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Introduction

Organizing for Transgender Rights in the United States

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) updated its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (today known as *DSM-5*), replacing the term "gender identity disorder" with "gender dysphoria" (Beredjick 2012). This change did not receive as much attention as the APA's landmark reclassification of homosexuality in 1973, but it was significant nonetheless. A year later, the Department of Justice announced that discrimination on the basis of gender identity constituted sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Department of Health and Human Services announced that it would no longer stop Medicare from covering gender reassignment surgery (McLaughlin 2015). And, by the end of 2016, twenty states, the District of Columbia, and hundreds of local jurisdictions in states without statewide protections (including Atlanta, Miami, and New Orleans), had laws on the books banning employment discrimination on the grounds of gender identity (Transgender Law Center n.d.). In short, in recent years, gender-variant people—including those we now call transgender people—have won public policy victories that seemed unwinnable just a few short years ago.

What accounts for these victories? While the answer to this question is undeniably multifarious, one answer lies in *the rise of transgender rights interest groups in the United States*. Transgender rights interest groups and the other components of the larger movement have worked tirelessly over the years to advance the cause of transgender rights in the United States. And,

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in some cases, they have been successful. How did these groups manage to mobilize in the face of substantial barriers to formation and survival? And how did transgender rights advocacy groups go from virtually nonexistent in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s to more numerous in the 2000s and 2010s? These are the questions I address in this book. I hope that answering them can help us understand more about how other oppressed and marginalized people can overcome the barriers to collective action and form viable organizations to represent their interests.

The Rise of Transgender Rights Advocacy

A precursory look at the contemporary American political landscape shows that there are now twenty or so politically active organizations representing transgender people at the national level and hundreds more at the state and local levels. This is a relatively new state of affairs. As late as 1985, only a few national-level organizations dedicated even tangentially to transgender rights advocacy had managed to form and survive for any period of time. These included the pioneers of transgender organizing—the Erickson Educational Foundation (founded in 1964), the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (now the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, 1979), the National Transsexual Counseling Unit (1968), Transsexual Action Organization (1970), and Tri-Ess (1976) (Beemyn 2014; Stryker 2008). In truth, calling any of these groups either "national-level" or "advocacy groups" at all is a stretch (I will have more to say about this later), and only two of them (the second and last) remained alive in 1985. But they were the proverbial only games in town for two decades. State, local, and regional transgender rights group numbers were quite low as well.

But weren't interest groups comprising the burgeoning gay and lesbian rights movement representing the rights of transgender people during this period? No. Despite the crucial role that transgender people played at Stonewall (1969) in particular and in the gay and lesbian rights movement in general in the late 1960s and early 1970s, nascent gay and lesbian rights organizations for the most part skirted the issue of transgender rights during these decades (Denny 2006, ch. 9). Indeed, throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and most of the 1980s, most LG and LGB groups resisted broadening their missions to include transgender rights (Rimmerman 2015). Not only were transgender people marginalized by many "mainstream" gay and lesbian rights organizations, but some gay and/or lesbian rights activists went as

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far as to openly criticize transgender people. In the dozen or so years after Stonewall, academic attacks, skepticism, and ostracization among gay and lesbian rights activists and organizations, as well as general societal marginalization, virtually banished transgender Americans and organizations from the political process.

All of this started to change in the late 1980s. Between 1986 and 2005, several nationally active, relatively well-funded transgender rights interest groups took root, including FTM International (founded in 1986), Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC 1995; now defunct), the National Center for Transgender Equality (2003), the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (1999), the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (2002), the Transgender Law and Policy Institute (2000; now defunct), and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (2003). Moreover, during the same period, dozens of local and state transgender rights groups formed, including the Connecticut Transadvocacy Coalition (2002), the FTM Alliance of Los Angeles (2002), and the Massachusetts Transgender Coalition (2001), just to name a few. Since 2005, numerous additional state, local, and regional transgender rights groups have formed, including the Arkansas Transgender Equality Coalition (2014), the MetroTrans Umbrella Group (St. Louis, 2013), TransMaryland (2017), and countless others. By the end of 2016, a majority of states had some statewide and/or local group(s) working on behalf of transgender people. Today, virtually all of the country's largest and most influential LGB groups have "added the T"—that is, officially added transgender rights to their mission statements—including the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National LGBTQ Task Force (formerly the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force), and PFLAG (formerly known as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

In sum, transgender rights interest-group advocacy is now thriving in the United States (Taylor and Haider-Markel 2014). The proliferation of transgender rights interest groups has reshaped advocacy for both transgender individuals and gays and lesbians (Taylor and Lewis 2014). Indeed, not only are there numerous flourishing, influential organizations working on behalf of transgender people, but we now rarely think of LGB organizing without mentioning transgender people. It is my contention that all of this represents an important shift in contemporary American politics.

Transgender rights interest groups are important in their own right, as they have helped transform policy toward transgender people in America and raised awareness of transgender rights issues among the public. Thus,

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understanding the formation, survival, and proliferation of these groups can teach us a great deal about the determinants of policy change in an important policy area. But these groups are ideal for study for another reason as well—*they are exemplars of groups that represent historically marginalized and oppressed members of society*. Thus, by understanding the mobilization and proliferation of transgender rights interest groups, we can learn important general lessons about how organizations representing marginalized and oppressed people can form and maintain themselves in the face of widespread hate and misunderstanding, as well as the substantial barriers to collective action that all organizations face.

Overview of Major Findings

To address the research questions I pose above, I collected new quantitative and qualitative data on transgender rights interest groups in the United States. The quantitative data comprise an aggregation of the life histories of nationally active transgender rights interest groups in the United States founded between 1964 (the year that the first viable transgender rights advocacy group was formed) and 2016, as well as fragmentary (due to data limitations) data on the life histories of state, local, and regional groups during the same time period. I gathered this quantitative data primarily to "map" the population of groups I study and to discern the population's trajectory over time. The qualitative data comprise transcripts of extensive, original interviews with twenty-seven founders of transgender rights interest groups in the United States (see table 1.1). Twenty-four of the founders I interviewed spoke to me for attribution. I refer to the others as anonymous respondents. The quantitative and qualitative data allow me to undertake a comprehensive and detailed examination of the formation of transgender rights interest groups in the United States.

A Few Words about the Data and My Approach

While the quantitative data are useful, in the pages that follow, I rely primarily upon the qualitative data to reach conclusions. To examine this data, I engaged in *inductive* or *grounded qualitative analysis*. This entailed reading the interview transcripts iteratively, looking for dominant and significant themes, and bringing them to bear on my research questions. I coded seg-

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Table 1.1. The interview subjects.

Name	*Group(s)*	*Jurisdictional Focus*	*Notes*
Melissa Alexander	TransOhio	State (Ohio)	
Anonymous #1	Anonymous Group #1	National	
Anonymous #2	Anonymous Group #2	National	
Anonymous #3	Anonymous Group #3	National	
Blake Alford	THEA+ (Transgender Health and Education Alliance)	State and local (Atlanta, Georgia)	
Anthony Barreto-Neto	Transgender Officers Protect and Serve (TOPS); Transexual Menace	National	Anthony was involved in the founding of two groups.
Thomi Clinton	Transgender Community Coalition	Local (Palm Springs, California)	
Loree Cook-Daniels	Transgender Aging Network	National	
Rachel Crandall	Transgender Michigan	State (Michigan)	
Masen Davis	FTM Alliance of Los Angeles	Local (Los Angeles)	
Dallas Denny	American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS)	National	Dallas was involved in the founding of several other organizations as well.
Justus Eisfeld	Global Action for Trans*Equality (GATE)	International, national	
Eli Erlick	Trans Student Educational Resources	National	
Brooke Cerda Guzman	TransWomen of Color Collective	National	

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Table 1.1. *Continued.*

Name	*Group(s)*	*Jurisdictional Focus*	*Notes*
Mara Keisling	National Center for Transgender Equality; Transexual Menace	National	
Adrien Lawyer	Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico	State (New Mexico)	
Nancy Nangeroni	Boston Chapter, Transexual Menace; Gender Education and Media (GEM)	Local (Boston); National	Nancy was involved in the founding of two groups
Pauline Park	New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA)	State (New York)	
Jacqueline Patterson	Indiana Transgender Wellness Alliance	State (Indiana)	
Marisa Richmond	Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition	State (Tennessee)	
Joelle Ruby Ryan	Transgender New Hampshire	State (New Hampshire)	
Bamby Salcedo	TransLatin@ Coalition	National	
De Sube	Gender Expression Movement (GEM)	State and local (Hampton Roads, Virginia)	
Josephine Tittsworth	Texas Transgender Nondiscrimination Summit	State (Texas)	
Julie Walsh	GenderNexus	State (Indiana)	
Riki Wilchins	Transexual Menace; GenderPAC	National	Riki was involved in the founding of these two groups and others.
Andrea Zekis	Arkansas Transgender Equality Coalition	State (Arkansas)	

Source: Author's data.

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ments of interview text on various aspects of interest-group formation (for example, "funding," "motivation"), and this allowed me to identify major themes (and a few minor ones). I read each interview transcript vertically (that is, from start to finish), but also horizontally, which means that I grouped segments of text across interviews by theme. Of course, my data analysis was not an entirely inductive exercise. To structure my interviews, I relied upon an interview protocol (see appendix A), which I developed after reading the extant scholarship on interest-group formation, and material on transgender history and politics. In this sense, my approach is also deductive.

It is important to note here that my approach—interviewing group founders about group formation—assumes that the group founder is a supremely important actor in the group-formation process. In fact, my approach assumes that without a founder—an identifiable individual who either alone or together with others puts the process of group formation into motion—an interest group will not form. Another way to put this is to say that each and every interest group mentioned in these pages had its origin with either one person or a group of people, and thus understanding what I call the group *founding decision*—the decision of the founder(s) to start the group—can help us understand group formation in general. I believe that extant theoretical and empirical work, much of which I review in subsequent chapters, makes my assumption that the founding decision is critical to group formation very reasonable. For more details about my approach and my methods, see appendix B.

How Transgender Rights Interest Groups Mobilized

The data paint a complicated but relatively clear picture of how transgender rights interest groups managed to mobilize in the face of substantial barriers. First, the data reveal that threats, grievances, and so-called disturbances—which are at the center of pluralist and relative deprivation theories of interest-group formation—were important spurs to transgender rights interest-group formation. It is fashionable to disparage theories of collective action and group formation that tab objective societal conditions as spurs to group formation as naïve and fatally flawed. But my data show that contrary to the most doctrinaire notions from rational choice and resource mobilization theories, threats, grievances, and disturbing events do indeed spur group formation. More specifically, my data show that they pushed individuals to form transgender rights groups. All of the groups I identify in this study began with the decision of one person or a small group of people to attempt to organize a group. And this decision was invariably spurred

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partially by the very real threats facing transgender people. In other words, in each and every case, a person saw a need for representation based on very real threats and decided to form a group to meet this need.

Second, the data reveal that while threats and grievances may push group founders *toward* the founding decision, they are not often *sufficient* to spur this decision. This leads to another major takeaway from the data analysis: threats and grievances spurred transgender rights interest-group formation only when they were coupled with extensive interaction between founders and other transgender people (in cases in which founders themselves were transgender people), transgender people (in cases in which founders were not transgender people), and to a lesser extent allies.Without exception, the founders of transgender rights groups I interviewed cited threats and grievances as important spurs to action. But they were also quick to note that the effects of threats and grievances were indirect. A clear understanding of the perils facing transgender people led group founders to seek out interaction with transgender people and allies, and it was this interaction that directly led to the founding decision. In short, interaction with other people, the data show, was the proverbial match that lit the fire for group founders. In the early days of transgender organizing (the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s), founders physically looked for transgender people and, in some cases, nontransgender allies in places they heard were safe. Founders sent letters and made telephone calls, joined LGB groups and women's and feminist and civil rights groups, and went to transgender support-group meetings. In the 1970s and 1980s, transgender conferences became key forums for interaction. And, in the 1990s and beyond, founders turned to the Internet. What was it about interacting with others that spurred the founding decision? The data show that interactions had multiple effects. Specifically, interactions inspired founders, fueled their passion and excitement about transgender advocacy, raised their awareness of the multiple needs of transgender people, convinced them that extant LGB and (in some cases) other transgender rights groups were insufficient, persuaded them of the need for effective group representation, and even taught them skills that came in handy during the group-founding process.

Third, the evidence shows that the mobilization of other groups of oppressed and marginalized people (members of the LGB community, and women, for example) acted as a spur to transgender rights interest-group formation. The qualitative data support the conclusion that cross-movement effects and spin-off effects, which are often cited by sociologists as important spurs to group formation, are real and substantial. The data reveal that LGB

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groups, even when they were not particularly interested in transgender rights, served as training grounds for transgender rights activists. These groups, as well as some women's rights, civil rights, and transgender rights groups, played a vital, indirect role in the formation of many transgender rights groups by providing for founders forums for interaction, encouragement, inspiration, awareness, and learning.

Fourth, the evidence shows that it does not "take a village" to form a transgender rights interest group. The data show, just as some rational-choice theories of group formation imply, that the people who start transgender rights interest groups do a great deal of the work necessary for group formation themselves. And while rational-choice studies of group formation may endlessly debate where the money comes from, how group entrepreneurs manage to convince people to join their groups, what kinds of incentives and benefits do and do not attract members, what kinds of organizations patrons such as foundations and large donors do and do not support, and what sorts of people do and do not join organizations that represent their interests, the data show that in most cases these concerns are almost wholly irrelevant. Most transgender rights groups originate with people who work either alone or with a few friends and family members.

Fifth, the data show that forming a transgender rights interest group does not require enormous sums of money. Rational choice inspired incentive theory and resource-mobilization treatments of group formation imply that it takes substantial resources to start an interest group. Indeed, they imply that this is one of the reasons that we cannot take group formation for granted—it is costly. Yet despite the substantial attention paid to group formation by political scientists and sociologists, few studies actually attempt to discern the quantity of resources—financial or human—necessary to start an interest group. My data show that starting a transgender rights interest group takes time, money, and human resources; there is no such thing as automatic group formation. But group formation does not take *huge* amounts of money and/or human resources (time, yes). Indeed, most transgender rights groups were founded on "a shoestring" by (again) one person or a small group of people. This does not mean, however, that starting a group is easy or virtually costless. Rather, the data show that many of the resources seemingly necessary to form an interest group are not financial. The founders of transgender rights interest groups tend to be well-educated, reasonably affluent, resourceful, privileged people. These founders have a mix of traits and skills that are not easily bought and that theories of group formation do not often consider. Most founders are intelligent,

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hard-charging, persistent, inspirational, well resourced, social, flexible, and empowered. Not just anyone can start an interest group.

Back to the issue of cost, my data also imply that the cost of starting an interest group is perhaps lower now than it ever has been. The Internet now does for free what previously cost large sums of money—it reaches huge numbers of people directly and instantly. Almost all of the founders who started groups after the advent of the Internet reported using it to promulgate their views, to get the word out that there was a new group in town, to raise money and other resources, and to interact with transgender people and supporters. It is simply not the case anymore (if it ever has been) that starting a group takes a great deal of money.

Sixth, the data show that the greater political environment did not play a large role in the formation of most transgender rights interest groups. There is some evidence, just as political opportunity structure (POS) theories of group mobilization would predict, that political factors matter in the formation of transgender rights interest groups. For example, the quantitative data show that the presence of Barack Obama in the White House, and a relatively liberal public, probably contributed to the formation of some transgender rights groups after 2005. But the qualitative data show that other factors loomed much larger than political factors in transgender rights interest-group formation. It is simply not the case, as some recent studies of group formation might predict, that transgender rights interest-group formation was spurred by government attention or activity and/or a favorable political environment. Indeed, the data reveal that for the most part, transgender rights interest-group formation preceded substantial government attention to transgender rights issues and favorable policy change.

Seventh, the data show that the rise of a transgender collective identity contributed somewhat to transgender rights interest-group formation and proliferation. I find some evidence that just as some new social movement (NSM) theories of group development aver, the rise of a transgender collective identity acted as a spur to group formation in some cases. The data imply that as transgender people began to interact with each other more extensively than ever starting in the mid-1980s, they began to get a sense that they indeed constituted a "we." This change in consciousness led several founders to more seriously contemplate forming an interest group. The data also reveal, however, that the rise of a transgender collective identity brought with it serious risks. Indeed, the data imply that as a group, after determining who they *were not*, transgender people had (and continue to have) a more difficult time determining who they *are*. This battle over collective identity

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has led to the founding in recent years of several "niche" groups—that is, groups that represent not the transgender population as a whole, but rather some identifiable subset of that population (e.g., black transgender people, Latina/o transgender people). It has also led to splintering, infighting, and conflict among actors within the larger transgender social movement.

Finally, the data reveal that density—that is, the size of the transgender rights interest-group population—helps explain transgender rights interest-group formation to some extent. The quantitative data show that the probability of new transgender rights interest-group formation started quite low (during the period 1964–1985), rose steadily from 1986 to about 2010, and has since fallen. This is in line with density-dependence theory, which posts that founding rates within an organizational population are affected by the size of the population. Specifically, the theory would predict that transgender rights interest-group formation is most likely after the organizational form, "transgender rights interest group" attains some substantial level of legitimation (which occurs after a few groups form and survive over some period of time), but before the population is crowded with too many groups. This is exactly what we see in the data. In short, the group founding decision is affected by density.

In all, the data paint a broad picture of how transgender rights groups have managed to form and survive in the face of substantial barriers. Some factors highlighted by extant theories of group formation—especially the existence of threats and grievances, extensive interactions between founders and others, the presence of privileged individuals willing and able to incur organizational costs, the cross-movement spread of ideas and skills and passion and awareness, and the legitimation of the organizational form "transgender rights interest group"—appear to have been essential in the rise and proliferation of transgender rights interest groups. Other factors, including the rise of a transgender collective identity, and openings in the political opportunity structure, played less of a role, but were important nonetheless. And still other factors, including government attention to transgender rights and the existence of entrepreneurs willing to start new transgender rights groups for personal gain, appear not to have been important at all.

Definitions and Terms

Before I lay out my plan for the rest of this book, I will take a few moments to define some important and recurring terms.

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Transgender

There are numerous definitions of the term "transgender," but the following definition appears to be widely accepted and is the one I adopt here:

> [Transgender is] [a]n umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms—including *transgender.* (Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation, n.d.)

Most transgender organizations hold that even defining the term "transgender" is somewhat limiting, as many people who view themselves as transgender may not fit a specific definition, and many people who fit a specific definition may not identify as transgender (see, for example, Sylvia Rivera Law Project n.d.). Moreover, there are ongoing debates within the transgender community (and without) about what the term really means. I do not intend to wade into this debate, as my interest here is primarily in organizations representing transgender Americans, no matter how that term is precisely defined.

Transgender Rights Interest Group

I define a transgender rights interest group as "an interest group whose primary political purpose is to advocate on behalf of transgender people." My definition excludes groups that advocate for transgender rights but have other concerns as well, including broad-based gay and/or lesbian and/or bisexual rights groups such as HRC, the National LGBTQ Task Force, and PFLAG. It also excludes broad-based civil liberties and civil rights groups such as the ACLU that work on transgender rights issues in addition to other issues, as well as organizations such as business firms, churches, charities, labor unions, and religious groups, that periodically weigh in on transgender rights issues. In short, I assume here that stand-alone, autonomous, transgender-focused organizations are integral parts of the larger transgender movement for equality.

My definition encompasses only groups that engage in *political activity*, which I define as "any attempt to influence government policy on transgender rights." I define political activity very broadly to include direct lobbying

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efforts (such as meeting with government officials), indirect lobbying efforts (for example, mounting grassroots lobbying activities or engaging in public protests or demonstrations), electoral lobbying efforts (such as working for or against a candidate for public office), and public education efforts (such as publicizing the effects of an existing or proposed piece of legislation or educating people about the rights or lack thereof of transgender people). I do not limit myself to the study of groups that are primarily or even substantially political. Thus, some of the organizations I study here are/were primarily political, such as It's Time America, GenderPAC, and the National Center for Transgender Equality. But others, such as the pioneering organizations Erickson Educational Foundation and Tri-Ess, are/were *not* primarily political, but rather exist(ed) primarily to do nonpolitical things but do/did politics "on the side." In fact, some of the groups I study here, including the relatively early groups Tri-Ess and Renaissance Transgender, deny publically that they are political. But since I adopt a broad definition of political activity, I consider groups like these political groups even though, clearly, they exist for nonpolitical purposes and engage in very low levels of political activity.

Finally, my definition includes groups that operate anywhere in the United States. I will have more to say about this later, but for now it will suffice to say that to be included in this study, a group need not be national in scope.

Transgender Rights Social Movement

Third, there is the term "transgender rights social movement." Defining this term is not easy, because there are numerous widely used definitions of the term "social movement" (Della Porta and Diani 2016, ch. 1). Here, I adopt the following definition of social movement: a "set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action" (Batliwala 2012, 3). I adopt this definition for two primary reasons. First, it is concise and parsimonious. Second, it encompasses aspects of other, more complicated definitions.

As this definition makes clear, a social movement is not just *one thing*, but rather is a set of many things. I assume here that among these many things are interest groups—formal organizations that work on behalf of movement goals. It is fair to say that many scholars are not exactly sure where interest groups fit into social movements, and do not share the view that interest groups are constituent parts of social movements (Smith 2014, xix-xx; Tarrow 2011, 9).

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Nonetheless, within political science and increasingly within sociology, interest groups are generally considered participants in these broader things called social movements (Skocpol 2004, 135; Soule 2013, 108).

Based on this understanding of social movement, I define the transgender rights social movement as "the set of constituents pursuing a common interest in affecting policy on transgender rights in the United States." I assume that the transgender rights social movement comprises a large variety of movement actors, among them transgender rights interest groups. I do not assume, however, that transgender rights interest groups *are* the transgender rights social movement or even that they comprise the most important parts of this movement.

Interest-Group Formation

Finally, there is the term "interest-group formation." While the generic term seems straightforward, it is not. First of all, it means different things for different types of groups. For business firms, charities, churches, and other types of organizations that are formed for nonpolitical purposes, forming as an interest group means becoming "politically active"; it does not mean "coming into existence." In contrast, for an organization that is formed partially or fully for political purposes, forming as an interest group simply means coming into existence. Most, though certainly not all, of the organizations I write about in this book formed at least partially for political reasons, and thus "formed" as interest groups when they came into existence. But there is the occasional group that started as something other than an interest group (a support group, for example) and then became an interest group later.

The second reason that defining interest-group formation is not straightforward is that there is a fine line between group formation and group maintenance, and discerning the former from the latter is difficult if not impossible. Here, I define interest-group formation as "the process by which a group comes into existence." My definition assumes that the *process* here is successful. To say that a group has come into existence is to say that it has obtained at least several of the trappings of an extant and continuing organization, such as a budget, a professional website, a staff, a board of directors, an organizational chart, recognition from some governmental body (for tax purposes, for example), sufficient resources to disseminate information to the public or the media or the government (via, for example, newsletters or press releases or brochures), media recognition, a physical location, or a lobbying presence.

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Outline of the Book

In chapter 2, I trace the history and development of transgender rights interest groups in the United States. I also address a number of questions that inform the analyses that follow: Which specific people and organizations have been and are at the forefront of transgender organizational advocacy? How has the universe of transgender rights interest groups in the United States evolved over time?

In chapter 3, I begin to address the primary question at hand: How did transgender rights interest groups manage to form and survive in the face of substantial barriers to group formation? I bring the qualitative data to bear on this question and demonstrate that threats and grievances played a vital role in the formation of transgender rights groups. From here, I explain how these threats and grievances led to interactions between transgender rights group founders and transgender people (and allies), and eventually spurred group formation.

In chapter 4, I continue my analysis of group formation by presenting data showing that interactions, some of which occurred in non-transgender rights groups and movements, led to learning by group founders—learning that convinced founders there was a need for new transgender rights groups, inspired them to become activists, and even taught them some of the "nuts and bolts" of group formation.

In chapter 5, I delve into the actual processes by which transgender rights interest-group founders got their groups off the ground and made them going concerns. The data in this chapter show that contrary to many rational choice treatments, group formation is largely an individual or small-group exercise; it does not take members or large numbers of supporters or patrons. It also shows that group formation is not particularly costly. It does, however, take skilled people with some resources—both human and financial—at their disposal.

In chapter 6, I examine the social and political context of group formation. In this chapter, I seek to discern the role of the larger political and social context in which transgender rights groups and activists operate in group formation. While I uncover some evidence that political factors contributed to the formation of some new groups, I also find that such factors were not particularly important for most groups. One feature of the environment in which transgender rights groups operate, however, is crucially important in group formation—other transgender rights groups. The quantitative data confirm that the development of the transgender rights

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interest-group population displays density dependence in the founding rate, just as many population ecology studies would predict.

In chapter 7, I examine the role of collective identity in transgender rights interest-group formation. I find that while collective identity did in some sense contribute to group formation, it also caused problems within the larger transgender movement. It also led to the formation of several "niche groups."

Finally, in chapter 8, I attempt to wrap things up by summarizing my major findings and attempting to answer the questions I pose at the beginning of this chapter. I also comment on the generalizability of my findings.

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