color and low-income queer & trans* people are constantly experiencing state abandonment, the violence of the health care system, and the violence of policing. Climate crises heighten these social and economic inequalities, which also include high rates of houselessness among queer & trans* youth (Pineda & Audre Lorde Project, 2014).

By contrast, the organizers I featured in the last section, by relying upon a distributional paradigm of environmental harm, which often derives legitimacy from peer-reviewed studies, engage in epistemic violence by characterizing lived experience as "not enough." The failure to see queer & trans people of color as a frontline community constitutes epistemic violence because, based on ignorance, the audience (the People's Climate March) does not reciprocate the speaker who asks for recognition (queer & trans people of color) (Dotson, 2011).

While Ceci respects the decision that the Queer Bloc made in choosing to be at the back of the March, the Queer Bloc erased their community in the ways they represented ***the*** queer & trans community:

> "Based on their identities and experience, I respect them placing themselves in the back of the march. However, they didn't frame their group as 'white, middle-class LGBT.' They named themselves LGBT, erasing queers who do not have the same experience, and placed the entire queer contingent in the last bloc." (C. Pineda, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

This quote speaks to the contradictions that I mentioned in earlier sections. The Queer Bloc knew that they represented a white gay male constituency, for the most part, but also absolved themselves of working toward making the "Queer" in their name stand for the broad swath of queer & trans community by framing themselves as *an* LGBTQ group. As Ceci mentions above, however, the Queer Bloc framed itself as *the* LGBTQ group.

Ceci also critiqued how climate justice organizers, and the March writ large, mobilized the narratives of "frontline communities" and noted that idealized or "vanguard" images of the frontlines were itself an embodiment of power:

> "There's this traditional vanguard of who has been seen as having these climate justice narratives…There does become this narrative of who is seen as someone who is on the front line when in reality, I believe that every group that is most marginalized by our society or at the opposite end of the spectrum of a white, able-bodied cis man, etc. [are on the frontlines]" (C. Pineda, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

One segment of this quote especially stands out to me, "this narrative of who is seen as someone who is on the front line when in reality." In other words, there is a gap between what the narrative and imagery of frontline communities propagate—the images I already discussed in this chapter, such as folks living in Fiji, those who lost their homes to Superstorm Sandy, etc.—and the reality, which is that under a system of cis-heteronormative racial capitalism, all are vulnerable to the climate crisis. Thus, how climate justice organizers mobilize narratives of frontline communities does not sufficiently "do the work" of analyzing power relations and captures a slice of the pie in diagnosing vulnerability.

Trauma shapes how you view the climate crisis

To state a point that may seem obvious—when organizers ignore or erase your lived experience, it hurts. The decision as to whether queer and trans people are a frontline community and who within the coalition we center is about more than designing solutions and setting strategies. It is also about affect, or how movements move us emotionally, and how prior emotional wounds are reopened (Gould, 2009). Internal to the Queer Bloc, Bizzy Barefoot recounts how the assumptions that went into the frontline decision hurt:

> "I've been there in certain ways. I almost lost my life to transphobia, right? [I experienced a] violent attack in the West Village many years ago. I do get it, like whiteness aside, not that it can be aside like that, but like that part, notwithstanding there are other things that put me in a place of hurt [so] that I know what it feels like to hurt. I know what it feels like to be pushed out. I know what it feels like to be beaten up. I know what it feels like to almost… have a rape kit done. I know what those things feel like because I felt them" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, January 14, 2022).

Bizzy cannot magic away the violence she experienced as the sea levels rise, food becomes more insecure, or when the weather becomes more extreme. At first glance, the quote may seem unconnected to climate change, but this is a critical point to make explicit—prior trauma, whether interpersonal, structural, or historical, informs and shapes how people perceive and experience any crisis, including the climate crisis. When you have experienced trauma or are proximate to it, it becomes evident that an issue like climate change roots back to preexisting traumas. To hit home the point of this quote, Bizzy is saying that transphobia and climate crisis are inextricably linked. Moreover, to tie back to the Theory Chapter, climate injustice is sexual and gender violence and trauma.

Sometimes this trauma and life experience may not be readily visible or apparent, which limits the validity of what currently goes into determining who counts as a frontline community. While race, class, and Indigeneity are fundamental in the conversation for qualifying the frontlines, the current approach sometimes does not engage with a queer

aesthetics lens. For example, Bizzy also mentioned to me the visual assumptions that the Queer Bloc organizers made in their frontline community conversation:

> "Queers also sometimes look fabulous, right? They step out fabulously. And so it seems like some people are doing better than they might actually be doing when you step out. You project certain confidence, or you refuse to indulge in the aesthetics of poverty because it drags you down further, right?
>
> When glamour makes you feel a little stronger like you can get out of bed because you feel beautiful or you feel wanted, that's not always real" (B. Barefoot, personal communication, January 14, 2022).

Glamour at once becomes a survival tactic and obscures the life experiences of those who choose the aesthetic. As Bizzy describes above, glamour is a performance that imbues some queers with confidence and is the constant practice of "fake it till you make it." This flies in the face of the decision calculus that goes into "proving" frontline community status. Because class is a heuristic for frontline community status, the performance of glamour appears to conflict with the performance of poverty, which some associate with the frontlines.

Summary of It's Obvious for Us

In summary, organizers external and internal to the Queer Bloc experienced epistemic violence from the March itself and the decision from the Queer Bloc to march in the back. For queer and trans people of color climate justice organizers, their lived experience was erased from the March, despite their belief that their lived experience is enough to stake a claim as a frontline community. We can see from this section how "controlling images" of queer and trans people of color direct social movement attention away from their claims as knowers in climate change (P. H. Collins, 2000). Additionally, for some queer and trans organizers within the Queer Bloc, such as Bizzy, prior trauma shapes

and determines how people experience climate crisis. Some of this life experience is not immediately apparent based on visuals or aesthetics alone. The erasure of these experiences is also epistemic violence. However, we cannot ignore how the Queer Bloc was constructed around whiteness and how people like Bizzy benefited from this privilege. Based on the directions of this last theme, I end the chapter with a summary and some recommendations on improving how organizers and academics work with frontline community narratives.

Conclusion

At the time, the People's Climate March was the largest climate mobilization. The March should rightly be celebrated for that accomplishment and the foundation it built for climate organizing down the road, such as work at the intersections of labor and the environment and Green New Deal organizing. Furthermore, researchers found that the 2014 People's Climate March's framing of centering people successfully brought out a diverse range of people who had never before participated in a climate protest. Yet, for all these accomplishments, the March struggled with an intersectional praxis that moved beyond identity to tackle wide-ranging questions of power. Despite using the framework of frontline communities to guide their strategy and rectify power dynamics between big green environmental organizations and environmental justice organizations, what they left out created new complications around legitimacy and further divided the marginalized within the marginalized. I conclude by discussing the implications of the varied responses to how to think about frontline communities and providing some recommendations on paths forward.

As this chapter indicates, climate organizers conceptualize and apply frontline community narratives differently, such that even as it addresses some power dynamics, it ignores others. The organizers in this chapter generally used some combination of factors

including “disproportionate impact,” “race,” “class,” “Indigeneity,” and “geography” to prove who counted as a frontline community. They diverged in the degree to which they felt they could apply these metrics to queer and trans people.

However, organizers drawing upon their lived experience or trauma argued that it was evident that they, as queer & trans people were a frontline community to the climate crisis. This tension matters for several reasons: 1) climate movements must ***not*** enact epistemic violence upon marginalized communities; 2) if the climate movement seeks to gain power relative to the overarching system of racial capitalism, they cannot afford to throw the marginalized within the marginalized under the bus; and 3) practicing intersectionality in applying “proof” for qualifying the frontlines that it has been done so far is a danger to the intersectionally disadvantaged who the state disproportionately targets. In other words, movements must not throw salt on preexisting wounds.

So what are potential paths forward? Below are three recommendations that draw upon the critique of the Queer Bloc and the different engagements with the frontlines that I analyzed in Theme 3. First, expand or change the parameters of determining the frontlines. Second, expand the spatial imaginary of the frontlines. Third, avoid toxic Oppression Olympics by incorporating a continual analysis of power.

1) Expand or change the parameters of determining the frontlines

Based on the analysis in this chapter, I argue that climate organizers can start by expanding or changing the parameters of what influences frontline community status. First, organizers can do their due diligence by researching the climate change impacts on additional constituencies by “asking the other question,” which Mari Matsuda describes as asking, in some ways, “where is this racism in this?” or “where is the sexism in this,” and so

on (Matsuda, 1991). Even if organizers wish to still operate within a distributional paradigm, as I mentioned in the introduction of the dissertation, many peer-reviewed studies link sexuality and gender identity to a disproportionate climate change impact (Dominey-Howes et al., 2018; Goldsmith et al., 2021; Gorman-Murray et al., 2017, 2018). In many respects, then, what I am advocating for is doing away with asking "who is a frontline community" because that is the wrong question even though it is the foundation of this whole chapter. Instead, it might be worth asking, "who are we leaving out and why?"

Second, as feminist scholars and activists have long argued, lived experience is "proof," "knowledge," and "rigorous" (Brooks, 2012; P. H. Collins, 2000). A start to rectifying the epistemic violence covered in this chapter is to heed what organizers have said "counts" to prove their place in the frontlines and incorporate this into analysis, strategies, and tactics. This means acknowledging how the structural violence compounds and how trauma is not immediately visible.

Third, queer the frontlines. If a significant contribution of queering has been the methodology to disrupt binaries, fixedness, and determinacy, then the same approach can be used to change how we approach the frontlines. Rather than the frontlines being a fixed category exclusively attending to vanguard images of racialized, poor, and Indigenous communities facing the impacts of climate-change-exacerbated sea-level rise, how we determine the frontlines can evolve and change over time. Its indeterminacy may be the source of its power in future climate movement coalition building efforts.

2) Expand the spatial imagery of the frontlines

The spatial imaginary and imagery of the frontlines are limited and can expand to include more people. In this chapter, I recounted how some activists with the Queer Bloc

used racialized images of Global South communities as a comparison from which to judge frontline community status. Drastic images of communities in the Global South or communities in the U.S. being swept away by hurricanes need not be the most common ways of visualizing frontline communities. Instead, as the quotes from this chapter imply, the frontlines can be more than living and fighting on the floodplains but can also encompass the pain of people who cannot leave the house or seek the health care they need in times of climate crisis (Goldsmith et al., 2021; Gorman-Murray et al., 2014).

When we expand the imagery of the frontlines, we create the possibility of more inclusive coalition building. For example, Movement Generation has a "Find your Frontlines" exercise where participants are encouraged to think about how they are impacted and, therefore, on the frontlines of the climate crisis. This exercise can guide group or community-level narratives.

3) Avoid toxic Oppression Olympics by incorporating a continual analysis of power

While the March successfully built a big tent coalition, it is less clear as to whether they addressed the power dynamics of marginalization within their ranks. Deciding how and why some communities counted as frontlines created new problems as some felt erased or ignored as a source of political legitimacy. However, there is a danger in coalition building for organizers to veer into a toxic Oppression Olympics, where the initial mistake of not including is interpreted as justification to compare one's Oppression to others to gain a seat at the table while also keeping marginalized people stratified (Hancock, 2007). Instead, organizers could follow the "center the most marginalized" approach that bell hooks articulates and other liberationist organizations practice (Hooks, 2000). These organizers do

not designate one or even a couple of constituencies but instead expand their power analysis to incorporate all who are marginal to the center of power. Similarly, Dara Strolovitch (2007) recommends that advocacy groups that represent marginalized people practice affirmative advocacy. They invest resources in the intersectionally marginalized to move beyond simply saying that they fight for the disadvantaged within their ranks.

This chapter has explored how the Queer Bloc reveals larger issues with how the climate movement organizes, mainly revolving around how to use the "frontline community" narrative. The Queer Bloc reinforces a limiting definition of frontline communities that erases some within their ranks and queer & trans people of color climate justice activists. However, several paths forward help to realize a deeply intersectional climate justice praxis. Some examples and the challenges of this vision are covered in the next chapter as I zoom into the activism of the queer climate justice frame proponents.

Chapter 6. Pride for Whom?

Let's imagine we're at Pride in Washington D.C's scorching hot, humid late days of June. The usual cast of characters is here to have a good time. Bright rainbows crisscross the streets—in capes that people wear, in flags that restaurants and floats hang, and in the confetti that rains down over joyous young baby queers' faces. You can't help yourself and smile in the freudenfreude of it all. You turn, however, and see the Wells Fargo float creep into the picture and feel chilled to the bone—why is a bank that backs pipelines such as the Dakota Access Pipeline that directly contribute to Native genocide and the climate crisis part of this Parade? You turn to your neighbor, but they continue to smile and clap. You wonder—am I living in a dystopia?

Unfortunately, the uncritical co-existence and collusion between Pride and institutions such as Wells Fargo is a reality that many queer and trans people have experienced. Wells Fargo is undoubtedly *proud* of touting its record and "commitment" to the LGBTQ community by noting that they have been participating in pride parades since 1991 and, at this point, participate in more than 50 parades annually in the U.S. alone (Bentz, 2020; Wells Fargo, n.d.). That many in the mainstream LGBTQ community perceive this relationship as a good one is deeply troubling. Much like feminists' collusion with the carceral state to reduce gender-based violence, LGBTQ rights advocates' pinkwashing of Israel, the formation of strange bedfellow coalitions, like that of Wells Fargo and pride parades, comes at a cost (E. Bernstein, 2012; Kim, 2018; Puar, 2007). And marginalized people within the LGBTQ community disproportionately bear the burden of this exchange.

But let's go back to Washington, D.C. for a moment. If Pride's collusion with Wells Fargo represents dystopia, then two moments in 2017 represent queer climate utopia. First,

in April, four collectives and organizations—WERK for Peace, Queer Resistance, Trans Women of Color Collective, and 350 DC—came together to throw a queer dance party for climate justice in front of Ivanka Trump's house in the well-to-do Kalorama neighborhood. Second, in June, the No Justice No Pride coalition held three blockades during D.C. Capital Pride Parade to assert that there is no pride in prisons, police, weapons manufacturers, and pipelines.

In this chapter, I address the third sub-question of the dissertation, "how do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategies?" Given the past two chapters have primarily focused on narrative, we do not yet have a clear picture of what queer climate justice looks like in practice. By contrast, this chapter focuses on strategy defined in Chapter 2 as targets, arenas, and tactics (Meyer & Staggenborg, 2007). This chapter, therefore, uses the cases of the queer dance party for climate justice and the blockade of Capital Pride to exemplify general elements of how queer climate justice works. In other words, where Chapter 4 provided the bones for the first part of the argument I presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.1), this chapter puts the "meat" on the skeleton.

Considered together, the protests' configurations of targets and tactics contrast with what we see in climate justice. First, I find that playful queer & trans politics imbues climate justice with a different touch toward conventional targets. In other words, while it is *typical* to expect someone in the Trump Administration to be the target of climate justice protests, a playful approach uses a different "how" and "why" toward selecting a target. Second, and by contrast, targeting Capital Pride is *atypical* for climate justice protests, while the "how" and "why" are relatively more unconventional. These different routes show how climate justice movements could learn from queer & trans perspectives.

I develop this chapter by considering each protest's build-up and design, execution, and aftereffects. I analyze the queer dance party for climate justice in the first section. Here, I focus on how an atypical, playful "how" or tactic solidifies a critique that functions to weaken a conventional political target. In the second section, I analyze the blockade of Capital Pride. Here, I focus on how selecting an atypical target at once expands the terrain in which climate justice operates and tells us something new about climate *in*justice. In the second section, I further develop the ecohomonormativity I described in Chapter 4 to paint how cis-heteronormativity produces climate injustice.

Provocation 1 – Will you dance with us?

Figure 6.1. Tweet during the Queer Dance Party for Climate Justice

On April 2, 2017, WERK for Peace, Queer Resistance, the Trans Women of Color Collective, and 350 DC threw a queer dance party for climate justice in front of Ivanka

Trump's house.[11] Beats that typically course through the veins of queer and trans people as they move their bodies on the dancefloor were instead invigorating brightly adorned protestors as they bopped from DuPont Circle to Kalorama, Ivanka's neighborhood. They targeted Ivanka Trump because media outlets such as the *New York Times* reported that she and her husband, Jared Kushner, were moderating forces within the Trump administration (Thrush & Haberman, 2017). For many queer & trans people, Ivanka simply provided political cover for the administration to harm their communities. The juxtaposition of Ivanka Trump, a handmaiden to authoritarian white supremacy, and beats, bops,[12] and bodies typically associated with Pride may seem jarring at first. But this was the point of the dance protest—the contrast between two opposite visions of the world came into the frame. A choice emerged, and according to one participant's Tweet above, dancing was one way to pick the right side: "Silence is complicity. And so, we dance" (Fuller, 2017).

The dance party for climate justice exemplifies why queer and trans interventions against climate change are crucial, and I examine these reasons in the following sections. First, the dance party was, to borrow the words of WERK for Peace organizer Firas Nasr, "an act of protest, it's also an act of fun" (Sisley, 2017). Although some climate justice protests might suggest otherwise, protesting for social justice and centering joy are not mutually exclusive. Second, the affective register of the dance protest—in playing with camp, perversity, and irreverence—effectively mobilizes existing and new constituents because of how it stands in contrast to predominant climate justice strategies. Third, the

[11] It might seem odd that 350 DC was a core organizer of the protest, but according to John Qua, organizer with 350 DC, in an interview with me on February 3, 2021 said "It was one of those moments, where we would just throw down. The unique nature of the city is that you can do these actions that have such a huge impact… We sent out emails, we got the group really involved. We had a lot of queer members, so it was easy to do."

[12] Including Hillary Duff's 'Come Clean,' CupcakKe's 'LGBT,' and Bell Biv DeVoe's 'Poison.'

protest creatively exposed the political cover that Ivanka Trump offered the Trump administration.

Dance as an act of protest AND act of fun

While the queer dance party for climate justice was the first time WERK for Peace had explicitly organized around climate justice, the group had long used dance to function as a protest and healing tactic since the Pulse Nightclub shooting in the summer of 2016. Historically, in the U.S., the state denied LGBTQ people self-expression, but queer and trans people have been able to find refuge on the dancefloor and for political change (Buckland, 2002; Croft, 2017). Continuing this legacy, the queer dance party for climate justice suggested that climate change threatened queer and trans self-expression. By turning the streets into a dancefloor, the organizers created a space to assert their queer & trans existence and suggest that the threat of climate change (and the silence from Ivanka) to their lives was not right. Balancing a goal of celebrating queer & trans lives and shifting policy was crucial.

Organizers of the dance protest for climate justice intended it to be a moment of joy and celebration of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit bodies and Mother Earth. According to Anthony from 350 DC, “Joy is really important for movements…People want to be a part of something that feels good, especially at that time. Especially now, people have got 99 problems, and they don’t want yours” (A. Torres, personal communication, February 19, 2021). Anthony’s comment “at that time” speaks to the early days of the Trump administration when activists in the region were still reeling from his shocking win and his subsequent policies in the first half of 2017.

Therefore, joy was a core part of the design, execution, and reflections of the queer dance party for climate justice. While Ivanka Trump was a clear target and played a role in the story that the organizers were trying to tell, a key priority was to affirm that queer and trans people could show up and honor their bodies. To illustrate this point, WERK for Peace organizer Firas Nasr tells me how centering joy and fun shift the ways that success is determined:

> "When I think about what success looks like when it comes to this dance protest and other dance protests, I think about, "Did everyone come safely and leave safely? Did everyone have a good time? Was everyone nourished and cared for? Was everyone able to show up as their full selves and really celebrate their communities? Especially with that Ivanka Trump protest, we had a fucking ball, and it was lit. We had a lot of fun, and I think everyone who wanted to participate in the protest was able to" (F. Nasr, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

The quote from Firas above shows what happens a queer & trans analysis is front and center in interpreting tactics. For one, success becomes more than a state-centric obsession, which is what the political process model adheres to (McAdam, 1982). Social movement scholars and activists have long stuck to narrow political, as opposed to cultural, conceptions of what counts as success (M. Bernstein, 2003): did we win the policies we wanted; did we get someone out of office; did we mobilize thousands of people. Additionally, the success of this protest is about creating safety in a world that is systemically unsafe for queer & trans people where at that moment, people can feel nourishment and care in being with others. And from that safety, whether people have a "fucking ball" is one metric of success.

Contrast to climate tactics

In contrast to the dull, humdrum, sleep-inducing tactics of mainstream climate activism (cite Seymour), the queer dance party organizers extended an invitation—you can dance with us AND fight against climate change. In a deft move of political theatre, the protest's Facebook event and press release irreverently frame Ivanka Trump as an ally to LGBTQ people and the environment through descriptors such as "climate czar" and "BFF of the gays" to point out the absurdity of reporting that cast her as a liberal counterpoint to Donald Trump (WERK for Peace et al., 2017). Additionally, organizers characterized the protest as Ivanka Trump inviting them to her house as opposed to the other way around:

> "Ivanka Trump has cordially invited hundreds of queer quests to throw a massive dance party on her lawn in protest of her father's most recent Executive Order rolling back environmental and climate protections and skinny budget proposing drastic cuts to the EPA. From 6-9 pm on Saturday, April 1, the dancers will parade from Dupont Circle to Ms. Trump's residence" (WERK for Peace et al., 2017).

The implicit demands above are conventional—maintain environmental and climate protections and do not cut the EPA's budget—but how and why the queer & trans protestors are making their demands are not conventional. The queer dance party organizers are implementing a strategy of what Seymour (2018) describes as critical reflexivity to critique climate and LGBTQ strategies. Traditional strategies suggest that climate organizers are always gloomy and that LGBTQ people are carefree hedonists. By contrast, by occupying a space of playful queer & trans climate critique, the organizers' strategy affirms that queer & trans people are concerned about climate change (and therefore not carefree) yet can do it in a way that eschews the doomsday.

Similarly, organizers also applied this gleeful perversity in the planning and execution of the protest. For example, speaking about the playlist for the dance protest, Firas told me that:

> "Every single song on that list had some connection to climate justice, [or] at least to the climate. We played "It's Getting Hot in Here" or we played "Cyclone" and Sean Paul's "Temperature." Songs like that, which had some sort of climate theme. We had a lot of fun with it" (F. Nasr, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

We can reasonably assume that Sean Paul did not intend for "Temperature" to be a tool for climate justice activism. And to be clear, the protest organizers are not saying that climate change will be a good thing. But the playlist exemplifies how a queer perspective might lend itself to climate justice strategy insofar as it represents the repurposing of something (a song) to serve new ends. In this way, the seemingly "inappropriate" use of music, much like a deviant use of an object (Herring, 2011), challenges the normativity embedded in environmentalism (Di Chiro, 2010). And of course, the entire protest functions similarly by transporting dance to new terrains and issue areas. By locating the queerness in climate change—its indeterminacy or fluctuation—and pairing this with party politics, organizers create and practice a novel form of activism that is expansive enough to envisage pop songs as constituting the playlist for liberation.

This contrast to how climate organizers plan protests, especially in a place like D.C., helped amplify the message and the organizers' demands. In a moment when regular protests were non-disruptive, the dance protest was a way to make a splash:

> "Queer and trans dance protests became a really effective way for us to use our bodies, to occupy space, to assert our power and our existence, and demand that we be taken seriously. And that our demands would be taken seriously. And I think that in the U.S., especially in D.C., is so saturated by protest" (F. Nasr, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

The quote above helps place the tactic in context. First, at the time of the queer dance party for climate justice, the Trump administration was in its early stages. In D.C., "there were large protests every other day" (A. Torres, personal communication, February 19, 2021). Second, protests have increasingly occurred more frequently and attract larger and

larger numbers of activists; however, because of their commonality, typical protests do not seem to be shifting power relations (Han, 2014). Located in an oversaturated and less powerful protest environment, the queer dance party amplifies climate justice demands.

Exposing Political Cover

And those demands for the queer dance party for climate justice revolved around exposing the political cover that Ivanka Trump, and the media, were giving Donald Trump. Organizers sought to create an opening to polarize the media and mobilize more activists into making a choice—either dancing with the protestors, a low stakes endeavor, or choosing collaboration with the Trump administration:

> "We had created a polarization where it was, 'You're either with the queer and climate people on the streets, or you're with Trump, Ivanka, and Jared.' Ivanka and Jared [were] symbols of other people who have implicitly normalized the Trump administration and other public figures. It [the dance party] helped deepen that polarization and pull a lot more folks over to us" (A. Torres, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

Trump represented an apparent threat to queer & trans people, which organizers pointed to in naming his Environmental Protection Agency regulatory rollbacks. But to the organizers, because of the vast gulf between clear proponents and opponents of white supremacy, the more subtle enemies in Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner were missing from strategic interventions. However, as the quote above signals, normalizing the Trump administration can be dangerous because it justifies allowing his policies to continue. The dance party was a creative way to shine a light on how Ivanka and Jared were just as complicit in advancing a white supremacist policy agenda that perpetuates climate injustice. As we see in the rest of the chapter, the strategy of exposing political cover is also applicable to targeting institutions that are supposedly part of the LGBTQ "community."

Provocation 2 – Capital Pride or Pride in Fossil Capital?

On June 10, 2017, the No Justice No Pride coalition shut down D.C. Capital Pride Parade on three separate occasions: first, they targeted the Metropolitan Police Department for creating conditions of unsafety for Black and Brown people, particularly trans women; second, they targeted the Lockheed Martin float to call out how Pride was profiting off of war; and third, they targeted Wells Fargo for its predatory lending practices, investment in prisons, and backing of the Dakota Access Pipeline. No Justice No Pride chose these three targets because of the intersectional story they were trying to tell—intersectionally marginalized people cannot separate the ways that systems of oppression impact them:

> "It isn't like, 'Oh, I'm Black, so I'm only impacted by predatory lending.' Or, 'Oh, I'm Indigenous, I'm only affected by pipelines.' There's a whole intersection, and also, we don't live single-issue lives. We also care about one another and know our destinies and liberations are tied. Our oppressors are thinking of ways to cut us out structurally and in some ways also kill us, so the strongest way for us to push back against that is to work together" (N. Mokeuna, personal communication, March 7, 2021).

As we see in the quote above from Ntebo, the organizers sought to implement a multi-issue protest that reflected their intersectional analysis. The analysis suggests that oppressors are already moving in ways that link issues to enact violence upon many marginalized people. In response, the resistance should be in coalition with many groups and across several issues.

Initially, Capital Pride organizers rerouted the Parade to ignore the NJNP protestors but eventually started negotiating with their demands, which included barring MPD, harmful corporations such as Lockheed Martin, and Wells Fargo from marching and contributing to the Parade and restructuring the Board of Directors to center marginalized communities such as trans women of color (Key & DiGuglielmo, 2017). While negotiations lasted for some

time, Capital Pride did not agree to NJNP's demands, catalyzing a loss of faith that the mainstream institution would do right by marginalized communities within the LGBTQ community.

Much like the queer dance party for climate justice, the blockade injected energy into Pride and painted a contrast between a sterile, corporate parade and one that stood for a better future. DeLesslin George-Warren, who was part of the Wells Fargo blockade, noted to me, "They're [protest detractors] yelling at us for stopping their aesthetically boring parade, and we made something more interesting out of the parade, and we are also standing up for literal water, which is the thing that connects us" (D. George-Warren, personal communication, March 10, 2022). On the one hand, the juxtaposition between water and oil, on the other hand, visualized a previously hidden polarization—corporate Pride gives gay rights but at the cost of water, which disproportionately harms Indigenous people, in this case, yet also affects all of us.

More broadly, the protest signaled and was part of a revitalized queer and trans liberation movement tired of the rightward expansion of the country writ large and the mainstreaming of the LGBTQ rights movement that continued to leave behind queer & trans people of color. While I write about this one protest in this section, I should say that activists in D.C. had long called on Capital Pride and mainstream organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the National LGBTQ Task Force (the Task Force) to do better. For example, GetEQUAL started a campaign to get Wells Fargo out of Capital Pride in 2016 because of their financial backing of private prisons and launched a #RevokeTheRainbow campaign calling on the HRC and the Task Force to revoke the metaphorical LGBTQ rainbow by divesting from Wells Fargo (Cronk, 2016; GetEQUAL, n.d.).

Through analyzing the June 10 protest, I make three points. First, NJNP organizers name and critique the continued abandonment of the mainstream LGBTQ rights movement of intersectionally marginalized queer & trans people. In attempting to return "back to the roots" of Stonewell, NJNP sought to build a home for those the mainstream movement left behind. Second, pinkwashing serves the expansion of fossil capital. And third, Capital Pride and many onlookers' implicit support of the Dakota Access Pipeline via Wells Fargo constitutes ecohomonormativity and represents a direct link between settler-colonial racial capitalism and cis-heteronormativity. In that subsection, I explain how selecting an atypical target in the context of climate justice like Capital Pride shifts the movement's strategic decisions.

LGBTQ abandonment and creating a political home for the abandoned

Pride traces its roots to queer and trans of color leadership, including at Stonewall and other events, such as the Cooper Donuts Uprising in 1959 and the Compton Cafeteria Riots in 1965, which set up the catalytic moment of Stonewall (Stryker, 2017). For NJNP organizers, Capital Pride's corporate sponsor list was emblematic of a larger trend in the LGBTQ rights movement of making loaded bargains. In exchange for sponsorship, funds, and "allyship" from corporations and therefore rights for some at the expense of all, LGBTQ organizations would provide political cover for corporations to desecrate Black, brown, and Indigenous communities. In the process, Capital Pride was simultaneously drifting away from the roots of Pride and abandoning queer and trans people of color:

> "Ironically, Capital Pride has also come to include the police—the very entity responsible for the violent raids on Stonewall that started it all. The presence of uniformed police officers in Pride makes it fundamentally unsafe and unwelcoming to members of our community who face discriminatory policing—like that which drove our ancestors to rebel at Stonewall—every day" (Peoples, 2017).

In the quote above, Angela Peoples, the Director of GetEQUAL and a No Justice No Pride organizer identified the contradictions inherent in Pride's contemporary practices. Instead of honoring the legacy of Stonewall starting in response to state-sanctioned violence via policing, Capital Pride honors the police. Despite several efforts calling on Capital Pride to change its practices, the institution remained committed to protecting capital over people. As No Justice No Pride organizers put it ahead of the June 10 Blockade:

> "The issues of putting corporate donations over people or principle, cozying up to the police at the expense of black and brown communities, and the lack of inclusion of all experiences is not new to Pride or the mainstream LGBT movement" (No Justice No Pride, 2017a).

Their protest, therefore, did not emerge out of a historical vacuum and is instead situated within a long history of the state and LGBTQ nonprofit violence toward and abandonment of queer and trans people of color. While LGBTQ nonprofits are ostensibly meant to serve all LGBTQ people, many of their practices police queer people of color. For example, organizations such as the Center on Halstead in Chicago create homonormative images of who is deserving of help—those who aspire toward whiteness—while creating imagery of queer youth of color as criminals to justify police and surveillance within the Center (Beam, 2018). Capital Pride carries forward the trend of making the space relatively more amenable for white LGBTQ people.

However, queer of color activists did not stop at naming these injustices and instead have organized to halt mainstream institutions' complicity in oppressive structures. Building upon a long history of queer and trans liberationists, who have targeted mainstream LGBTQ institutions for their complicity in racism (Broad, 2020), No Justice No Pride started by first

asserting that these same dynamics of mainstream LGBTQ abandonment were at play with Capital Pride:

> "Capital Pride's list of sponsors reads like a who's who of Native genocide: FBI, NSA, CIA, Wells Fargo, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Federal Bureau of Prisons" (No Justice No Pride, 2017b).

In targeting a number of these sponsors during the Blockade, No Justice No Pride asserted three crucial claims. First, that fighting back against Capital Pride's sponsors was a matter of fighting back against colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy. In the quote above, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Jen Deerinwater, pointed out the harmful values Capital Pride is practicing by aligning themselves with active agents of Native genocide and how the U.S. colonial state and corporations prop up and bolster ongoing violence toward Indigenous people. While there are clear environmental and climate justice implications in targeting Wells Fargo for its support of the Dakota Access Pipeline, i.e., continued use of fossil fuels (Dhillon, 2019), the primary framing emerging from here is that the protest was a struggle against colonial, imperialist, and racist violence.

Second, NJNP organizers critique how Capital Pride's sponsorships are antithetical to their stated commitment to standing for all queer & trans people and instead have the effect of prioritizing capital over people. As Beam (2018) argues, mainstream LGBTQ institutions have increasingly oriented themselves toward the market and, in the process, solidified a queer subject who is profitable. To be part of this marketplace and achieve "inclusion," the ideal gay subject accepts and believes in the necessity of policing and consumerism. According to NJNP's Facebook Event for the June 10 Day of Action: "Capital Pride spokespeople eagerly fram[e] Pride-goers as "a whole market" ready to have their buying choices "influenced" by sponsors, who don't want to "miss out" on this great

marketing opportunity" (Ambrogi et al., 2017). As a result, those racialized, classed "others" who are not part of this vision are abandoned, an argument that NJNP organizers advanced on several occasions. For example, Jen observed a clear response from Capital Pride at a public meeting where the Board was hearing from community members:

> I remember I looked over and saw this person sitting with all the Capital Pride people. And he read as a white cis gay man, and I saw him rolling his eyes, and I just thought, "How dare you?" I can't imagine hearing someone within the queer community reading about experiences of violence and abuse and rolling my eyes (J. Deerinwater, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Above, Jen talks about a reaction from a white gay man after reading a statement about how Wells Fargo's inclusion in the Parade signified support of pipelines and state violence (recall that Wells Fargo was backing the Dakota Access Pipeline). The white gay man in the quote exemplifies a larger trend from Capital Pride in which a sexuality-only lens ignores multiple dimensions of power.[13] Such a one-dimensional response is not new to LGBTQ politics, drawing eerie resemblances to institutions such as *the Advocate* or the Task Force, which, in the process of assimilating, depoliticized radical anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist critiques for the sake of white-washed gay "rights" (Ferguson, 2018) These people and institutions ignore the violence and abuse that Jen talks about because their rights rest on the exclusion of marginalized queer & trans people.

Back to the roots

Third, No Justice No Pride organizers argued that they were creating a social and political home for who mainstream LGBTQ institutions reliant upon nonprofit structures were leaving behind. For example, Ntebo Mokeuna, also a part of the Wells Fargo blockade,

[13] During our interview, Jen also told me that Ryan Bos, Executive Director of Capital Pride, responded to the statement by saying Wells Fargo was "good to the LGBT community."

told me that the success of the protest in inspiring similar Pride disruptions around the U.S. and the globe was because of exhaustion and frustration with LGBTQ nonprofits:

> "The expansion of the nonprofit industrial complex impacted, for the worst, how people are organizing. I think we're living in the aftermath of that, and the nonprofit industrial complex has gotten even bigger and has taken dangerous forms for LGBTQ people, particularly trans folks. I think that's the spirit of No Justice No Pride" (N. Mokeuna, personal communication, March 2, 2021).

In the quote above, Ntebo implicitly points to a historical and structural context where nonprofits do not serve intersectionally marginalized queer and trans people, yet they continue to expand.

By contrast, organizers argue that because Capital Pride has drifted so far from its roots and foundations in queer and trans of color struggle, there has not been a place where all LGBTQ people, including Native queer people and people of color, are welcome and can find refuge. This outcome spurred the need for NJNP to create a political home for people left behind. As Angela Peoples of GetEQUAL put it:

> "We deserve to celebrate Pride without being forced alongside the Police who kill us… Pride should be a haven for the entire LGBTQ community. The Capital Pride Board has shown who it's prioritizing. No Justice No Pride is for everyone who has previously been excluded and for a different vision of what this event could and should be" (No Justice No Pride, 2017b).

In summary, No Justice No Pride organizers thus make two moves. First, to point out how Capital Pride's practices prioritize corporations over the interests of all LGBTQ people. And second, after giving Capital Pride a chance to practice accountability and seeing not much of a response, articulating and creating a social and political home for whom Capital Pride excludes in their continued commitment to Pride in prisons, police, and pipelines.

Pinkwashing serves fossil capital

This case of NJNP's protest and selection of Wells Fargo as a target shows how pipelines, climate devastation, and Native genocide are core to homonormativity. For example, As Jen also put it, "Wells Fargo profits off our genocide, and you all [Capital Pride] collude with them" (Dejean, 2017). We know from homonormativity scholars that the outsize attention toward individual assimilationist goals such as marriage and military inclusion depoliticizes the LGBTQ constituency while reshaping the contours of corporations to profit off more amenable LGBTQ people (Duggan, 2002, 2003). NJNP's selection of Wells Fargo as a target builds upon this insight that Capital Pride's racialization and devaluation of Black and Brown people are also built upon the foundations of climate devastation. The "community" that Capital Pride proffers produces social inequalities, which in turn produce environmental inequalities.

In many ways, Capital Pride functions as a cloak for Wells Fargo, among the other targets of the NJNP protest, to continue its violence toward queer & trans people of color. NJNP organizers called out Wells Fargo for using their contributions and presence in Capital Pride to pinkwash their business practices:

> "Capital Pride 'pinkwashes' harmful institutions: announcing to the world that state agencies and private companies are 'LGBTQ-friendly' by draping a rainbow veil over their destructive activities. Its overwhelmingly white, cis, professional, middle-aged Board repeatedly make clear with whom their priorities lie" (Ambrogi et al., 2017).

Pinkwashing is a strategy where corporations or states perform their alignment with LGBTQ and feminist movements by co-opting or parroting their language because of the belief that such actions will distract and provide cover for them to continue harming queer and trans communities (Puar, 2007). It serves a similar function to greenwashing, where corporations appear to address environmental harm but use this appearance to mask their

ongoing violence toward the environment (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Delmas & Burbano, 2011; Lubitow & Davis, 2011). Pinkwashing is possible because of homonationalism. While Puar's (2007) insights about homonationalism are situated within a historical context of contrasting LGBTQ citizenship in the West versus other countries' LGBTQ rights to justify racist, xenophobic violence (M. Smith, 2017), what is relevant in the case of NJNP is its similar critique. Capital Pride valorizes Wells Fargo for its support of gay rights, which covers and allows them to continue funding the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the process, it sacrifices intersectionally disadvantaged queer & trans people.

To hone in on the specificity of Wells Fargo as a target, let me be clear: pinkwashing serves fossil capital and environmental and climate devastation. This means that pinkwashing does not solely mask harm toward conventional "LGBTQ issues" but also stretches to conceal climate violence.[14] Pinkwashing, from Wells Fargo, allows for continued climate injustice by hiding and supporting ongoing U.S. settler colonialism invested in expanding fossil capital on Native lands. In other words, pinkwashing as social reproduction makes accumulation *possible* and shows how "the heteronormative regulation of sexuality dialectically interrelates with other social relations of power such as racism, patriarchy, and settler-colonialism to form the ongoing condition of possibility for capitalist accumulation" (Nguyen 2021, pg. 2).

While Puar's (2007) incisive critique of pinkwashing reveals the strength of Israeli settler-colonialism, the case of NJNP's protest and targeting of Wells Fargo points to the need to center on how the environment and climate are core to Turtle Island settler

[14] The construction of "LGBTQ issues" is itself a manifestation of how identity reproduces inequality. Given that Black, Brown, Asian, and Indigenous people are impacted by the climate crisis, and of course are part of the LGBTQ community, then climate change should be an "LGBTQ issue," but the prioritization of white gay rights closes off this analysis.

colonialism and homonormativity (Connors Jackman & Upadhyay, 2014; Morgensen, 2012). Pinkwashing, therefore, serves the reproductive needs of capitalist accumulation. Capturing the essence of this critique succinctly, GetEQUAL tweeted, "Null & Void when they [Wells Fargo] fund pipelines like #DAPL, destroying the land of Two-Spirit, indigenous, LGBTQ communities. #NoJusticeNoPride."

Ecohomonormativity: Concealing the costs of "rights" and "equality"

In this section, I further develop the critique portion of my theory, as seen in Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2. I start the section by describing how Capital Pride's actions represent homonormativity. I then couch and explain why other Capital Pride responses are ecohomonormative. Because of the narrow "rights" and "equality" that privileged LGBTQ people accepted, a backlash ensues where they seek to preserve their rights. I, therefore, spend the third section speaking about how privileged LGBTQ people claim victimhood at the hands of NJNP protestors as a protection mechanism. Finally, I describe a more subtle form of social and political control where Capital Pride engaged in pseudo-listening and racial gaslighting. Ecohomonormativity, therefore, represents a clear threat to realizing queer climate justice.

Homonormative responses conceal violence toward Queer & Trans People of Color

Capital Pride presented a universal vision of LGBTQ progress, but its universality masked how its vision left many out. Homonormativity functions by opening a portal for some—privileged white gays and lesbians can enter the "good life" if they assimilate and in exchange for throwing intersectionally marginalized LGBTQ people under the bus. For

example, this process of assimilating meant accepting a vision of Pride that accommodates carceral politics and policing:

> "I do not want to deny the police officer who is out publicly and working side by side with allies, the chance to show his pride, her pride, or their pride. That is ultimately how minds change" (Kurzius, 2017).

In the quote above from Executive Director of Capital Pride Ryan Bos responding to NJNP's demands, we can see the textbook elements of homonormativity. On the more obvious level, Ryan upholds and solidifies the notion that there is pride in police, despite the concerns from queer & trans people of color that policing threatens liberation and was a catalyst for queer liberation organizing. On a more subtle level, Ryan's invocation of "how minds change" strikes me. Rhetorically, such a phrase is couched in the assimilationist strategy of marriage equality and gay rights. If we show heterosexual people and politicians that LGBTQ people, including police, are "just like you," then we will "change hearts and minds" to create greater acceptance toward LGBTQ people. In this way, homonormativity is a discursive strategy where normative LGBTQ people and institutions like Ryan Bos perform that they "[V]alue everyone's voice, value everyone's perspective" (Kurzius, 2017) to mask their prioritization of advantaged subgroup issues over disadvantaged subgroup issues (Strolovitch, 2007).

Ecohomonormativity as protecting environmental privilege

To couch Capital Pride's practices as ecohomonormative, I make a somewhat obvious point but one that I believe is worth saying explicitly: environmental privilege extends to LGBTQ people, and in exchange for assimilation, normative LGBTQ people offload climate injustice on others within the community. Park and Pellow (2011) argue that

"Environmental privilege is embodied in the fact that some groups can access spaces and resources, which are protected from the kinds of ecological harm that other groups are forced to contend with everyday" (4). In the context of the dissertation, some groups, such as homonormative LGBTQ people, can access the benefits of gay rights and a healthy environment. In contrast, some groups, particularly queer & trans people of color, are less likely to accrue these benefits.

How does environmental privilege work for LGBTQ communities? First, Capital Pride frames individualist, consumerist actions as "political," when these homonormative pivots remove the institution's responsibility to show up for people who cannot afford to leave their politics at that.[15] Their environmental privilege allows them to ignore the stakes of allowing pipelines to go forward while taking advantage of the fact that pipelines do not threaten them.

Backlash: Claiming victimhood to mask violence

Second, Capital Pride and white gay onlookers seek to claim Pride's "benefits" or advantages to themselves and create a backlash to NJNP's critique. White gay onlookers believed that they earned the right to a depoliticized Pride and characterized any disruption to this vision as an invasion.[16] For example, while NJNP protestors were blocking the Wells Fargo float, white gay Pride participants threw water bottles at them and did their best to stop the disruption:

[15] For example, Ryan Bos argues that "The original [D.C.] Pride was a block party, and that block party was a protest—a way for people told not to accept who they are to come together and celebrate ourselves as individuals. That is a form of protest. That is how many choose to protest" (Kurzius, 2017).

[16] Looking over the Facebook page for the No Justice No Pride Day of Action shows the vitriol that white gay people directed toward the queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people of color at the forefront of NJNP (Ambrogi et al., 2017).

> "Someone did try and kick the PVC that connected me to someone else. He was an older white guy, a white gay, and ran up to me and was trying to kick the PVC. Thankfully someone from the support team was like, 'Okay, that seems a little drastic, sir" (D. George-Warren, personal communication, March 10, 2022).

In many respects, it is reasonable to react and say that this reaction was a severe response to a protest. Still, more importantly, it speaks to the degree to which white gay men using a one-dimensional queer analysis violently seek to protect their "rights" (Ferguson, 2018). Strikingly, these men, in these moments, can pose an even more significant threat than state and corporate agents of violence like the police and the Wells Fargo float's security team:

> "Once I was sitting down and locked in, and I saw the look of rage on the face of those white gay men. That's when I got scared. I wasn't scared of security. I wasn't scared of the police. In that moment, I was scared of the white gays. One man was screaming right next to me, like beet red spit coming out of his mouth" (J. Deerinwater, personal communication, May 3, 2022).

As Jen's quote clarifies, a one-dimensional, homonormative analysis is not just a theoretical concern—interpersonally and systemically, it has violent implications. As we have seen throughout this section, Capital Pride's practices align with larger mainstream LGBTQ political trends. These institutions "work to sever sexuality from critiques of race, gender, capitalism, and colonialism and thereby make sexuality the handmaiden of state and capital" (Ferguson, 2018). When we frame the NJNP protest as a struggle against colonialism, capitalism, and racism, the violent reactions from white gay men are not contradictions but simply the logical behaviors expected of assimilated queers beholden to protecting the state and fossil capital. That white gay men do the work of state-sanctioned violence (police), and capital-sanctioned violence (private security) shows how dangerous a one-dimensional queer analysis can be.

The onlookers attempted to solidify their privilege by casting themselves as victims who were now the targets of homophobic violence from NJNP protestors. For example, the founder of D.C.'s first gay and lesbian advocacy group Paul Kuntzler viewed the NJNP protestors as "hav[ing] very little understanding of where we came from… I really [see] them as trying to exclude people and trying to dictate who's able to participate in Pride" (Montgomery, 2018) In this way, people like Paul turn and co-opt the overarching critique that NJNP advances. As opposed to Capital Pride and white gays and lesbians being exclusionary, it is instead NJNP that is being exclusionary. As a result of claiming victimhood, the larger homonormative community can ignore their environmental privileges and gaslight the concerns of queer & trans people of color.

Pseudo-listening and racial gaslighting

On that note, during and after the conclusion of the protest, Capital Pride continued to enact epistemic violence upon the NJNP protestors by ignoring their concerns, engaging in pseudo-listening, or using racial gaslighting. One of the board members told an NJNP organizer that they refused to "negotiate with terrorists" (Barksdale, 2017), thus reinforcing racialized controlling images to justify their way out of hearing valid concerns (P. H. Collins, 2000). Others on the executive team for Capital Pride suggested that they and NJNP organizers come together to "meet," "discuss," and "research" changes (No Justice No Pride, 2017c). In the sense of being present but not hearing the concerns, this pseudo-listening strategy functions to avoid making changes that would amplify the power of queer & trans people of color. The strategy of delay, ignorance, and mischaracterization all constitute a form of what scholars call racial gaslighting, insofar as Capital Pride questions

the realities and perspectives of queer & trans people of color in making reasonable demands (Davis & Ernst, 2019).[17]

Ironically, even as Capital Pride and white gay people attempt to hold on to their environmental privilege, they are also at risk under a capitalism-produced climate crisis. For example, gayborhoods, sites of violence via gentrification, are in danger of ecological devastation. Research shows that neighborhoods with high numbers of same-sex couples are associated with increased air pollution, placing them at a 12.3 percent greater risk for cancer than heterosexual couples (T. W. Collins et al., 2017b, 2017a).

Capitalism is inherently contradictory, and white gays would do well to interrogate how their environmental privilege is a concession.

Summary

To summarize, while we know that building, maintaining, and protecting fossil capital like the Dakota Access Pipeline is core to racial capitalism's constant need for energy production and dispossession of Native lands and people, NJNP's critique of Capital Pride as colluding with Wells Fargo raises a subtle, but essential, insight. Capital Pride's practices of ecohomonormativity normalize how certain systems, such as (environmental) racism, are necessary to realize and maintain white, gay male individual enjoyment. Additionally, Capital Pride's cosign of Wells Fargo, and therefore of the Dakota Access Pipeline, reveal how cis-heteronormative social reproduction creates the conditions for fossil capital and production to prosper.

[17] A clear example of this process came in the aftermath of Capital Pride Executive Producer Bryan Pruitt resigning from his position after No Justice No Pride organizers exposed his earlier transphobic commentary. In an interview with *DCIst,* responding to No Justice No Pride's demands, Pruitt responds "'I am not even remotely aware of Wells Fargo or pinkwashing,' he says. 'I volunteer for Capital Pride because I want to make people's weekend great'" (Kurzius, 2017).

Conclusion

Just as climate change is not "over there," but instead upon us, dystopian Pride is upon us. In this dystopian reality in which we live, Wells Fargo, the Metropolitan Police Department, and Lockheed Martin are core allies in the fight for LGBTQ "equality." At the same time, they perpetuate violence against this community. Yet, despite forces of pinkwashing that mask the impacts of this violence among the most privileged in the queer & trans community, activists have asserted and practiced a different reality, one that purports to leave no one behind and certainly does not include corporations. This chapter has previewed two protests that are microcosms of an alternative invested in claiming Pride for all of us and rejecting dystopian Pride.

Whereas dystopian Pride asserts that Pride is meant to be a celebration and not a protest, the queer dance party for climate justice rejected the premise and affirmed that protest and fun are not mutually exclusive. Partiers celebrated their bodies and Mother Earth by dancing, chanting, and throwing biodegradable confetti into the air. At the same time, *how* they went about calling all conventional targets in Ivanka Trump has instrumental lessons for climate justice strategy. The playful politics featured in this chapter at once celebrates queer & trans bodies and cuts through the noise of typical, doomsday-oriented climate protests.

The No Justice No Pride protest called out how Pride continued to mainstream queerness & transness and pointed out the dangers of continuing to act in this way. Blocking the 2017 Capital Pride Parade on three occasions, NJNP organizers told an intersectional story about the overt enemies against them—Wells Fargo, the police, weapons manufacturers—and the near enemies ostensibly in their community—Capital Pride and the

Human Rights Campaign. Like the queer dance party for climate justice organizers, NJNP organizers argued that another Pride was possible on the horizon. They would work to create a home for everyone left behind by dystopian Pride.

Both protests expose the political cover that media and mainstream institutions give to clear enemies in the form of the Trumps and Wells Fargo. This suggests that Ivanka and Capital Pride are complicit and collude with more visible threats to queer & trans life. In this way, a queer climate justice lens identifies the visible ways that systems of oppression crash down in people's daily lives while also unmasks the less visible levers of power that threaten their livelihoods.

This chapter has explored how a queer climate justice frame and lens, rooted in queer and trans of color lived experience, serves as a critique and launchpad for creative resistance. The critique identifies the threats to liberation in the form of Wells Fargo, Trump, and even mainstream institutions such as Pride and the Human Rights Campaign. The resistance to dystopian Pride claims a Pride that is, by contrast, welcoming toward all and leaves no one behind through self-expression, healing, and dance.

Chapter 7. Coming out of the closet; Coming out as environmentalists

"Our organization fights for a just future. That doesn't mean only climate justice, it means justice across all fronts. If we aren't fighting for a future that is safe for everyone, then what are we truly fighting for?" – 350.org

"But we are also deeply concerned about the physical world LGBT young people, and all the nation's young people, will be inheriting—potentially one with more extreme droughts, dangerous heat waves, destructive floods, deadly storms, frightening diseases, and disappearing coastal communities." – National Center for Transgender Equality

In 2021, ahead of the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, scientists again decried the lack of state action to address climate change and warned that our time is running out to stop irreversible climate damage (Berwyn, 2021). At the same time, building upon a long history of attacks on trans people, state legislatures controlled by Republicans advanced bills that threatened trans youth and their humanity (ACLU, 2021). These crises rage on, seemingly unconnected, without coordination between movements, institutions, and policymakers.

But, looking at some of the statements that LGBTQ interest groups and climate/environmental interest groups release, such as those in the chapter's epigraph, a somewhat different picture emerges. After the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016, queer and trans staffers at 350 wrote that if activists' visions of climate justice did not include "justice on all fronts," including for queer and trans liberation, they were not practicing climate justice. After Trump announced Scott Pruitt as his Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator appointee in 2017,[18] the National Center for Transgender Equality put out a call to action—if LGBTQ interest groups care about trans youth, then they need to address

[18] Scott Pruitt's appointment to the EPA was controversial because, for instance, he had sued the EPA several times (Mosbergen, 2017).

climate change, which threatens the physical well-being of those youth. At first glance, these statements suggest coalitional strength, or at least on the rhetorical level, organizations associated with seemingly separate movements are extending a hand to each other.

In this chapter, I dig into the lead-up and aftermath of these statements and address the fourth and final sub-question of the dissertation "to what extent do queer & trans perspectives shape climate justice strategy?" In Chapter 6, I described how queer & trans perspectives make strategic climate justice interventions. This chapter examines how far queer & trans perspectives push climate justice strategies by turning to the national advocacy level. The chapter completes the empirical portion of the dissertation and shows how there are several barriers to practicing queer climate justice. Specifically, this chapter fills out the second part of the argument described in Chapter 2 by identifying the "Blockage" organizations face when moving from symbolic to substantive action (Figure 2.2).

I move the analysis over four organizations throughout the chapter—the Sierra Club, 350.org, the National Center for Transgender Equality, and the National LGBTQ Task Force. While statements like those I previewed here in the introduction have symbolic importance, they have not led to strategic campaigns at the intersections of queer & trans and climate politics. On the one hand, discursive actions like writing statements or signing off on organizational petitions rhetorically communicate queer & trans stakes in the fight against climate change and expand who belongs in the movement. On the other hand, these discursive actions fall short by not moving into action. Ultimately, this chapter tells a mixed story—some connections between queer & trans liberation and climate justice are established, but impactful strategic interventions have yet to materialize.

I cover each organization and divide the chapter into two parts. In Part 1, I focus on the two environmental/climate organizations. Starting with the Sierra Club, I trace how decisions to support environmental justice and anti-racism spill over into how the organization approaches queer & trans solidarity. Moving into 350.org, I describe how the gradual inclusion of more and more queer & trans people served queer world-making. Transitioning to Part 2, I shift my analysis to the two queer & trans organizations. I cover the National Center for Transgender Equality first and describe the barriers to moving beyond the anti-Scott Pruitt letter featured here in the introduction. I close the chapter with the National LGBTQ Task Force and likewise identify a few cases of the organization acting on climate and some of the constraints on further queer & trans climate campaigns.

Part 1: Environmentalists Come out of the Closet

Case 1 – the Sierra Club: Solidarity and Justice Feedback Loops

Mainstream environmental and queer social movements have only begun to identify their commonalities in the past decade. This section analyzes the Sierra Club as an environmental & climate organization with heavy "baggage" that has gradually incorporated queer & trans solidarity into its broader environmental strategy. First, I describe three examples of how the Sierra Club's value commitments and institutional changes in responses to racism appeared to have justice feedback loops in spurring some action toward LGBTQ issues. Here, I also analyze the Sierra Club's public statements supporting queer & trans members. Second, I give more nuance to the more positive story I write about in the first half of this section. Turning to the Sierra Club's internal politics, I warn against

romanticizing the Sierra Club's external-facing progress. The case's story is ultimately one of falling short of practicing queer climate justice.

The relatively slow response from the standpoint of environmental organizations makes sense—the central tension within the environmental movement has been one of racism, especially for the Sierra Club as one of the oldest surviving interest groups in the U.S., founded in 1892. And yet, only in 2020 has the Sierra Club denounced its founder John Muir for perpetuating white supremacy with anti-Indigenous and anti-Black sentiments (Brune, 2020). In 1998 and 2004, racist and xenophobic contingents of the Sierra Club nearly succeeded in adopting an anti-immigrant policy plank for the organization, thus continuing a long and dangerous history of nativist environmentalism (King, 2008; L. S.-H. Park & Pellow, 2011). The Sierra Club has shifted its priorities, internal oppression work, and coalitional efforts in response to these failings. Unintentionally, these changes to rectify racism also shape how the Sierra Club shows up for queer & trans people.

The Sierra Club began showing up for a broader range of social justice issues after solidifying its justice, equity, and inclusion values. For example, in 2016, President Obama designated the Stonewall Inn as a National Monument. While the Stonewall Inn is critical to the LGBTQ+ movement as the site of an insurgent queer and trans uprising in 1969 against policing, the Sierra Club also saw the importance of Stonewall. It supported its designation as a monument by sending out action alerts and mobilizing members to write comments to the Park Service. According to Dan Chu, preserving Stonewall aligned with the Sierra Club's pre-existing commitments:

> "Really, for us as a conservation group, to lean into supporting the designations of these new monuments that initially weren't that significant from an ecological point of view tied in with Sierra Club's already [existing] commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion" (D. Chu, personal communication, January 19, 2021).

Although Dan leaves intact the Sierra Club as primarily focused on conservation, he suggests that the Sierra Club's solidarity with queer & trans people flowed from its standing political commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion. According to this characterization, the Sierra Club maintains its core reputation and identity as a conservation group but values queer & trans solidarity as fitting with its social justice principles.

These social justice principles were not core to the Sierra Club's initial organizational identity. In 2014, the Sierra Club's Board of Directors adopted the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing, including commitments to bottom-up organizing and working in solidarity and mutuality (Moyer, 2017). Drafted in 1996 by environmental and economic justice organizers, the Principles provide guidelines on working across differences and unequal power dynamics. As Dan explained to me during our interview, supporting the designation of the Stonewall Inn as a National Monument was an extension of the Sierra Club's support of the Jemez Principles.

This one example of the Sierra Club's work on a marginal policy issue reflects a larger trend in which the Sierra Club's shifts in identity in response to other issues of varying policy importance have ramifications for issues down the line. Prior institutional commitments in the Sierra Club to work toward racial and economic justice have the spillover effect of shaping work on LGBTQ issues. Most visibly, after years of not taking a stance on gay marriage, the Sierra Club in 2012 eventually signaled its support of marriage equality by boycotting an Episcopal diocese for its opposition to gay rights:

> "Unfortunately, we have learned that the owner of St. Christopher's... has adopted positions regarding sexual orientation which do not reflect the values of our organization," the letter states. "Given that the diocese holds views we find

> objectionable ... we must inform you that the Sierra Club will no longer patronize St. Christopher's" (Parker, 2012).

As theories of social movement political process would predict (McAdam, 1982), marriage equality's rise on the public agenda and elite arrangements in favor of a pro-marriage equality stance opened a window for the Sierra Club to pivot its perspective. In this case, after President Obama publicly endorsed gay marriage in 2012, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club, Michael Brune, released a brief statement affirming Obama's stance:

> "The Sierra Club applauds the courage and conviction President Barack Obama displayed today in supporting the basic human right of same sex couples to marry. Our 1.4 million members and supporters include people of every sexual orientation, and they are all as entitled to marry the person they choose as they are to the clean air, water, and beautiful landscapes they fight to protect" (Brune, 2012).

In the quote above, Brune implies that marriage equality is just as essential of a human right as is access to clean air, water, and land. More than simply taking advantage of the changing political winds behind marriage equality (an instrumental purpose), the Sierra Club performed crucial identity work (Jacobson, 2011). Rather than invisibilizing the sexual orientation of its membership, the Sierra Club used this moment to state that its membership was inclusive of sexual minorities explicitly. By connecting marriage equality to a need to be responsive to its membership and a shared framing of human rights, the Sierra Club places a marginal policy issue in unity with its primary policy aims. It signals a more inclusive identity to external constituents and allies.

Unintentional spillover effects from institutionalizing diversity, equity, and inclusion

Institutional changes fostered some conditions for queer & trans perspectives to influence strategy. The Sierra Club began formalizing its diversity, equity, and inclusion

work in the 2000s. Notably, the Dismantling Racism program started in 2002 to internally change the culture of the Sierra Club. By 2006, the Sierra Club formed the Diversity Council. Two leaders of color—the board director Sunjay Rainchild and volunteer Mark Walters—chaired the Council. According to former President Allison Chin, who I interviewed on February 8, 2021, the Council realized that the Sierra Club needed to establish an infrastructure for diversity, equity, and inclusion with resources to implement their recommendations. From these discussions emerged a Sierra Club diversity steering committee and support committees for the Board, staff, and volunteers. Since 2013, two multi-year equity plans have included steps toward implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks in policy and campaign work. Internal institutionalization in response to calls for the Sierra Club to address racism had *unintentional* spillover effects on issues of sexuality and gender.

First, national-level guidelines led to changes in chapter cross-racial solidarity and taught members concepts such as white privilege. Barbara Grover of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, recounts that around 2014, Sierra Club National was encouraging its chapters and groups to work toward greater diversity and build with groups outside of its white, middle-class constituency:

> "They provided guidelines, I think, to say, 'Please reach out to communities of color wherever you are and try to build a relationship with them.' One of the big things was attending their meetings. Go and attend their meetings, listen to what they are doing and what events they're planning, and their issues, and see how you, how the Sierra Club, can support them in whatever they are doing. Do not come in and suggest that you know what they as an organization should be doing" (B. Grover, personal communication, March 19, 2021).

The main message from Sierra Club National above is evident in instructing groups to practice cross-racial solidarity. Rather than assuming a paternalistic or dominant

relationship over less-resourced organizations, groups approached their coalition building with the intention that they would value the leadership of people of color, or at least Sierra Club instructed this. In Barbara's case, her group decided to build a relationship with New Voices Pittsburgh, a reproductive justice organization led by and for women of color.

Sierra Club National's directions on addressing racism in coalition building led to greater solidarity in the Allegheny Group with Pittsburgh's larger queer & trans of color community. In 2015, the Delta Foundation—the primary organizer of Pittsburgh's Pride—invited the pop star Iggy Azalea as its headliner. New Voices, among other organizations, decided to protest Delta Foundation's Pride because of Azalea's past, both homophobic and racist Tweets, and the Delta Foundation's history of sexual racism or racialized hierarchies of desires that privilege whiteness. Despite not fully understanding the tensions between the Delta Foundation and queer & trans people of color, the Allegheny Group of Sierra Club decided to withdraw from the Delta Foundation's parade, despite its higher potential for recruitment, and instead join the separate Pride event that New Voices helped organize:

> "Delta Foundation, according to them [New Voices], was very white and male. A lot of Blacks and other people of color who were gay and also gay women had apparently been having a contentious situation with Delta forever. I didn't know the details. I just remember in our conversation saying, 'What's this all about? You're pulling out. Okay.'
>
> Because of our relationship with those New Voices, we made the decision that we're not going to support the Delta Foundation's parade either." (B. Grover, personal communication, March 19, 2021).

The Allegheny Group, by being in a relationship with New Voices, also benefited from the pre-existing relationships that New Voices had built in Pittsburgh. The Sierra Club National's directive to reach out to communities of color created, at least in the case of the Allegheny Group, a feedback loop. By encouraging its groups to invest in relationships with

activists of color, the Sierra Club National catalyzed a degree of organizational learning extending to gender identity and sexuality issues.

Likewise, as another example, the Minnesota North Star Chapter's prior commitment to justice, as an organization focused on environmental justice, spurred the chapter to oppose a ballot initiative that would have banned gay marriage (Kimball, 2011). Luther Dale, chair of the Chapter's Executive Committee at the time of the decision, said that supporting advocacy against the ballot initiative was a pivotal moment for the organization's identity:

> "As an environmental organization, should we just focus on the environment or expand our concerns to wider issues that affect the environment and our members?" (L. Dale, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

The Chapter's primary focus was to protect the environment; however, they realized that other issues, such as marriage equality, mattered and affected their members. Yet, as Luther told me, there was some fear that their environmental opponents might weaponize their support of marriage equality to cast the Chapter as radical.

Ultimately, the Chapter decided to oppose the initiative because of a commitment to honoring their lesbian and gay membership and a belief that the issue fit with their standing identity as a justice-oriented environmental organization. Even though marriage equality was a low priority for the organization, the Chapter saw the discussion as a "focal point" and "the beginning... of how much should the Sierra Club be doing in other areas of justice" (L. Dale, personal communication, April 19, 2021) that led them to take on other issues like voting rights. Solidarity, even on a marginal policy issue, begets more solidarity.

Since then, Sierra Club National has relied upon individual directors or staffers to draw the connections between the climate crisis and the LGBTQ community. As outlined in Appendix B in Table B.1, statements from Sierra Club staffers on the queer-climate nexus

have become increasingly common in the last five years, especially during Pride Month (Kennedy-Howard, 2017, 2019; The Sierra Club, 2016). For example, Executive Director Michael Brune has continued to release press statements and articles about LGBTQ issues. In 2020, he applauded the Supreme Court's decision to extend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to LGBTQ+ people and noted that U.S. policy could do more:

> "While this is an important step for our country, the reality of a pervasive racist, homophobic, and xenophobic system remains. The rights of all LGBTQ+ people will not be safe until the ongoing legal and cultural systems of racism, oppression, transphobia, homophobia, and xenophobia are dismantled. We at the Sierra Club rise with the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities in demanding that Congress immediately pass full federal and state non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people" (Carr, 2020).

While Brune does not explicitly mention intersectionality in his press statement, he is pointing to, at least on the surface, the need for intersectional analysis in interrogating the limitations of expanded civil rights. In other words, gradually granting rights to LGBTQ+ people have some impact but will remain an incomplete version of equality when intersecting oppressions remain intact. In some respects, Brune's words would suggest a call to action for the Sierra Club—as an organization that claims to strive for anti-racism, they must also aim to dismantle homophobia and transphobia. However, as I explain in the next section, such as task is easier said than done.

Clashing external and internal politics

While the Sierra Club has appeared to "come out" of the closet supporting queer & trans people through statements, internally, the organization has not made the same progress. This mismatch between the external and internal faces of the organization constrains more substantive action around LGBTQ issues. For example, three years ago, the Sierra Club

established a new headquarters in Oakland after moving from San Francisco but did not create gender-inclusive restrooms. Instead, according to staffer Jessica Olson:

> "All we have are signs in front of the door saying 'You can choose and you can't harass people for choosing which one to go into,' instead of having all bathrooms being uniform and open and not having signage on it" (J. Olson, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

Through union organizing, members of the Sierra Club have won some benefits for queer & trans people while also calling out the hypocrisy of the organization's public commitments considering its marginalizing internal policies:

> "We have also forced environmental organizations to look within. Too often in these organizations, policies and cultural dynamics perpetuate homophobia and transphobia despite public commitment to equity and justice. Anthony [Torres] is among the LGBTQ members of the Progressive Workers Union at the Sierra Club who fought to have benefits extend to chosen family, to expand the definition of and protections from toxic behavior, and to include gender-affirming care in health coverage" (Brady et al., 2019).

The quote above shows an explicit critique of environmental organizations and, implicitly, the Sierra Club. After tragedies or the rollbacks of rights, environmental organizations release statements, like those I covered earlier, showing their solidarity with queer & trans people. And yet, only through long-term union organizing were LGBTQ members able to implement policies and a culture that began to align with the Sierra Club's public statements.

Anthony Torres, a former staffer at the Sierra Club, framed the fight around internal politics in Sierra Club as a core element of queer climate justice:

> "It also means putting into place in our work practices that show that the larger we, and the larger movement and a larger society we are trying to are trying to build is a place that where queer and trans people belong" (A. Torres, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

In the quote above, Sierra Club has not gotten to the point of building that larger culture of belonging for queer & trans people. Although the statements I described tell a more positive story insofar as the Sierra Club appears to perform solidarity, my findings suggest a gulf between saying and implementing visions of queer climate justice.

Despite wanting to make the Sierra Club better for queer and trans people internally and externally, Jessica Olson talked about the tensions in reconciling the outcome of a queer-centered Sierra Club with how long of a process it would take.:

> "There are times when I question whether or not the Sierra Club is the right place to push this and if using language around queerness and transness and all of our beauty is more harmful because I don't know how many people I work with will parrot language without understanding it, and then do a lot of harm.
>
> And I think it's a big conflict to think about an organization with so much baggage doing right by people, when they're not supporting their staff appropriately" (J. Olson, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

In the quote above, Jessica speaks about the conflicts that she has over moving forward queer & trans programmatic work, specifically in her work with the Gender Equity & Environment Program of the Sierra Club. More fundamentally, as I just raised, Olson points to how the organization has so much unresolved "baggage" and simply knows how to *perform* solidarity without *practicing* solidarity. If the choice is merely to parrot as opposed to "doing right," in some ways, this could be more harmful than doing nothing.

Summary of the Sierra Club case

The queer & trans perspectives have made some inroads in the Sierra Club. On the one hand, especially in the past decade, the Sierra Club has released statements that name their commitment to a vision of justice inclusive of queer & trans people. There are examples on the national and chapter levels where the Sierra Club's prior value

commitments and institutional changes spur strategic shifts. On the other hand, from the standpoint of staffers and looking at internal politics, the Sierra Club has a long road to realize queer climate justice in terms of shifting culture and policy to ensure that queer & trans people belong. This case suggests that queer & trans perspectives have a limited reach in moving the Sierra Club's strategy.

Case 2 – 350: Queer world-making

In contrast to the Sierra Club, 350.org is a relatively new organization founded in the late 2000s and therefore has a less fraught history around its values. Most readily identified by its charismatic leader Bill McKibben, 350.org was one of the first mainstream climate organizations globally, as opposed to the primary environmental focus of many pre-existing interest groups. The organization was foundational to highlighting the existential threat of climate change and has been at the center of numerous campaigns such as the fight against the Keystone XL Pipeline, the campaign for fossil fuel divestment, and planning the massive 400,000 people strong People's Climate March in 2014. At the same time, 350.org has fewer resources than the Sierra Club and lacks an extensive diversity, equity, and inclusion infrastructure. For 350.org, smaller-scale investments such as changes in staffing and creating queer cultures are crucial factors in raising LGBTQ issues on their agenda.

This section, about 350, tells a relatively contained story from 2011/2012 leading up to and after the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016. In the first subsection, I describe how 350 learned from queer & trans struggles, attempted to show solidarity with LGBTQ+ people, and navigated where to go from initial statements. In the middle subsections of the case, I explore how staffing and cultural changes set up the conditions for more intersectional stances. In the last sections of the case, I take stock of 350's letter following the Pulse

nightclub shooting and interpret it. I close the 350 section by speaking to exasperation over the organization's lack of substantive engagement with queer liberation.

Showing up, learning from LGBTQ+ activism, and navigating growing pains

350.org had learned from prior gay rights and queer struggles in formulating its climate strategy (Hiskes, 2009; McKibben, 2013; R. Stanley, 2020). According to Jamie Henn, during our interview on January 28, 2021, 350.org learned from the mainstream gay and lesbian rights movement about storytelling and changing hearts to shift opinion about climate change. As 350.org shifted strategy toward more aggressive tactics in the fight against the Keystone XL Pipeline, 350.org organizers adapted narrative work from ACT UP:

> "A lot of that came from looking at the history of ACT UP and watching *How to Survive a Plague*. We watched that as staff at 350. Again, I think that it's hard to draw direct comparisons and, by no means, want to equate the death and destruction from the AIDS crisis to climate. It's a different issue, but that idea of there's an invisible thread here that is having a direct impact on people's lives, and the mainstream public did not pay attention and silence is death" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 18, 2021).

In the quote above, Jamie clarifies that 350.org did not want to co-opt the Silence=Death framing from ACT UP organizers, but 350 realized that there was narrative cohesion between the two crises of climate change and AIDS. This finding lends weight to how seemingly disconnected social movements learn from each, as social movement spillover theory might predict (Meyer & Whittier, 1994).

In addition to learning from queer & trans movement, in 2012, 350.org publicly took a stance in supporting gay marriage shortly after President Obama signaled his support for the policy. Again, as was the case for the Sierra Club, the timing of this action from 350.org was predictable according to theories of social movement political process (McAdam,

1982). That said, for one of the first times, a national mainstream climate organization made the connections between the prototypical gay rights issue of marriage equality and climate change:

> "What does marriage equality have to do with climate change? We believe that a society that believes in treating all people equally — no matter their race, class, gender, religion, or sexual identity — is a society that's more likely to extend that same respect and care to future generations and the planet" (350.org, 2012).

Although indirect, the quote above suggests that the connection between LGBTQ issues and climate change rests on values. If society changes to provide equal treatment to all, including LGBTQ people, then that society also cares for the planet.

This statement does not seem controversial, but according to Jamie Henn, the former Communications Director at 350.org, who wrote the statement, wading into LGBTQ issues exemplified concerns over organizational identity, resources, and appeals to prospective constituents and allies. 350's primary purpose was to fight the climate crisis and had to navigate competing demands around their broader issue advocacy:

> "How do you stay sharp on your message and issue knowing that you have limited bandwidth, but also show solidarity and explain the intersection between issues to pull people in?" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 18, 2021).

In many ways, the quote above shows a fear around "mission drift," or that expressing solidarity with queer & trans people, in this case, would detract from their primary climate message. I also interpret this concern as 350 not possessing stable frame bridges or the cognitive interpretations bridging movements (Snow et al., 1986), which I prominently describe in Chapter 4. In other words, if the connection is clear, then the concern would be figuring out how to implement the connection rather than a concern about detracting from the message.

But the organization, at the time, locked into a single-issue analysis, found it challenging to develop a multi-issue strategy:

> "I think part of it was constant debate within an organization like, do you keep your focus on your issue or become more intersectional? Now clearly, the trend is everybody's intersectional. Everybody puts out a statement about every issue. Which I think is good. I think that's important, but that was a big debate back in the day" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 18, 2021).

In contrast to some of the commentary that we have seen in the previous chapters, this quote starts from the notion that people live single-issue lives. As the quote also signals, "becoming" intersectional can also be accomplished by putting out statements, a belief that queer & trans staffers at 350 challenged.

Still, the decision to release the press release was not without tension. 350.org faced some backlash for its support of marriage equality from its broader membership, organizers in other countries, and queer & trans staffers. First, some local groups and members felt that statements supporting marriage equality were a form of mission drift and asked, "What the hell do LGBT rights have to do with the climate?" Second, when the global 350.org Facebook page shared a graphic in support of marriage equality, 350.org had to grapple with how a US-rooted stance would affect their organizing globally:

> "The staff member based in Ukraine found that [the statement] stood in the way of her doing the work required because of the coalition she was working with it and the coalition she was trying to build as an organizer, and how different the conversations were about gay rights in different places, just how open they were" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

Finally, queer and trans staffers were frustrated with the process of releasing the "Love Wins" press release. Jamie describes the feedback he received after he decided to write and release the letter in solidarity with the gay rights movement:

> "Our staff were like, 'Wait. Who are you? Hey, white cis straight man. Are you the one who should be writing this, or why don't you consult with us? Should we have more of a process? Let's actually figure out what does it mean? You say this, but does this integrate into our work in any way?'" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

Despite taking the step to show solidarity with the gay rights movements, 350 marginalized queer and trans staffers. Rather than having the mic to speak for themselves, the letter was written by a member who was not a part of the community directly affected by marriage equality. Secondly, as the questions above suggest, queer and trans staffers saw the letter as performative solidarity without a deeper engagement with how the stance would shape their climate activism as an organization. Before the queer & trans staffers had the power to respond to the Pulse Nightclub shooting on their terms, staffing and cultural changes that began even before the letter in support of marriage equality were necessary first steps.

Shifts in strategy lead to shifts in staffing

Before 2011, 350 primarily focused on raising essential awareness about the climate crisis—their organizing led to massive global days of action that opened the floodgates for the possibilities of activism at the scale necessary to address the crisis. While important, the actions were not threatening the fossil fuel industry directly. But in 2010, an inflection point was opening that would shape 350 internally and externally—the Keystone XL Pipeline would carry crude oil across Canada and the U.S. and threaten Indigenous sacred sites and water sources. Strategically, the fight was smart. Because the Pipeline required presidential approval, 350 could target President Obama exclusively and avoid having to spread resources targeting multiple members of Congress. Tactically, 350 had learned from LGBT groups, as well as civil rights groups, about how to plan disruptive actions and planned a

series of sit-ins in front of the White House in late August that resulted in over 1200 arrests and widespread attention to a climate fight that the media had previously ignored (Adler, 2015).

These shifts in strategy and tactics meant changing the criteria for hiring. Unintentionally, as a result, many queer people were hired at the organization:

> "Early on, we were like, 'People who care about climate change. Climate activists, and that's who we're hiring.' Then we were like, 'We don't need more people to care about climate change. We need people who know how to put up protests. That's the skill set'" (J. Henn, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

Jamie suggests that the people with 350 at the beginning were deeply invested in stopping climate change but were constrained in their skillsets or were biased in the knowledge they brought to the table. In this case, structural changes in hiring and staff power changed how 350 talked about queer & trans issues and how 350 approached the strategic and tactical calculus of addressing the climate crisis. As seen in the next section, structural changes also open the possibilities for cultural and identity changes that are foundational for amplifying queer & trans perspectives.

Creating Queer Worlds

As more and more queer & trans people joined the organization, the culture shifted to create a space that fostered political education, community, nurturing, and identity development. And yet, two worlds emerged in 350—the pre-existing one that was marginalizing for those who did not occupy dominant categories and one that was affirming:

> "For the most part, different straight people had been doing plenty of envisioning about a world where we could all survive, which didn't always include me, right? It included things like electrical grid and divestment or clean energy. It didn't include, 'Oh, you don't get murdered for wearing a dress down the street.'

> For most people in 350 at that time, if you weren't queer or trans, I don't know that those two things were inextricably linked… It absolutely was for all of the queer and trans people who work there, whether they were out as queer at work or not" (E. Altomare, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

350 represented the straight and cisgender world that Elliot describes above. Elliot's challenge to this world's conceptions of "survival" strikes me. He almost poses a question—yes, fighting climate change as 350 does is about the planet's survival, but what does survival mean when we ignore the trans people killed for living as they see fit? According to Elliot, by not incorporating a problem analysis of queer & trans survival into their organizing, 350 was correspondingly not including queer & trans people in their solutions.

All the same, queer & trans people at 350 created a culture that strengthened analysis and ties between the LGBTQ and climate movements. Elliot Altomare said having informal conversations in the hallways and leveraging time during organization-sponsored retreats helped create queer worlds. These queer worlds were affirming for queer & trans-identified people in the organization and challenged the analyses of straight and cisgender people within 350. As former staffer Everette Thompson put it during our interview on January 29, 2021, "We're going to change the culture."

For queer & trans people bringing their gender identity into existence, the warmth of having queer and trans elders in the space was life-giving. When he first started working at 350, Elliot was just beginning to consider that he was not a girl. Drawn into conversations with other queer & trans people who would talk about gender identity or migration, Elliot eased into a world where queering went beyond gender and actively was about liberatory world-making. For Elliot,

> "That was intoxicating, and it was necessary. It was like oxygen. I had never talked to people who believed that I could exist in the world, not as the me who hadn't been able to exist yet" (E. Altomare, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

In the context of a transphobic society, a climate organization that numerically has a lot of queer & trans people can create an affirming culture that naturally produces "oxygen." And as Elliot said, the queer world was necessary given the policy agenda of 350 was envisioning a new world that did not include queer & trans people. This culture laid the foundation for the response that 350 gave following the Pulse nightclub shooting.

Knitting together queer liberation and climate justice after tragedy

The Pulse nightclub shooting was devastating as one of the deadliest single incidents of violence toward the queer & trans Latinx community in the U.S. On June 12, 2016, on "Latin Night," a gunman entered the nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others. The immediate aftermath of the shooting had a chilling effect on many in the queer, trans, and Latinx communities, who struggled to comprehend the scale of the violence and process the grief of being under attack.

But the shooting also opened a political window for 350 staffers to collectively process and pushed the climate movement in new directions. Days letter, on June 17, 2016, 350 released a letter written by 12 LGBTQ staffers who expressed their grief and pain from witnessing the violence of the shooting while also drawing out connections between queer liberation and climate justice (Capato Jr et al., 2016). The letter is notable for three reasons: first, in contrast to the first letter in support of gay marriage, this letter was written by LGBTQ staff members; second, the letter names intersectionality as both a complicated reality but integral to a climate organization; and third, it does discursive work by emphatically pushing 350 to stand for more than what is conventionally considered climate justice.

Much like the first letter that Jamie wrote, the authors of the Pulse letter anticipate skepticism from their readers as to why a climate organization was responding to an "LGBTQ issue." And like the first letter, the Pulse letter touches on a talking point about how a just society addresses climate as well as social issues:

> "You might be asking yourself, why is an organization who focuses on climate change, responding to this horrifying night. Because we're all connected, as is our fight.
> As LGBTQ+ staff at 350, we are a part of this movement, we are connected to this movement, and our survival depends on this movement for climate justice.
> There are many folks at 350.org, in our networks, at our actions, in our community that identify as LGBTQ+. There are many of us who see the intersections of our race, class, gender and sexual orientation as inextricably linked to the fight against fossil fuels and for our climate."

However, beyond the first letter, the Pulse letter authors specifically frame their writing around climate justice. Rather than simply stating that climate justice is vital for the organization, they suggest that LGBTQ+ people need climate justice. As a discursive point, the statement is valuable by identifying a shared threat in fossil fuels and a changing climate. With that said, the letter does not go into the specifics of how exactly to link LGBTQ struggles to the fight against fossil fuels.

Later in the letter, though, there are some clues as to what queer climate justice looks like for the authors:

> "Our organization fights for a just future. That doesn't mean only climate justice, it means justice across all fronts. If we aren't fighting for a future that is safe for everyone, then what are we truly fighting for?...
>
> If we are to move forward together in all of our interconnected struggles, we must make sure that everyone is cared for and safe. We cannot fight the biggest issue impacting our world without everyone. We cannot fight climate change without standing with each other when we come under attack."

According to the quote above, for 350 to fight for justice, including climate justice, it must stand up and defend against attacks against all intersectionally marginalized people

regardless of the threat being a "climate" issue or an "LGBTQ+" issue. Additionally, fighting for "justice across all fronts" is framed as necessary because of the enormous task of fighting climate change. Requiring everyone to be in the fight includes LGBTQ+ people feeling like they belong. Lastly, the quote above also frames climate change as an intersectional issue—it cuts across and impacts all people who face injustice.

When the letter was released, intersectionality was still new to the organization as a concept and framework. Simply naming intersectionality burst a bubble for 350:

> "My understanding was that within the movement, this was incredibly well-received. Other people were hungry to see this level of intersectionality being named as central. Now it's not a thing I think of as rare at all" (E. Altomare, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

The quote above pairs well with the quotes that I featured from Jamie in the last section. Building coalition intersectionally was less of a norm just four years earlier at the time of the marriage equality letter and still appeared noteworthy at the time of the Pulse letter.

Nonetheless, because of the staffing changes and a culture that allowed queer & trans people to "speak from their hearts" (E. Thompson, personal communication, January 29, 2021), writing a letter in response to the shooting was obvious. According to Elliot's memory, "Might've been as simple as there was just finally enough power within the organization by people who recognize that this is a story that needed to be told to make sure it got told through combinations of numbers, and longevity, and access to the people who would say, 'Yes, you can write and share this thing'" (E. Altomare, personal communication, January 26, 2021). After the shooting, someone posted on the 350 Slack channel for queer and trans people suggesting that the organization release a response

(Seney, personal communication, February 10, 2021). From there, the process flowed naturally:

> "It was just like, 'We got to say something.' And we started writing. When I started writing, other people edited it to make sure that it would fit what was needed—I'm a southerner. I know those folks. [So], also wanting to support their efforts and what they were doing [in the statement]" (E. Thompson, personal communication, January 29, 2021).

Staffers started a Google Doc and started writing and editing from across the globe, from places like Taiwan and the U.K. to the parking lot of a church in rural Connecticut (E. Altomare, personal communication, January 26, 2021). As the quote above indicates, they also made it a point to direct readers to donate to organizations doing work on the ground in the region. Therefore, the staffers were able to quickly come together and knit together one of the few highly visible arguments for fighting for queer liberation and climate justice.

Environmentalists come out of the closet, but does it get better?

While structural and cultural changes opened up space for queer and trans staffers to write about Pulse and intersectional climate activism, the organization remains constrained by heteronormativity. 350 has not changed its substantive relationship with queer and trans issues for all the symbolic importance of releasing the Pulse Nightclub letter. The cover of the Pulse letter serving as a "coming out" moment (Gaard, 2019) obscures 350's continued marginalization of queer & trans people.

According to former staffer Seney (a pseudonym), it almost felt like the efforts were disingenuous because of the lack of attention forecasting the reaction and what would come next:

> "I think more my response to what your question is those intersections were *still* not strong enough. It was *still* marginalized even though there was a good portion of staff who were queer, people who were *still* organizing on those intersections and

> would get out a blog post or get out and would talk about it, but institutionally or structurally, it wasn't something that felt valued." (italics added by author) (Seney, personal communication, February 10, 2021).

At the risk of over-interpreting the quote, I am struck by how Seney uses the word "still" several times in a way that appears to signal an exasperation with how the organization was approaching its engagement with queer & trans issues.[19] In some ways, the organization's strategy as being committed to intersectionality was a bait and switch: members hungry for having intersectionality be named were fed, but the institution itself did not change. 350 appeared to be falling into a similar pattern like organizational practices in Strolovitch's (2007) study: national advocacy organizations might be able to support intersectionally disadvantaged constituents *symbolically* but *substantively* fail them by not dedicating resources toward their issues.

Summary of the 350 case

In summary, queer & trans perspectives in 350 play an important strategic role in challenging what counts as a climate justice issue. At first, 350 released the marriage equality statement. It adopted a homonormative lens, like what I have covered in other chapters, in attempting to signal to external and internal LGBTQ people that they are welcome at 350. However, queer & trans staffers gradually helped deepen 350's analysis, culminating in an intersectional statement following the Pulse shooting in Orlando. The statement played an essential role in discursively establishing the necessity for queer climate

[19] Chapters may also replicate similar dynamics of treating queer & trans issues as afterthoughts. As Nathan Park told me in speaking about 350 DC in our interview on February 12, 2021, there is a crucial difference between a space "by and for" queer and trans people and one that is simply accepting toward queer and trans people insofar as the latter is more performative: "I would rather go to a space that is not like, 'Oh, we're accepting of queer people,' but is more, 'Hey, this is a space convened by queer people. This space created by queer people.'"

justice but has fallen short in further realizing the connection in practice. Much like the Sierra Club case, the 350 case shows how a climate organization coming out of the closet does not substantively change the organization's strategy.

Part 2: Queers come out as environmentalists

Case 3 – The National Center for Transgender Equality: What story can we tell?

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) has been the central transgender rights organization in the beltway since 2003. The organization established many firsts in U.S. politics. They were at the first Congressional hearing on transgender issues in 2008. They fielded the largest survey of transgender people in 2008. They forced the gay and lesbian rights movement to win transgender recognition within hate crime and non-discrimination policies. Alongside the Task Force, NCTE pushed for transgender inclusion in the 2007 fight for the national Employment Non-discrimination ACT (ENDA) against the efforts of congressional sponsors to separate the ENDA into one version with sexual orientation protections and the other with gender identity protections (Engel, 2016a). In the mid-2000s, the political opportunity for passing LGBT rights bills was narrow, and other groups like the Human Rights Campaign believed that an incremental strategy of protecting LGB people at that time and transgender people later was the most effective route forward. All to say that the NCTE's organizational identity as a champion for the margins of the queer & trans coalition set them up to advocate on climate issues.

In this section, I describe how a trans organization like NCTE is not much better than the two environmental & climate organizations in pushing forward queer & trans perspectives in climate justice strategy. First, I take the narrative to 2017, when Trump

decided to put Scott Pruitt at the head of the EPA. Realizing that Pruitt was a threat to queer & trans people and the climate, NCTE released a letter opposing him at the EPA. I then interpret the letter and provide details about how it came into existence. Second, I speak about the aftermath of the letter and explore why there have not been more strategic interventions from NCTE in fighting climate change. This section should dampen beliefs that pushing for queer climate justice from queer & trans organizations instead of environmental & climate organizations is the more feasible route for change.

Meeting the moment to draw out queer and environment connections

The Trump administration presented a political threat that mobilized and united many segments of the progressive movement—the NCTE decided to seize the moment to identify connections between queer & trans and climate issues. On January 18, 2017, the NCTE and 11 other LGBT organizations sent out a press release opposing Scott Pruitt's nomination to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2017). Scott Pruitt was uniquely positioned as a shared enemy for the climate and LGBTQ rights movements. By his nomination, Pruitt had sued the EPA 13 times as the Oklahoma attorney general and attempted to overturn rules such as the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards regulating power plants (Mosbergen, 2017). Similarly, Pruitt sued over the Obama administration's directive for public schools, which he described as a "transgender power play," to allow students to use the restrooms of their choice, regardless of their sex assigned at birth (Pruitt, 2017). Given Pruitt's apparent track record of opposition to the agendas of both the climate and LGBTQ rights movements, the letter

accomplishes important discursive work in identifying how the two struggles were interconnected.

The letter frames the connection between LGBTQ and climate issues by emphasizing a commitment to protecting youth:

> "Every day we work to make life better for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth—to help families understand and support them, and to build safe and supportive schools and communities. But we are also deeply concerned about the physical world LGBT young people, and all the nation's young people, will be inheriting—potentially one with more extreme droughts, dangerous heat waves, destructive floods, deadly storms, frightening diseases, and disappearing coastal communities. If we do not take decisive action now, these changes will gravely threaten our communities' health, economic security, and their very safety in the years to come—and we are already seeing the effects today, all around the country and the world. No one can look at the decisive science and enormous implication of climate change and say 'this is not my issue.'"

While Pruitt and the Trump administration were a clear threat to the climate and trans people, it is unlikely that the NCTE would have released the statement unless there was a "fit" between the organization's identity of protecting trans youth and climate change (Engel, 2007). The passage does not suggest that LGBTQ youth face more disproportionate climate impacts than non-LGBTQ youth. Instead, because the NCTE and the other organizations who signed on have political agendas that protect LGBTQ youth in schools, climate change advocacy is an extension of a pre-existing commitment to making the world better for younger generations. As I have shown in previous chapters, there are many ways that queer & trans people are disproportionately at risk of facing the impacts of climate change. Without attention to heightened risk, the statement elides the particularized impacts of climate change on queer & trans people.

Despite not naming the disproportionate impact on LGBTQ people, the passage's last sentence points to how this may not matter—LGBTQ communities cannot say 'this is not

my issue' because they, like all others, will be impacted. The end of the letter points out the unifying nature of the climate crisis and how combatting it will require everyone to act:

> "Climate change is likely the **most serious issue facing us all [**emphasis added] in the years ahead and right now. We call on every single member of our communities to commit to civic action to prevent catastrophic climate change. We further call on President-elect Trump to withdraw the nomination of Scott Pruitt, and if he does not, we call on the Senate to reject him."

At the same time, the short phrase about climate change as the "most serious issue facing us all" demonstrates the paradoxical nature of LGBTQ organizations coming out as environmentalists. On the one hand, the letter starts the discursive process of connecting the dots between LGBTQ advocacy and climate. On the other hand, despite noting how climate change is the "most serious" issue, which implies importance that would demand organizational and movement resources, the organizational signatories' political agendas did not and have not since the letter prominently featured the climate crisis.

Discursive statements such as those from the NCTE are essential. As we have seen in the case of bridging, for example, LGBTQ and reproductive justice movements, they align organizations around shared principles and histories (Price, 2017, 2018). And in some ways, statements are strategically risky insofar as they may reduce or grow membership and potentially reshape organizational agendas (Jacobson, 2011). However, if we take seriously the uneasy, arduous, and intensive call for solidarities (Roediger, 2016) or the need to show up repeatedly, it demands structures, resources, and ongoing engagement.

Why did the letter emerge?

The letter emerged when it did because a political opportunity was opening in 2017, and the NCTE could use the moment to reshape its identity and build coalitions. According

to Harper Jean Tobin, former policy director at the NCTE and the primary author of the letter, Scott Pruitt was awful toward the climate and LGBTQ communities:

> "I just had this feeling [that] this is one of those moments that if we're going to have this conversation as a movement, talking about climate, this is an opportunity to do this--because this guy is so egregious because it's-- there's an inflection point around his confirmation because he also happens to have an overtly hostile record towards our communities-- that I [just said] '**You know what? Let me try to see if I can get people to do something extremely easy for them to do, even if it may or may not make much of an impact, maybe it'll get people talking.'** [emphasis added] I don't know. It probably won't affect the confirmation one bit. Maybe it'll move the conversation in our movement just a little bit." (H. Tobin, personal communication, March 12, 2021).

The latter half of this quote is notable for two reasons: first, the desire to have an easy action for coalition partners, and second, a vague sense of how effective the letter would be. Given the pre-existing political commitments that the organizations had, Tobin explained to me that since the climate was a tertiary issue for the groups, a quick mobilizing action like signing onto her letter was appropriate. None of the organizations had the resources to dedicate more energy to climate, and several of the other organizations simply signed on. As the quote above shows, Tobin did not believe that the letter would affect the nomination process but, at the minimum, had hoped that the letter would serve a movement-building function of getting "people talking" or spurring a realization that climate and LGBTQ struggles were interconnected.

By reconfiguring the narrative stock of trans rights and connecting it to narratives around climate change, Tobin created the possibility for a reworking of how LGBTQ and climate organizations conceived of themselves. But, this effort largely failed. For example, procedurally, Tobin had buy-in from her bosses to write the letter but was upfront that it would be a one-time effort:

> "I had buy-in in my organization to do that letter, I didn't have buy-in to do a whole lot more on EPA issues…It was a very targeted post only, just do this one thing" (H. Tobin, personal communication, March 12, 2021).

Due to the lack of organizational investment, which we see in the quote above, the outcomes of the letter largely fell flat. Tobin told me that she forwarded the letter to big national environmental organizations. The response was lukewarm—the organizations responded, "this is awesome," before ending the engagement by posting the letter on social media. Neither the NCTE nor the environmental organizations decided to invest in a relationship that would lead to further collaboration. D. Ojeda, who was a policy advocate at NCTE, told me during our interview on February 25, 2021, "In terms of establishing relationships with environmental groups, I'm going to be honest with you. It's very much non-existent." Tobin also sent the letter to the Hill where as far as she could tell, "nobody really cared," and it did not seem to push the needle on Pruitt's nomination.

An unopened letter: Why was it ineffective and what are the barriers to effectiveness?

At the same time, existing political conditions constrained the impacts of the letter to spur further relationship building as expected by theories of political opportunity structures and internal responsiveness on several levels (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Nuske, 2022). NCTE lacked political allies on the Hill, buy-in from funders, and engagement from supporters to push on climate. Tobin believes that the confluence of all three stakeholders having narrow conceptions of what counts as LGBTQ issues limits the utility of investing in an issue like climate change.

The NCTE also expresses low external efficacy around climate issues and does not believe policymakers will be responsive to them, with an additional constraint around the lack of policy capacity around climate:

> "On issues like climate, we don't have the expertise, and nobody cares what we have to say. We would be wasting our resources if we were to engage because it wouldn't help move the ball forward. The assumption is that policymakers just won't maybe be moved by lobbying from, say, an LGBTQ organization because the policymakers will assume that this is at best a tertiary concern for the LGBTQ group at the end of the day. They're not going to mobilize a lot of money around it" (H. Tobin, personal communication, March 12, 2021).

As the quote above shows, advocacy organizations and policymakers struggle to move intersectionally. On both ends, there is an assumption that "LGBTQ" issues are exclusively about employment or non-discrimination, thus flattening how inequalities are interrelated (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Within a political system that approaches identity additively (Hancock, 2007), which assumes that experiences can be stacked onto each other and that there are unitary and uniform "LGBTQ issues," this response to not focus on climate change makes sense but is nonetheless disappointing.

Still, the NCTE has tried to challenge what counts as an "LGBTQ issue" by incorporating climate advocacy on their agenda. At several points, the NCTE has considered climate justice as being one of their priorities, but elite alignments are not yet there:

> "I will be frank with you. We were just revamping our priorities, and that was one of the things [climate justice] that got removed. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that there's just no opportunity. There's not a member of Congress, for example, who is focused on how climate change could impact the trans community" (D. Ojeda, personal communication, February 25, 2021).

As the quote above shows, NCTE seems to be more passively waiting for a political opportunity to arise where, for example, a member of Congress will be their legislative champion for protecting trans people from climate change.

Part of the reluctance for NCTE to advance climate justice on their agenda also lies in a lack of narrative resources to inspire LGBT supporters to mobilize against climate change. Both Tobin and Ojeda recognize how the climate crisis disproportionately impacts the trans community and mention that because trans people are more likely than cisgender people to live in poverty and environmental harms are correlated with lower incomes, the connection is intuitive. Yet this story is not told because of a lack of quantitative data to make the case and a sense that still, the climate crisis affects ***all of us***.

This suggests, in other words, that the politically catalyzing condition of having a "disproportionate impact" right now, on a large scale, is not being met to force climate justice onto the NCTE's agenda:

> "I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we're so overwhelmed by the immediate fires that happened, especially in the Trump administration, that the last thing we're thinking about is something that impacts everybody, which sounds sad because it is, but that was just the reality of things" (D. Ojeda, personal communication, February 25, 2021).

The throughline of these quotes and the letter acknowledges that climate change "impacts everybody." And of course, this is true, but adhering to the line also elides how queer & trans people of many intersecting identities *are* disproportionately impacted if we are to believe the earlier chapters of the dissertation. In some cases, queer & trans people have been overwhelmed by literal fires (Berne & Raditz, 2019). I want to clarify that one issue is not more important than another but that strategic analysis could be more adept at considering a deeper multi-issue framework.

Finally, as policy bandwagon theories would predict (Baumgartner & Leech, 2001; LaPira et al., 2014), due to the NCTE's more passive stance on climate justice—to wait until coalition partners invest energy toward the issues or politicians to open up a political

opportunity to talk about queerness and climate justice—bottom-up local pressure or broader coalition pressure targeting the NCTE would likely be impactful. According to Ojeda, this pressure from below or from other organizations is probably the most crucial missing element that forestalls the development of the NCTE's climate agenda:

> "I think what we're lacking honestly is a queer environmental justice organization present in all of these, something that addresses both issues. Honestly, I think I bet that's probably the biggest thing is, no one is thinking about those two as it correlates with each other and how it relates to each other."

The latter part of the quote above also points to a deeper constraint from engaging in queer climate justice: exclusive attention to a distributional paradigm built into nonprofits' funding and agenda setting. Both the LGBTQ interest group and environmental interest group ecosystems operate under this paradigm that, in turn, obscures the issues of intersectionally disadvantaged constituents. For example, LGBTQ rights interest groups garnered funding from philanthropists because AIDS emerged as an existential threat. In that case, the distribution of risk appeared to be concentrated among gay men. This funding economy, under assumptions of resource scarcity, is contingent upon the construction of risk as applying to a limited set of groups and "links diversity and social justice with a relatively narrow set of health issues, issues that describes the needs of some groups (such as queer men of color) but elide the needs of others (such as queer women of color)" (Ward, 2008).

Similarly, the foundation on which the environmental justice movement emerged was the problem definition of environmental (mal)distribution of environmental ills (Schlosberg, 2004), resulting, from a favorable perspective, in funding to protect poor communities of color, but at the same time, from a unfavorable viewpoint, eliding other intersectional survivors of environmental crisis. The NCTE's inability to move forward with a climate agenda is due to internal and external political conditions, but the broader structure

and analytical framework of proving the "disproportionate" impact to procure funding is also a significant limiting factor.

Summary of the NCTE case

In summary, NCTE attempted to move the needle on tying together climate change and trans politics by publishing a letter in opposition to Scott Pruitt's appointment to the EPA. They tried to make their case by outlining a dangerous world LGBTQ youth would inhabit if climate change raged forward under Pruitt. Again, like the environmental & climate organizations I covered in this chapter, the letter shows how queer & trans perspectives have some purchase in shifting strategy insofar as the organization was willing to release the letter. However, climate justice has not risen on the NCTE's agenda because of the lack of political allies that push forward how trans politics and climate change are connected and the belief that some issues appear to be more immediate. As this section shows, coming out as environmentalists does not translate into pushing for queer climate justice.

Case 4 - The National LGBTQ Task Force: an intersectional analytical framework with limits

The National LGBTQ Task Force (otherwise known as the Task Force) is the oldest national LGBTQ advocacy organization in the U.S. While a mainstream organization, it has a more progressive reputation than the other prominent national LGBTQ advocacy organization, the Human Rights Campaign. Starting in 1973 as the National Gay Task Force, the Task Force emerged, as the gay liberation movement stemming from 1969's Stonewall uprising adapted to emerging forces of neoliberalism, and chose to

professionalize to adapt to changing political conditions (Hindman, 2018). In the decades since, the Task Force has played a prominent role in advancing prototypical LGBTQ issues such as military inclusion, marriage equality, and employment non-discrimination while also working on women-of-color centered reproductive justice issues. The Task Force sees its expansion into climate issues as intuitive due to a pre-existing intersectional analytical framework and a history of progressive advocacy.

Over the years, the Task Force's "sticky" organizational identity both constrains and opens possibilities for further advocacy around racial and economic equality and fighting for conventional LGBTQ issues (Engel, 2016a). For example, the Task Force's increased attention to reproductive justice is the clearest example of how its organizational identity committed to anti-racism and intersectionality allowed political expansion. The process of "queering" the reproductive justice movement began with reproductive justice activists rhetorically connecting the dots between LGBT and reproductive issues. By 2014, the Task Force was sponsoring fact sheets and attended a gathering of the Arcus Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Moriah Fund to figure out how funders could support collaborations between the LGBTQ and reproductive justice movements (Price, 2017). Although the Task Force has helped "queer" the reproductive justice movement (Price, 2017), there has not been a similar success for the Task Force in "queering" environmental or climate justice.

This section explores how the Task Force conceptualized and operationalized its work on climate justice. I describe how the Task Force viewed climate justice campaigns as another dimension of their core racial justice and economic justice pillars. I go through a couple of examples, such as the Task Force signing on to support the Green Choice campaign, to show how the Task Force's intersectional lens guided their decision-making. I

then explain how the Rockwood Leadership Institute fostered personal relationships but did not appear to forge organizational relationships between queer & trans and environmental & climate groups. Finally, I end the section by discussing some barriers to queer & trans perspectives shaping climate justice strategy in the Task Force.

The Task Force's intersectional politics appears to extend to climate justice

This subsection outlines some of the ways the Task Force has acted on climate and why. Over the past half-decade, the Task Force has appeared successful in coming out as environmentalists—they have been in coalition with environmental justice partners and have signaled their opposition to Trump's climate and environmental agenda numerous times (see Appendix B– Table B.3). This is because climate justice aligns with the organization's mission and analysis.

An intersectional framework sits at the core of the Task's Force strategy and facilitates their decision-making, agendas, and coalitions. According to Rowan (pseudonym), a current staffer at the Task Force, during our interview on February 17, 2021, the three primary pillars for their decision-making are racial, gender, and economic justice, and the five secondary pillars address Christian hegemony, transphobia and homophobia, gender identity, faith and religiosity, and disability and ability. The Task Force does not treat the pillars as discrete and considers how each of them interacts and impact LGBTQ people. In some cases, the framework facilitates queer & trans interventions and support in the climate justice movement.

For example, because of the framework and how "99% of what we are doing [is] in coalition with our partners" (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021), the Task Force signed onto the Green Choice Campaign, a climate justice campaign. UNITE HERE,

a labor union that represents hotel, food, and hospitality workers, started the Green Choice Campaign (in other words, an anti-Green Choice *Program* campaign) to oppose Marriott's Green Choice Program, which allowed hotel guests to accumulate green points if they declined housekeeping services each night they stayed.

Campaigners were concerned that the Program cut hours for precarious workers and made housekeeping harder because the rooms were dirtier after the lack of daily cleaning. But UNITE HERE organizers also accused Marriott of engaging in corporate greenwashing and perpetuating climate injustice through the Program: first, Marriott could point to the Green Choice Campaign to virtue signal that they were "sustainable" without engaging in the more substantial investment in renewable and clean energy; second, the program appeared to perpetuate climate injustice because Marriott was not reducing emissions and harming women of color by either taking away their work or making it more difficult for those who kept their jobs (Zilliac, 2020).

From Rowan's recollection, the Task Force signaled their support of the campaign due to several meetings with labor partners like UNITE HERE and determining that their campaign hit all three of the Task Force's primary pillars:

> "We looked at our decision-making criteria. Does it fit the strategic plan? Does it fit our current list of funder deliverables? Does it meet our intersectional lens around economic justice, gender justice, and racial justice? It does, and do we have the capacity to do it?
>
> Then the answer is, 'It's a no-brainer.' That is probably how that came to be, a conversation where a partner organization or organizations came to us and said, will you sign on to this? It ticked all the boxes."[20]

The quote above shows how the intersectional lens works in practice to foster involvement in climate justice issues. The Task Force was able to see how the Green Choice

[20] Ibid.

Campaign met its primary pillars and, from there, "it's a no-brainer" to sign on. While it may seem that sign-on letters are relatively low-cost, they still take resources and need to align with the organization's strategic plans.

The Task Force's support of the Green Choice campaign appears to be a clear example of what Dara Strolovitch (2007) refers to as affirmative advocacy, or a form of representation where resources are used for the intersectionally marginalized within a constituency. Whereas most national interest groups tend to dedicate resources to the most advantaged among their constituencies, Strolovitch (2007) suggests that the groups practicing affirmative advocacy share standard practices including intersectional decision-making rules, ideological commitments to long-term social change, and strong coalitional politics. Because of the Task Force's organizational reputation as a practitioner of affirmative advocacy, its foray into a climate justice campaign like the Green Choice Campaign was intuitive.

The same commitment to intersectional and coalitional politics undergirds the Task Force's other actions around climate and the environment during the Trump administration, but the track record extends far before his presidency. For example, Human Rights Campaign staffers noted more than 15 years ago that "the Task Force will take a position on the war, or on economic justice issues, or on environmental issues, or on the death penalty that we [at HRC] won't wade into" (Engel 2007, p. 77). The Task Force's identity as bridging progressive and LGBTQ politics has stuck in the years since: "Our handle was being a progressive voice in the LGBTQ movement and the LGBTQ voice in the progressive movement" (S. Simmons, personal communication, April 9, 2021). Therefore,

the Task Force's progressive identity has long enabled the organization to continue taking stances outside traditional LGBTQ issues.

In addition to signing the NCTE letter opposing Scott Pruitt I featured earlier in the chapter, the Task Force has signed on to other letters opposing EPA nominations and regulatory change and has called for President Biden to incorporate climate justice into his climate agenda (See Appendix B, Table B.3). Again, pre-existing coalitional relationships and their intersectional lens undergird the logic for all these other examples of symbolic support for climate justice (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

In this subsection, I have outlined how the Task Force has acted on climate justice. An intersectional lens, alongside questions of coalitional support, capacity, and strategic planning, is at the root of why they have acted. This lens includes an analysis of gender, economic, and racial (in)justice. Seeing that efforts such as the Green Choice Campaign and pressuring Biden to form a climate justice agenda align with their analysis, the Task Force acted. The lens and consequent actions align with the Task Force's identity as a progressive organization that has long been unafraid to venture into issues such as war and the death penalty.

Cross-movement collaborations fall short in developing deeper relationships

If the intersectional lens the Task Force developed made signing on to letters easy as an extension of their progressive identity, then relationships made it possible for cross-movement collaborations. The Rockwood Leadership Institute's cohort programs were significant in establishing and forging connections between the Task Force and organizations that work on climate issues. The Program called the "Cross-Movement Yearlong" brought together senior-level staff from various organizations and, to some

degree, facilitated some broad cross-movement collaborations between queer & trans and climate & environmental advocacy groups.

On a broad, surface level, several staffers at the Task Force formed relationships with environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and Greenpeace through the Rockwood Leadership Institute that made it possible for organizations to share sign-on letters. According to Rowan, participants saw each for several weeks over two years:

> "I can remember that we said yes to a bunch of things during at least my cohort 2013 and 2014 when the Sierra Club or Greenpeace would ask us to do something, and similarly, we would ask Greenpeace or Sierra Club to sign on to something or to take action, and it was very much at the individual relationship level because we were building relationships with peers at those organization."

In the quote above, Rowan points out that staffers at these organizations were forming relationships with each other as peers but not as organizations. Although these individual relationships matter and amplify symbolic sign-on letters, peers change and leave while organizations do not. In other words, by staying at the *individual* relationship level, the cross-movement collaborations fell short in developing *organizational* relationships between queer & trans and climate & environmental organizations.

Part of the problem or gap in developing organizational relationships lies in capacity. For example, former policy director Stacey Long Simmons built individual relationships with environmental staffers by participating in Rockwood Leadership Institute programs. Still, these relationships did not transform into long-term organizational collaborations:

> "I did befriend some colleagues at Greenpeace and colleagues at Sierra Club specifically. They are probably willing and able if anyone were to approach them to do something, but I wasn't able to get it as far along as I would have liked just for capacity reasons" (S. Simmons, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

Here we see how the Task Force's lens of economic, gender, and racial justice is limited. Their priorities are important within those areas; however, climate justice is subsumed. As a result, with limited capacity, Simmons built some individual but not organizational relationships with Greenpeace and the Sierra Club. Similarly, Jacqui Patterson of the NAACP invited Simmons to a climate justice roundtable to provide a queer voice. Ultimately, despite the Task Force's support for environmental and climate justice fights, substantive relationships between organizations and, therefore, campaigns on queer climate justice have yet to materialize.

In some ways, the Task Force may have missed their opportunity, as the Rockwood Leadership Institute has forged connections between movements and led to power shifts such as expanding Medi-Cal to be more inclusive of immigration status for 20 years. Still, there may be a reason for hope, as the Rockwood Leadership Institute implies that alums of the Cross-Movement Yearlong, including the Sierra Club and the Task Force, developed an organizing and litigation strategy against voter suppression laws in North Carolina and Texas because of the connections forged through the program (Lipton & LaFrance, 2016). Unfortunately, it was never per se the intention of the cross-movement programs to connect LGBTQ and environmental interest groups (S. Price, personal communication, May 11, 2021).

In summary, institutions such as the Rockwood Leadership Institute helped develop personal relationships between peers at queer & trans and environmental & climate organizations. These personal relationships created the conditions for the Task Force to take their intersectional lens in new directions and sign on and signal support for climate justice campaigns. However, building relationships among peers is different from building

relationships with organizations. As a result, those deeper relationships have fallen by the wayside.

What's stopping the Task Force from taking on climate justice?

According to staffers, the Task Force is missing three conditions that would amplify climate justice on their agenda: 1) institutional buy-in from funders, 2) Board support and 3) staff capacity and initiative. Rowan frames this by emphasizing the need for champions at all three levels:

> "I think it's a bandwidth issue. Is there funding for it? Are there donors who understand the intersection of queer liberation and equity and see that as an actionable lens to do policy advocacy and mobilize convening work on climate change and eco-justice? There has to be a champion for it. **There has to be a funder champion, there has to be a staff champion, and there has to be a board champion** [emphasis added]."

This quote speaks to how simply having one champion is insufficient for amplifying queer & trans perspectives on climate justice strategy. Unfortunately, given their members, staff, and Board are largely unresponsive to the climate issue, climate justice deflates in importance.

That said, at various points, the Task Force has had staff investment in environmental justice, particularly related to the organization's primary pillars. Simmons told me, "For capacity reasons, I was never able to do what I really wanted to do, which was to birth an economic justice project at the Task Force. I was able to get my foot in the door, have some conversations, and endorse some work like Demos did a piece, I think, on environmental justice" (S. Simmons, personal communication, April 9, 2021). This suggests that staffing capacity at the Task Force is not yet to the point of having champions ready to push for environmental or climate justice on the agenda.

In recent strategic planning processes, the Task Force considered whether environmental justice should be a core part of their work:

> "I know that in the last strategic planning process, environmental justice did rise to the level of at least a conversation. It did not come out though as one of the primary goals for the next three to five years" (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

This last part of the quote may be disheartening to process. Because of the time scale of strategic planning and deciding where to place resources, it takes several years for environmental justice to have another chance at rising as a primary goal for the Task Force.

Still, there is interest from funders and the Board in the intersections between queer politics and environmental justice:

> "We're actually engaging in a similar process as to what you're doing. We just accepted a grant from a family foundation to look at the intersection of queerness and environmental ecojustice, so we're going to do some maybe even similar work you're doing, mapping, who's doing the work, and where that is" (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

This hopeful note shows that the Task Force is starting one of Rowan's first steps around needing analysis of how queer liberation and the environment are interconnected before developing an actionable strategy.

Perhaps to state the obvious then, staff and particularly executive leadership play a crucial role in the interpretations of the Task Force's identity and moving the organization in new strategic directions:

> "We had a funder who is queer. Her lived experience is at the intersection of environmental justice, climate justice, and queerness. She came to us and said, "We're looking for organizations who are doing this work. Is this something that you all care about?"
>
> It just happened at this transition moment from one executive director to the next, and because of the conversations at the Board during this last strategic planning process, I think Kierra knew that there was some appetite, and so the fact that some

> funding came along to start exploring this conversation was just the stars aligning" (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

A funder approached the organization at the right moment. First, a new executive director was at the helm of the organization and could pivot to new horizons. Second, despite environmental justice failing to become a primary goal in the recent strategic planning process, that initial conversation about environmental justice piqued the Board's interest. This situation tells us that national-level advocacy organizations such as the Task Force can push for queer climate justice.

However, like the NCTE case, because of exclusive attention to the distributional paradigm—a primary concern with the quantification of risk and, more importantly that we ***must*** see the disproportionate impact of climate change on queer & trans people to act—the Task Force occupies an affective state of unease or shame:

> "No one wants to read it in your Ph.D. about why the Task Force, why HRC, why NCTE have not taken on environmental ecojustice as a primary issue when it impacts all of us the same, and likely, if the Williams Institute or Movement Advancement Project is doing research, it would show, I'm guessing, that multiply marginalized people are impacted X times more than people with privileged identities, just as LGBTQ people are impacted more by mental health and physical disabilities and the economic system. Probably, we are going to see, the research shows, that queer people are impacted X times more because of climate change" (Rowan, personal communication, February 17, 2021).

The quote above suggests a disconnect for the Task Force and the other organizations profiled here between committing to intersectionality and separating "LGBTQ issues" from "environmental & climate issues." Rowan notes how climate change "affects all of us the same," much like the NCTE staffers did, and therefore should merit more attention to begin with and knows intellectually that there probably is a disproportionate impact of climate change on queer & trans people. They know they *should* be working on climate justice issues, as signaled by the comment "no one wants to read it in your Ph.D.,"

yet they do not substantively advance the agenda. However because climate justice has not met that "disproportionate impact" bar, it cannot be viewed as a queer & trans issue. Therefore, this separation of the issues elides the intersectional impacts of climate injustices for queer & trans people.

The Task Force's intersectional decision-making structure and progressive identity enable the organization to symbolically advance a climate and environmental justice agenda. Still, the structural environment of a risk-based funding economy constrains further advocacy for climate justice.

Summary of the Task Force case

Like the NCTE, the Task Force has come out as an environmentalist organization by symbolically adding its organizational name to climate justice letters and policy agendas. Their pre-existing commitment to intersectional decision-making has informed and shaped their participation in climate justice in some cases by checking all the boxes of their three pillars around economic, gender, and racial justice. And yet, despite environmental justice making it to the strategic planning discussion as a potential priority for the next few years, the Board removed it as a primary goal. There is some indication that this may change as funders do the conceptual work of connecting queer and climate change politics to determine what, if anything, would be actionable policy-wise. However, moving queer climate justice policies, of course, remains to be seen.

Conclusion

Each of the cases outlined in this chapter has seen queer & trans perspectives have purchase in climate justice strategy to varying degrees. The Sierra Club leaders released

solidarity statements during Pride months and after Supreme Court rulings; 350 named intersectionality in its message following the Pulse nightclub shooting and have adopted tactics from queer movements; NCTE has done discursive work in tying together LGBTQ lives with the climate crisis, and the Task Force provides sign-on support for climate and environmental justice letters and campaigns. The climate/environmental organizations' prior pivots on rewriting their identity with race led to LGBTQ issues having a better "fit" with the organization's agendas. The LGBTQ organizations moved on climate because of existing narrative stock and a commitment to intersectional, coalitional identity. Yet all the cases lingered on symbolic actions because of a lack of evidence to support the distributional paradigm that constrains substantive investment in queer climate justice.

Furthermore, all the cases are analytically and structurally constrained by a distributional paradigm imbued with the need for nonprofits to compete for resources to support "high-risk" populations. The limitation of this distributional paradigm, as the findings suggest, is that the interest groups are incentivized to prioritize issues for which there is clear evidence of disproportionate impact on LGBTQ people. Given that the interest groups in the study either do not know or ignore the evidence that this is, in fact the case, or that queerness and transness are always an intersectional category[21] and moreover, that the systems creating a climate crisis and LGBTQ death are connected at their root, a paradox results where organizations claim intersectionality and yet experience intersectional failure. Like critiques of environmental justice organizers suggesting that they focus on racial

[21] What I mean to suggest here is that even if you do not know about disproportionate climate impacts on the basis of sexuality or gender identity, there is a well-established environmental justice literature and movement that has extensively outlined the correlations between environmental ills and minority and poor communities.

outcomes rather than racial production (Pulido, 2017), the organizations in this chapter focus on the outcomes rather than the overarching root system.

But why do we care about this substantive intersectional failure, and what does this chapter tell us about queer climate justice? National advocacy organizations play a critical representative function for marginalized communities (Strolovitch, 2007). In the cases of this chapter, the organizations do not substantively act at the intersection of LGBTQ and climate issues and therefore fail in their representative capacities (Strolovitch & Crowder, 2018).

Environmental and climate organizations like the Sierra Club and 350 have come out of the closet, while NCTE and the Task Force have come out as environmentalists. The actions outlined in this chapter emerged because individual champions, pre-existing identities, or prior identity pivots opened space for the organizations to take advantage of political openings like the nomination of Scott Pruitt as EPA administrator. However, the process of organizations coming out, much like individuals coming out, does not lead to liberation.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Climate change is queer, so *naturally* climate activism is queer too. This dissertation traveled far and wide across the United States and a half-decade in time. We started in the Abrons Art Center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in September 2014, where for ten days, the whole team at Queer Planet made earth, air, fire, and water come alive in giant elemental drag puppets. We saw them march down the outer flanks of Central Park for the 2014 People's Climate March, where they were unfortunately in the very back. The party did not end there though, it just began. At the start of April in 2017, to the thumping rhythms of Sean Paul's "Temperature," we watched queer and trans activists dance from D.C.'s DuPont Circle to the ritzy Kalorama neighborhood where "climate czar" Ivanka Trump challenged her father's administration. The seasons changed to the summer, just in time for Pride in 2017, when we went to D.C.'s Capital Pride Parade right along 17th Street, home of several gay bars. There, activists, arm-in-arm via PVC pipes, blockaded and disrupted the parade to assert "No Pride in Prisons, Police, and Pipelines." And finally, we went over a couple blocks to K Street, where we walked the halls of nonprofits, under sterile, fluorescent lights, to talk cross-movement strategy.

Through it all, we saw anger, sadness, fear, grief, trauma, joy, fun, pleasure, ambivalence, compassion, and empathy. Our affective responses to climate change are never one thing all the time. Similarly, queer climate activism and our reactions to it are never stable but always in flux. As someone researching and completing a dissertation in 2022 about events that occurred five or more years ago, and equipped with some language, frameworks, and ideas that were not yet worked into existence for some of the activists in this dissertation, I offer a limited interpretation of a variety of actions, convenings, and

parties. So, I ask you, readers, whoever you are, that wherever and whenever you look over these words, to hold a contradiction—the people in this dissertation were doing the best that they could but still, more was possible. With these caveats in hand, I end the dissertation by summarizing the key findings, naming the contributions I see this dissertation making, and positing the recommendations that I have for scholars and activists alike.

Contributions and Recommendations

Climate activists have a humongous task ahead of them in trying to figure out how to challenge an entrenched fossil fuel economy, communicate the stakes and urgency of climate change to get people to act without turning them off, and working across structural differences in race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, nation, and age between activists and movements. Has our collective consciousness shifted around climate change? Yes, in a lot of ways, but even with these interventions, resources, and strategic insights that climate justice activists have offered, it is still insufficient. This dissertation starts and ends with a provocation for climate activists: maybe some, partial answers to these massive questions can be found on the dancefloor, along the glitter-strewn roads of a Pride Parade, or the open space of a queer art build.

Mainstream climate and climate justice organizations, in the short span of a decade, are increasingly working together, and are leveraging their combined resources—financial, analytical, and people—to plan massive climate mobilizations that signal that they are not to be ignored. Most research on climate change social movements are preoccupied with the outcomes of climate activism, i.e. how effective was the People's Climate March at shifting the tides, and to some extent, the process behind how people come together to fight the climate crisis (della Porta & Parks, 2014; McAdam, 2017; Skocpol, 2013). However,

outsized attention to outcomes leaves little attention to systems and the production of inequality, and how systems are reproduced within movements (Pulido, 2017). To invoke activists in this dissertation and across a variety of issues, we must "go back to the roots."

Focusing on both (re)production and outcomes, I asked how do queer & trans perspectives shape the climate justice movement? Drawing upon several qualitative data sources, including semi-structured interviews, emails, press releases, blog posts, & op-eds, media and newspaper reports and articles, and Facebook events & Tweets, I argue LGBTQ organizations (and climate organizations) can reproduce climate injustice for all and accrue environmental privilege for a select few. At the same time, I argue that queer and trans organizers practices, on a micro-scale, show us a way to creatively battle climate crisis in ways that are relevant for us all. Breaking down this argument, I go into four sets of contributions and recommendations by each empirical chapter.

Chapter 4: What is queer climate justice?

First, distinguish between ecoheteronormativity and ecohomonormativity. Queer ecologies scholars have cogently argued that states, nonstate actors, and media use the environment as a tool to reproduce gendered and sexualized binaries and assumptions (di Chiro, 2010; Hogan, 2010; Mortimer-Sandilands & Erickson, 2010b). Throughout the dissertation, I turned analytical attention "inside" to uncover how LGBTQ institutions and movements replicate heteronormativity by putting on a neoliberal skin. In Chapter 4, I focused on how LGBTQ climate activists, by uncritically centering marriage equality and gay rights discourse into their organizing, produced a state-centric organizing strategy that simply does not work for intersectionally marginalized queer and trans people.

Second, LGBTQ infrastructure can reproduce climate injustice. When environmental justice, and later climate justice, scholarship burgeoned, the "typical" sites of analysis solidified—ethnic enclaves, coal and other extractive communities, rural communities next to landfills or pollution. I situate this dissertation among a growing number of environmental justice scholars who turn our attention to other places where extraction or exploitation is not immediately visible. As we saw in Chapter 4, Pride parades make it possible for environmental extraction to continue, and consequently, are complicit in exacerbating climate change. I therefore expand the stakeholders relevant for environmental justice research to include houseless shelters, gay bars, and Pride parades. Future research can more deeply analyze each component of queer and trans social infrastructure to understand how they uphold environmental and climate injustice.

Finally, I believe the key takeaway of Chapter 4 is for climate activists to mobilize LGBTQ constituents in culturally resonant ways and exercise caution in narrative work. First, as the many issue bridges in the chapter suggest, there are several ways to couch issues in ways that communicate the stakes of climate change that "fit" with queer and trans liberation, such as mentioning the relatively high proportion of queer and trans youth in the unhoused population or connecting an abolitionist lens, how policing disproportionately impacts queer and trans people, especially during natural disasters. Second, as a way of practicing critical awareness about narrative work, I recommend climate activists ask a series of questions. Who can and will claim the narrative we produce? Who is erased and how will our narrative impact them?

Chapter 5: Intersectional climate narratives

First, I challenge the ubiquity of "frontline communities" in climate justice organizing and interrogate how its mobilization is embedded with social forces. Activists and scholars alike uncritically adopt the terminology of frontline communities and do not spend time thinking about how it is both inclusionary and exclusionary. There is no doubt that mainstream climate and environmental organizations marginalize climate and environmental justice organizations and have a long history of leveraging their outsized resources toward "false solutions" that throw racialized and poor EJ/CJ organizers and communities under the bus. Given this context, the act of centering frontline communities is inclusionary by moving the climate movement toward procedural justice. However, as an intersectional praxis, how climate activists defined frontline communities in the context of the People's Climate March was exclusionary by highlighting a few axes of difference over other axes. As Luna (2016) cautions, there is value in claiming a sameness or similarity in oppression; however, this strategy must be paired with an analysis of difference in sameness. We must problematize why race, class, & Indigeneity are more salient and relevant markers of frontline community status if we are to realize an intersectional praxis that unites us all against the root drivers of crisis.

Second, playing is a queer virtue that heals ***and*** mobilizes. Readers of this dissertation might have gut reactions to the play at the center of Chapter 5—oh, queers like to have fun and are carefree! Be careful to not elide the stakes of precarious queer and trans life in the U.S. The play and spectacle that we saw in Chapter 5 emerges out of longstanding historical and structural traumas, with the AIDS epidemic being the most visible. In this

way, making gorgeous puppets and other actions that the Queer Bloc took ahead of the People's Climate March serve a healing function—let's have fun despite, not because of, the oppression the community has faced. Additionally, the Queer Bloc had a fun time, and in a context of doomsday climate narratives, their tactics of queer spectacle were and can be an effective mobilizing tactic.

My key takeaways and recommendations start with, like I just mentioned with the last section, practicing a critical awareness with the language and tools we use. What are the assumptions we make in the language of "frontlines?" What are we counting as "proof" in determining who has political legitimacy and why do we need "proof" to begin with? How do our individual and collective biases showing up in determining the frontlines? How does scholarly research (or the lack thereof) and media reporting shape our interpretations?

Chapter 6: Pride for whom?

First, this chapter suggests that pinkwashing serves fossil capital and therefore links the political economy of heteronormativity and an environmentally destructive racial capitalism. Existing research on pinkwashing cogently argues that state and nonstate actors' embrace of LGBTQ rights serves to cover up their racist and religious violence. However, it is imperative to locate how pinkwashing can also be a tool for environmental extraction and exploitation. As this chapter's analysis of Wells Fargo's inclusion in Capital Pride shows, pinkwashing threatens queer and trans people of color and by maintaining capitalism, threatens us all.

In examining the No Justice No Pride blockade of Capital Pride, this chapter argues the necessity of identifying how homonormativity rests on the extraction of people and the environment. Trenchant critiques have exposed the mainstream LGBTQ movement for

assimilating into neoliberal capitalism rather than asserting that liberation is not possible without a fundamental challenge to this system but have not tackled on what grounds, resources, and environments homonormativity prospers (Duggan 2003; Nguyen 2021). On one level, homonormativity, as these scholars describe, remains strong because privileged white gays and the Capital Pride Board continue to invest in an assimilationist logic and wholeheartedly believe in the benefits of a "we're just like you" approach that the mainstream LGBTQ movement perfected. On another level, ecohomonormativity more visibly rears its head in our current moment of attention toward the climate crisis. Future research could analyze how state institutions, policies and further nonstate practices produce ecohomonormativity.

Second, this chapter makes the somewhat obvious point that some LGBTQ people have environmental privilege. As Park and Pellow (2011) argue, scholars depict an incomplete picture of environmental injustice if they do not also interrogate the ways that people are advantaged. Environmental privilege affords Capital Pride Board members and white gay onlookers to ignore how Wells Fargo and Dakota Access Pipeline affect some queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people's livelihoods or to claim a victimhood that protestors are attacking them. Thus, when scholars and activists challenge the ways that white lesbians and gays reinforce racism, let it be known that they are also protecting their own environmental privilege.

By bringing together environmental justice studies and queer studies, this chapter shows how their theories can be leveraged in concert to interpret areas each framework cannot address on its own. For example, I located and analyzed environmental privileges and injustices in a new domain and place—Pride marches. While a burgeoning body of

research examines how environmental and climate injustice impacts LGBTQ communities (T. W. Collins et al., 2017a, 2017b; Goldsmith et al., 2021), it is just as crucial to examine the other side of the coin in environmental and climate privileges. Pride is just one example or microcosm of how LGBTQ communities can produce climate injustices. We must view LGBTQ places, like Fire Island and Palm Springs, as sites of refuge, racial and class injustice, ***and*** climate privilege and injustice.

More practically, I recommend that power mapping exercises also incorporate analysis of near enemies, in addition to far enemies. In Buddhism, the far enemy is your obvious enemy whereas the near enemy appears to be an ally but will harm you. Psychologists and other mental health professionals use the concept to develop emotional literacy. For example, a near enemy of compassion—indignity based on the suffering of others—is pity, an emotion best captured by phrases like "poor you!" As a near enemy of compassion, pity is a wolf putting on the sheep skin of compassion.

Conceptually, we can translate this logic to building strong coalitions. For many people who have done power mapping, it is typical to start by identifying the enemies who are absolutely against your campaign. These are clearly the far enemies. Think Exxon Mobil, for example, in the context of a Keep It in the Ground campaign. Then you move into identifying neutral actors, allies, and active supporters. The concept of near enemies will be especially useful in giving more nuance to how we identify allies. In this chapter, we saw clear far enemies—Donald Trump and Wells Fargo. The activists in the chapter, however, went a step further and called out the near enemies—Ivanka Trump and Capital Pride—who claim allyship but are invested in the same status quo that Donald Trump and Wells Fargo advance. As activists develop their campaigns, they would do well to neutralize

or hold their near enemies accountable because these are the actors who will gaslight you in the name of "unity."

Finally, dancing is a protest tactic that climate movements and other social movements could amplify as part of their protest repertoires. In a time when protests are frequent and high in quantity, an attention to quality or contrast to what's typically done point to the power of dance in protest. At the same time, there is a uniqueness to dance in the fight for climate justice. As organizers told me, dance is a celebration of our bodies, and one important body is Mother Earth. In this way, by highlighting a shared body politics, dance can bridge queer & trans liberation and climate justice.

Chapter 7: Coming out of the closet; Coming out as environmentalists

My first contribution of Chapter 7 is that advocacy on prior policy issues creates feedback loops. If advocacy organizations act substantially or symbolically on intersectionally disadvantaged subgroup issues, it lays the grounds for future work on related issues. For example, local chapters of the Sierra Club told me that prior work on "justice" issues, i.e., social justice issues, served as a reference point in the decision-making calculus for future social justice issues. While many of the cross-movement actions covered in the chapter were symbolic, they were nonetheless important in signaling to LGBTQ constituents within and outside of the organizations that the organizations could be a home for them.

However, do not exclusively rely upon national advocacy organizations to advance queer climate justice. A distributional paradigm at the heart of many of the organizations constrains bridging between LGBTQ and climate movements. To justify advocacy at the queer climate nexus and procure funding, the advocacy organizations in the chapter must prove that queer and trans people are "disproportionately" impacted by climate change. This

attention does two things. First, signaling who is "at-risk" to funders is always an inclusionary and exclusionary practice that elides configurations of vulnerability. Second, it places outsize attention on unequal outcomes rather than focusing on the inequalities of the root driving forces.

Much as I noted for Chapter 5, I recommend that national advocacy organizations start by expanding what counts as proof. If this dissertation does anything, at a minimum, I believe it makes clear that queer and trans activists feel the impacts of climate change on their bodies. They do not need peer-reviewed studies to confirm what they feel, nor should national advocacy organizations.

Limitations and Where Next?

To complete this dissertation, I had to narrow the scope of it to a manageable size and this is at once a benefit and a constraint on what I was able to analyze, interpret, and claim. I balanced breadth and depth in my research design, data collection, and analysis. Over the course of the dissertation, I accomplished breadth by covering a wide range of queer and trans climate campaigns that differed in their historical context, leadership, constituency, and overarching aims. I accomplished depth by homing in on two regions and windows of time—New York City in the summer of 2014 up until the end of September and Washington D.C. from spring 2017 until June. These choices also constrain how far the findings of this dissertation can travel, so I spend this section naming some limitations and how these gaps could inform future research.

This dissertation is limited in its geographic scope of queer and trans climate activism, even in the United States. For example, the depth cases in Washington D.C. and New York City are both confined to the East Coast of the United States and in some of the

U.S.'s largest cities where cultural, economic, and political capital flow. In a counterfactual world, I would have varied the geographic design of the dissertation and attempted to research cases on the West Coast and in the South to gain a deeper understanding of how place informs and shapes queer and trans climate activism. Furthermore, because of my focus on activism in cities, I run the danger of reproducing a metronormative bias by implicitly suggesting that queer climate activism exclusively takes place in the cities. This movement work clearly does take place in rural and suburban areas, and future research could give these places the due scholarly attention they deserve. Without much variation in the design in terms of place, this dissertation is limited in making place-based claims.

More glaringly, the dissertation is limited to the United States and does not touch on the global landscape of queer and trans climate activism. As we saw in Chapter 6, a transnational commitment informs queer and trans activism, as No Justice No Pride sought to connect the dots between Palestinian settler colonialism and U.S. settler colonialism. This suggests the importance of identifying how solidarities travel transnationally and how movements in the Global North learn from movements in the Global South, and vice versa. Additionally, there are numerous examples of queer and trans climate activists launching campaigns across the world. For example, Queers 4 Climate put on a spectacle during the 2021 Amsterdam Pride March and Queers x Climate have also done work to tie together queer and climate issues. Each of these cases are unique and scholars studying them would introduce factors and insights that this dissertation did not address.

Finally, the dissertation is limited by the visibility of the actions I study. Chapters 5 and 7 are especially focused on protests that captured media attention and the attention of people outside of the LGBTQ community. By focusing on splashy protests or direct actions,

scholars run the danger of ignoring the gendered and racialized aspects of day-to-day organizing. Inside apartments, libraries, or coffee shops, we can feasibly imagine that organizers use a queer and trans climate justice lens to interrogate power and name the stakes of their activism. Scholars using intensive methods such as ethnography or participant observation would be equipped to identify these nuances.

Closing Remarks

After protests, we do not immediately go back and integrate into the world. We need transitions and I think the same logic applies, partially, after reading a long dissertation. Talking to me about the aftermath of the NJNP blockade, DeLesslin George-Warren explained the importance of having an afterparty after the action:

> "If we had just ended what we did at the protest and walked away—it's like a story not finished…We need the rest of that story to help us reintegrate back into our daily negotiations. We occupied this space in which everything was possible, and we were ultimately free and then we have to remember the realities again.
>
> That's a big part of a lot of Native cultures is for people who go out and do dangerous things, specifically warriors that when they came back, there would be a process. They wouldn't be able to go immediately back into the community. They had to do some healing. Some tribes would say that you bring ghosts back with you from war. But just this idea that humans need transition" (D. George-Warren, personal communication, March 10, 2022).

We all have ghosts that haunt us, and it is unlikely that we will ever be able to fully exorcise them. However, we can acknowledge our ghosts and manage them for our individual and collective healing. So, I think it is appropriate to end this dissertation with some aftercare.

Aftercare is what we do after we, for example, have sex, get a piercing, or have an operation. In essence, it is the bookend to a journey. It is simply a part of life because without it, we feel lonely, the piercing gets infected, or our bodies do not heal. The best way

that I offer some aftercare in the context of a dissertation is to ask some questions. What felt good about this dissertation? What did not feel good? Why? What can we (and I) do better on in the future? Did you feel safe and were you able to show up as your full self while responding to these words? And finally, how can we hold space together and work toward queer climate justice?

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Appendix

Appendix A: Methods & Data Sources

Table A.1 Content Analysis Data Source Categories, Count, and Example

Data Source Category	Count	Example
Blog	22	"Why Climate Change is an LGBTQ+ issue"
Electronic Article	46	"What the impact of Stonewall has taught me about environmental rights"
Social Media	2	"This Sunday NYC Pride – SAVE THE STRAIGHTS! (Oh, and the planet, too)
Magazine Article	19	"Queering the movement"
Newspaper Article	6	"Ecosexuals pitch nature for a change"
Podcast	2	"Two Spirit Movement and Environmental Protection" from the Why Isn't Anyone Talking About This? Podcast
Op-ed or Column	11	"The Dangerous Erasure of Queer and Trans* People of Color from the Climate Movement"
Pamphlet	1	"History and current context—Vibrant yet under-resourced—the state of lesbian, bisexual, & queer movements"
Web Page	4	"Fundraiser – Queer resilience in the era of climate change"
	TOTAL: 113	

Table A.2 Interview Participants (Chapters 4-6)

Interview Number	Organization	Date of Interview
1. Gabrielle Mendelsohn	Sunrise DC	1/25/21
2. John Qua	350 DC	2/3/21

3. Nathan Park	350 DC	2/12/21
4. Anthony Torres 1 5. Anthony Torres 2	350 DC; No Justice No Pride	2/15/21 2/19/21
6. Paul Getsos	People's Climate March/Peoples Climate Movement	2/16/21
7. Ntebo Mokuena 1 8. Ntebo Mokuena 2	350 DC; No Justice No Pride	3/2/21 3/7/21
9. Jeff Ordower	GenderJUST; ACORN	3/16/21
10. Leslie Cagan	People's Climate March/Peoples Climate Movement	3/22/21
11. Rachel Schragis	People's Climate March/Peoples Climate Movement/Queers for the Climate	4/1/21
12. Kei Williams	Peoples Climate Movement	4/11/21
13. Adrien Salazar	Green New Deal Policy Nexus	4/15/21
14. Quito Ziegler	People's Climate March; Queer Planet	4/29/21
15. Cindy Wiesner	Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (spoke at Reclaim Pride in NYC on intersections of queer liberation and climate justice)	8/27/21
16. Joseph Huff-Hannon	People's Climate March; Queers for the Climate	10/27/21
17. Patrick Robbins	People's Climate March; Queers for the Climate	11/29/21
18. Bizzy Barefoot	People's Climate March; Queer Planet	1/14/22
19. DeLesslin George-Warren	No Justice No Pride	3/10/22
20. Ceci Pineda	Audre Lorde Project	3/18/22
21. Firas Nasr	WERK for Peace	4/20/22
22. Jen Deerinwater	Crushing Colonialism; No Justice No Pride	5/3/22

Table A.3 Interview Participants (Chapter 7)

Interview Number	**Organization**	**Date of Interview**
1. Jessica Olson	Sierra Club	1/13/21
2. Dan Chu	Sierra Club	1/19/21
3. Elliot Altomare	350.org	1/26/21
4. Jamie Henn	350.org	1/28/21
5. Everette Thompson	350.org	1/29/21

6. Liangyi Chang	350.org	1/31/21
7. Sam (pseudonym)	Sierra Club	2/8/21
8. Allison Chin	Sierra Club	2/8/21
9. Seney (pseudonym)	350.org	2/10/21
10. Anthony Torres	Sierra Club	2/15/21
11. Rowan (pseudonym)	The National LGBTQ Task Force	2/17/21
12. D. Ojeda	The National Center for Transgender Equality	2/25/21
13. Harper Jean Tobin	The National Center for Transgender Equality	3/12/21
14. Barbara Grover	Sierra Club	3/19/21
15. Stacey Long Simmons	The National LGBTQ Task Force	4/9/21
16. Luther Dale	Sierra Club	4/19/21
17. Sharon Price	Rockwood Leadership Institute	5/11/21

Interview Protocol

Agenda Item 1 – GENERAL/CONCEPTUAL/ANALYSIS (such as "What are the connections between queer and climate politics?). Additional questions include:

- When and why did you start thinking about the connections between climate justice and queer liberation?
- Give me an overview of your organization, its formations, and how goals have changed since you've been there
- What has shifted your agenda?
- What is your organization's general culture toward queer and trans people?
- How has being in coalition with organizations changed what you do?

Agenda Item 2 – ACTION/PROTEST/POLICY/CAMPAIGN 1 (such as "How did you plan your event? What impact were you going for? Who was in the room for planning and during the action?). Additional questions include:

- How did you figure out the story that you wanted to tell?
- How did the organizations come together to plan the action?
- How did you negotiate differences between organizers/organizations?
- What did the debrief after the action look like?
- How did you define and assess success of the action?
- Did you feel like people were left out of your analysis? What were any conflicts or tensions that arose, if at all?

Agenda Item 3 – ACTION/PROTEST/POLICY/CAMPAIGN 2 (see above)

Agenda Item 4 – ACTION/PROTEST/POLICY/CAMPAIGN 3 (If necessary)

Agenda Item 5 – BARRIERS/FUTURE

- What's next for organizing at the intersection of queer and climate politics?
- Why hasn't the organizing carried forward?

Appendix B: Cross-movement Actions at National Advocacy Organizations

Table B.1 Sierra Club actions on LGBTQ issues (Chapter 5)

Sierra Club Action	Date
San Francisco chapter establishes first gay and lesbian activities section	3/1/1986
Sierra Club opposes The Wall Las Memorias Project, an AIDS memorial in LA County, on the grounds that it would conflict with Parks and Recs regulations	1993
Sierra Club Hawaii endorses Tulsi Gabbard despite her work against LGBT rights. Given this was prior to her run for Congress in 2012, she had not yet apologized for her prior record	11/10/2010
North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club in Minnesota opposes the statewide ban on same-sex marriage. This appears to be the first time that a statewide chapter took a stance on marriage equality after not saying anything on the California and Maine battles	11/14/2011
Executive Director Brune supports Obama's decision to support gay marriage	5/9/2012
Sierra Club boycotts camp and conference center they previously used in SC because Episcopal diocese opposes same-sex marriage	7/28/2012
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, NAACP, and the Sierra Club release ads calling for Obama nominees to be confirmed to NLRB (National Labor Relations Board)	

Larry Hogan starts assault on environmental and LGBT regulations. Sierra Club speaks out	1/23/2015
Congressional Republicans vote down energy bill because of inclusion of LGBT protections in the bill	5/26/2016
Blog piece reflecting on Pride in immediate aftermath of Orlando	6/2016
Press release decrying failure of gun control bills. These were one week after the pulse nightclub shooting, but the press release does not mention the shooting by name.	6/20/2016
Press release applauding designation of Stonewall as National Monument	6/24/2016
Reflection on Stonewall, also in the near aftermath of Orlando	7/5/2016
Sierra Club and the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund release statement in opposition to Rep. Kathleen Peters' weak legislation against oil and gas	10/5/2016
Reflection on Pride Month in the amidst of ongoing Trump oppressive measures	6/27/2017
Washington State Chapter features guest post from Sophia Lee on the climate crisis and the LGBTQ community	6/25/2019
Reflection on Pride 50 years after Stonewall	6/25/2019
Sierra Club Colorado holds joint fundraiser with LGBTQ group and reproductive freedom group	2/4/2020
ED Brune releases blog post in honor of Women's History Month and calls for a feminist future for those of all genders	3/27/2020
ED Brune releases press release affirming Supreme Court decision to include sexual orientation and gender identity in Civil Rights Act	6/15/2020

Table B.2 350 actions on LGBTQ issues

350 Action	Date
McKibben pivots climate protest strategy to being decentralized across the US because of seeing the lack of attention that Equality March garners	10/15/2009
For Keystone XL Protest, 350.org draws on civil rights and LGBT rights activism for inspiration	11/6/2011

Takes stance in support of marriage equality after Obama endorses it publicly for the first time	5/9/2012
Early 350 activists draw inspiration from LGBT rights movement's ability to rapidly change public opinion	12/13/2013
Student Activists in UK call on Student Pride to drop BP as sponsor and draft petition through 350 campaigns	6/19/2015
LGBTQ+ staff at 350 release statement on Pulse nightclub and intersections with climate justice	6/17/2016
Tweets in shock that pages on civil rights, LGBT rights, and climate change all removed from White House page	1/20/2017
Queer feminist block participates in action against Coal in Rhineland, Germany	8/25/2017
Honors Queer and Trans people of color in climate movement on Trans Day of Visibility by sharing Ceci's article on the dangerous erasure of queer and trans BIPOC in the climate movement	3/31/2019
350.org Pilipinas marches at Pride	6/29/2019
Endorsement criteria includes mention of supporting issues outside of climate such as LGBT rights	2020
Miles Lewis leads workshop on queer ecology for SoCal 350	7/2020

Table B.3 National LGBTQ Task Force actions on climate or environment

National LGBTQ Task Force Action	**Date**
Creating Change 2015 - features a panel called "a Queer Response to Climate Change" Peterson Toscano, also on the panel, does a one-person comedy show on climate change	2/4/2015
Creating Change 2016 - Workshop on "Talking Across Movements: LGBTQ, Economic Justice, Environmental, and Immigrant Rights Leaders Embrace the Cross-Movement Approach (this panel included Michael Bosse of Sierra Club and Stacey Long Simmons/Sayre Reece from the Task Force Nancy Wilson on Faith, LGBTQ Politics, and Environmental Justice	1/20/2016

justin adkins on student activism	
Opposition to Scott Pruitt EPA nom	1/18/2017
Signs letter to Congress opposing border wall	3/23/2017
Signs letter opposing Michael Dourson's nomination as Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	10/3/2017
Creating Change 2017 - A panel from Woodhull Freedom Foundation on Family and its intersections with oppression (including environmental injustice) Vanessa and Deseree from Queer Ecojustice, Roya Banan from Rising Tides talk about Queering Climate Change and Organizing and focus on Just Transition and Resilience-Based organizing	1/18/2017
People's Climate March Email	4/1/2017
Dance Protest w/ WERK for Peace on #WERKforConsent	1/27/2018
Signs letter requesting EPA extend comment period for rulemaking on use of science in regulatory decision-making	5/3/2018
Signs letter opposing EPA's June 13, 2018 proposal to change rulemaking around cost/benefit analysis	8/13/2018
Endorses (not a contributor) Report on "Protecting Science at Federal Agencies"	11/20/2018
Creating Change 2018 features Vanessa Raditz's Fire and Flood documentary Also a session from University of Minnesota Morris folx (Adrienne Conley and Clement Loo) on environmental disparities through a queer lens	1/24/2018
Signs letter opposing EPA proposal to weaken Environmental Appeals Board	1/2/2020
Creating Change 2020 - features the Laughing Gull Foundation in the South that focuses on LGBTQ equality and Environmental Justice Alexis Pauline Gumbs also gives plenary on Political Ecology Workshop on Creating Change Inspired by Nature as well	1/15/2020
Signs letter to Congress demanding "Don't Bail out Fossil Fuel Polluters"	4/20/2020
Signatory to Demos Frontlines Climate Justice Executive Action Platform	7/22/2020
Signs on to letter calling on next Pres to take immediate steps toward climate justice	7/28/2020