ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	IN THE NAME OF CULTURE: THE POLITICS OF CELEBRATION IN THE MULTICULTURAL CIVIL SPHERE
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A common barrier to the civic integration of immigrant and minority groups is the suite of symbolic classifications that structure everyday relations in diverse societies and set standards for inclusion and exclusion in shared public spaces. Although the regulatory norms governing the civil sphere are increasingly understood to be constituent elements of social power, they are not frequently seen as targets of collective action. As they are held in private attitudes and expressed spontaneously in everyday conduct, these forms of symbolic power do not easily lend themselves to political solutions. What form might a contestation of symbolic exclusion take?

This dissertation examines the strategy of *celebratory civics* pursued through an annual series of 23 free public cultural festivals organized throughout the year by ethnic community organizations in partnership with the city of Seattle. Participating groups describe the dominant civil sphere as a place where opportunities for public deliberation

about ethnic minority issues are scarce and ineffective, while confrontational protests antagonize potential allies and produce negative associations with minority cultural groups. They are skeptical that traditional civic action targeting policymakers is adequate to addressing discriminatory practices where they are most intimately felt, in the everyday conduct of social life in diverse societies. Through positive emotional appeals directed towards unfamiliar audiences unlikely to engage with them in everyday life, festivals aim to establish "common ground" on which to displace ethnic and racial stereotypes and make viable alternative ways of affirming civic belonging.

Based on interviews with ethnic community organizations, their municipal sponsors, and festival visitors, surveys demonstrating the audience profile and expectations for the event, and a year of ethnographic observation at planning meetings and public festivals, this dissertation explores the promise and limitations of a form of civic engagement that takes up positive emotions as both a tactic and the target of its efforts. I demonstrate that this style of collective action seeks to supply members of the dominant culture with the familiarity required not to see ethnic identity as a threat or a curiosity, such that ethnic minorities can feel comfortable conducting themselves in public spaces on other days of the year. This desire defines a multicultural civil sphere that cannot be secured through rights alone, but only through the erasure of symbolic boundaries preventing the viability of diverse cultural practices and different ways of asserting belonging in public space.

IN THE NAME OF CULTURE:

THE POLITICS OF CELEBRATION IN THE MULTICULTURAL CIVIL SPHERE

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Advisory Committee:
  Professor Dana R. Fisher, Chair
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Dedication

To Filiz,

My co-worker in the kingdom of culture

Acknowledgements

Dissertations are only *typed* alone; they are composed by (and of) the work of many. I owe a great debt of gratitude to a great number of people. Acknowledging them here can only serve as a start.

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Rashawn Ray provided me great support, both as a mentor and committee member and in his work with the Critical Race Initiative. He continued to encourage my research even as its findings took me in unanticipated directions, provided me with a platform to workshop drafts, met with me to discuss findings, and pushed me forward at times of flagging confidence. On top of this dissertation assistance, he found me a home in the MLAW department when my funding in Sociology was in doubt. I do not know what I would have done without him and wish to thank him deeply that I did not have to.

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Fieldwork is always populated with innumerable contributors. I am immensely grateful to my respondents, without whose willing permission and active participation this dissertation could not have been written. Steve Sneed at Seattle Center Productions was my Virgil through the layers of Festál and proved extraordinarily generous with his time. There were no problems of access that he was unwilling to help me overcome, and his appreciation of my sometimes critical stance towards the program did much to influence my analyses. I am also grateful to the many festival organizers who provided me with information—sometimes unsolicited—about the internal workings of their committees. Yutaka and Tazue Sasaki, JP Paredes, and Jeanene Mitchell, in particular, were eager to provide me with anything necessary to improve the project. Thanks are also in order for the undergraduate research assistants who helped me collect survey data in the field: Alma Akras, Jose Garcia, Cheryl Keeney, Mark Lee, Lindsey Trimmer, Aya Yousef, and Juyoung Yun.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Pictures

Chapter 1: Introduction

"They say that people are going to forget about anything that you say, but people are not going to forget about how you make them feel." Proverbial wisdom can have many authors, but this time it is relayed to me by Javad[1], an Iranian software developer finishing his first year working for Microsoft.[2] Javad is like a lot of recent immigrants to Seattle—young, highly educated, and employed in the city's booming technology sector. He's part of a new wave of foreign-born residents that is changing the culture and complexion of a fast-growing city whose publicly cosmopolitan ambitions have long belied its predominantly white population.

Javad attended the Seattle Iranian Festival at Seattle Center in part to celebrate his cultural heritage with fellow expatriates, listening to traditional Persian music and chatting with friends in Farsi while dining on food from back home. But he is adamant that his enjoyment of the festival is a secondary matter. "The main purpose is not just having fun," he tells me, noting that the Seattle Art Museum, just down the street, is open year-round for the aesthetically minded. "I think the goal should be to introduce Iranian culture to someone who doesn't know about it." This objective, he says, is best met through heeding the adage above, avoiding explanatory workshops or weighty

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[1] Because respondents were recruited from among public celebrations and interviews did not discuss sensitive issues, the omission of their last names is sufficient to protect their anonymity. Data collection for all stages of this project was conducted in accordance with University of Maryland policies on the research on Human Subjects (IRB Protocol No. 584403-1). See Chapter 2 for full methodology.

[2] In various forms, this quotation has been attributed to figures as diverse as a general authority for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Carl W. Buehner, and the late American poet Maya Angelou.

discussions that touch on divisive religious or political differences. For Javad, a festival is about creating and sharing positive feelings, feelings that may carry over beyond the event itself: "The whole time, you just see people laughing about something—people are going to remember that and think about it later."

Ethnic community organizations, sponsoring city departments, and festival visitors alike ascribe a civic purpose to these public celebrations that makes them more than "just a party." The annual series of 23 free downtown festivals, each showcasing a different ethnic culture within Seattle's rapidly diversifying population, advances several objectives important to the civic integration of minority groups, such as facilitating intercultural contact in the segregated city, dispelling racial and ethnic stereotypes, and affirming their sense of belonging in public. However, these resolutely upbeat, participatory, and widely accessible events pursue these civic goals in an unlikely manner, through positive emotional appeals directed towards unfamiliar audiences unlikely to engage with them in everyday life. Participating groups describe the dominant civil sphere as a place where opportunities for public deliberation about ethnic minority issues are scarce and ineffective, while confrontational protests antagonize potential allies and produce negative associations with minority cultural groups. They are skeptical that traditional civic action targeting policymakers is adequate to addressing discriminatory practices where they are most intimately felt, in the everyday conduct of social life in diverse societies.

Cultural festivals thus differ in important ways from other forms of civic engagement, however they still raise questions fundamental to the study of all collective civic action: *What are the objectives sought by participating groups? What tactics do*

they employ and to whom are they addressed? And why is theirs a collective problem

requiring a collective remedy? Questions like these are seldom conceived so

schematically by the parties involved. But in speaking with festival organizers and their

municipal sponsors, attending planning meetings and scope sessions, analyzing the

profile and expectations of audience members, and observing conduct and interactions

among participants at the festivals themselves, this dissertation reveals a distinct

constellation of targets, tactics, and *telos* of civic engagement that is not easily captured

by dominant models of civic action that assume social grievances can only be addressed

when articulated as political claims (Baiocchi et al. 2014; Lichterman and Eliasoph

2014), and that the state is the *sine qua non* guarantor of social change (Tarrow 1994,

McAdam et al 2001; Tilly 2008). If the participants in the Festál program are not

pursuing political change, what kind of social change do they seek? And why would

public celebrations help to achieve these goals?

This dissertation examines a strategy of civic engagement that I call *celebratory*

civics, in which positive emotions are mobilized in pursuit of social change. In this

introductory chapter, I examine three distinctive features of celebratory civics that define

it as a unique "scene style" of civic action (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014) suited to the

specific social problems that motivate participants in the festival series. I argue that by

targeting private attitudes rather than public policies, by making positive emotional

appeals rather than direct discussions of the problem, and by engaging its audience as

members of a shared community rather than as political actors, participants in the Festál

program seek to produce a change in the social norms that set symbolic boundaries to

civic integration. Celebratory civics thus uses public performances of ethnic culture as a

basis for asserting belonging within a civil sphere in which such expressions of cultural difference are frequently used as criteria for exclusion (Alexander 2001; Amin 2002; Voyer 2013; Schachter 2016). After situating this strategy of civic outreach within the sociology of civic action, I describe three research questions that this dissertation answers through an empirical analysis of the Festál program and provide an overview of the chapters to follow.

1.1 Symbolic Exclusion, Solidarity, and the Civil Sphere

First, the approach to civic integration I am calling celebratory civics begins from the recognition that full membership and participation in the public realm cannot be guaranteed by formal rights, nor instituted through the right kinds of social policy alone.[3] The civil sphere is also organized *symbolically* by widely shared norms, moral commitments, and mutual expectations regarding who belongs and how to behave in public (Alexander 2006). It is this foundational focus on symbolic boundaries operating through cultural processes of affiliation and disaffiliation that distinguishes Alexander's conception of a civil *sphere* from the more familiar term civil *society* (Tocqueville 1835/2004; Habermas 1984, 1987, 1989; Cohen and Arato 1992; Putnam 1993, 2000; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014).

The civil sphere, as Alexander (2006) defines it, shares many characteristics with civil society, including similar boundary relations with other realms of social relations (including autonomy from the principles regulating conduct in the market and in the

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[3] Needless to say, the political dimension of inclusion is critical to the civic membership of minority groups, as are the social movements that pressure states to enact them. Indeed, and as will be discussed in depth in Chapters 3 and 5, as Festál is organized as a partnership between the Seattle municipality and local ethnic minority organizations, the festival series is itself, quite literally, public policy.

political field) and in the types of actors engaged in such work (such as voluntary associations, nongovernmental organizations, or social movements). The distinction lies with the principles of their internal organization. Cohen and Arato (1992:x) refer to civil society as "the structures of socialization, association, and organized forms of communication of the lifeworld to the extent that these are institutionalized or are in the process of being institutionalized." In other words, *civil society* represents a subset of the broader realm of meaningful social actions that make up the space of everyday culture, defined by the process of institutionalization. For Cohen and Arato, what qualifies social relations as institutionalized—and therefore *civil*—is their formal organization and regulation; unlike the more "spontaneous" forms of interaction governed through social conventions, institutionalized social relationships are "stabilized by fundamental rights" that are "linked to legal principles rather than normative rules" (Ibid.:440).

According to this view, an individual's status as an equal member of civil society is granted formally and backed by the force of law. Civil society becomes increasingly "modernized" insofar as social relations continue to move from the conventionally-regulated lifeworld to the institutionalized realm of civil society, where one's civil standing can be legally safeguarded regardless of personal characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion (Cohen and Arato 1992; Habermas 1984, 1987, 1989). Civil membership is guaranteed through citizenship and the social arenas in which citizens can interact as equals is extended through the expansion of "fundamental rights" (Emirbayer and Sheller 1999:152).

For Alexander (2006), by contrast, civil relations occur within a broader *sphere* of social life defined not only by formal status, but through the extension of fellow feeling

and recognition among members. As opposed to the legally regulated civil society, the civil sphere is "organized around a particular kind of solidarity, one whose members are symbolically represented as independent and self-motivating persons individually responsible for their actions, yet also as actors who feel themselves, at the same time, bound by collective obligations to all the other individuals who compose this sphere" (Alexander 2001:239). Relations within the civil sphere depend upon a form of mutual identification among members, wherein one recognizes duties to another based upon an understanding of the other as similar to oneself. Alexander's emphasis on the subjective *feelings* of civic actors underscores the degree to which this civic identification is extended or denied through sympathy, irrespective of the legally guaranteed status of the person.

Alexander's approach draws heavily upon Durkheim's (1893/1984:24) conviction that "social solidarity is a wholly moral phenomenon" for which the law is merely its most "visible symbol"—a proxy that may be especially amenable to sociological observation and measurement, but one that is not synonymous with the social norms underlying it. According to this neo-Durkheimian understanding of "the civil" as a realm of social solidarity, what is at stake in the civil sphere is, first and foremost, *membership*. Unlike in the institutionalized realm of civil society (Cohen and Arato 1992), where membership is a formal status granted as citizenship and secured through rights, belonging within the symbolic boundaries of the civil sphere cannot be practically guaranteed through the force of law. Exclusions from the civil sphere can be effectuated through discriminatory treatment in routine practices that are difficult to regulate legally (Doan et al. 2014; Doan et al. 2015; Schachter 2016). As scholars of symbolic interaction

and social psychology have long known, the contours of symbolic boundaries are forged

through everyday interactions, making lines of inclusion and exclusion publicly visible

and cognitively available (Goffman 1963; Ridgeway et al. 2009; Ridgeway 2014). Such

symbolic classifications become especially salient during periods of demographic change,

depressing overall levels of civic engagement as dominant groups "hunker down"

(Putnam 2007:149) and exhibit lower levels of social trust (Hopkins 2010; Uslaner 2011;

van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Craig and Richeson 2014; Abascal and Baldassari 2015).

Recognizing symbolic classifications as barriers to civic integration also suggests

that culture is more than simply a staging ground for civic groups to forge collective

identities and mobilize actions targeting the political sphere—as it is frequently

understood by many scholars of social movements (Williams 1995; Staggenborg 2001;

Polletta 2008; Taylor et al. 2009) —but is in itself constitutive of social power and thus a

critical site for engaged civic action (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Ebert and Okamoto

2013; Bruce 2013). Symbolic power may be articulated in multiple institutions, but

because the symbolic classifications that structure everyday relations in diverse societies

are also held in private attitudes and expressed spontaneously in everyday conduct, they

do not easily lend themselves to political solutions.[4]

Conceptualizing the civil sphere as an arena structured by feelings of solidarity,

recognition, and mutual obligation is not to view the structural and institutional

guarantees enshrined in citizenship and rights as unimportant. On the contrary, such legal

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[4] It is because of the diffuse and unorganized nature of everyday, regulatory public conduct that Armstrong
and Bernstein's (2008) "multi-institutional politics approach" to social movements, while convincing in its
critique of the political-process model's singular focus on the state, does not offer a complete account of
why or how civil society actors seek to enact change. Culture is institutionalized in many important ways,
but it is also embedded in—and enacted through—spontaneous social practices for which their model does
not account. See Chapter 4.

safeguards are necessary for the maintenance of a functioning civil sphere. However, they are not sufficient (Schachter 2016). The ability of marginalized groups to participate equally in common life is conditioned not only by "formal rights" granted to all citizens but the "informal privileges" that are accorded or denied in regulatory public conduct (Doan et al. 2014; Doan et al. 2015). This non-institutional aspect of the civil sphere means that it is not only the source of civic action, but also a target. Civic action may take the form of organized efforts by citizens and institutions to pressure the state through mass mobilization, voting, or influence campaigns. But it can also be engaged in the work of its own constitution. In other words, members of the civil sphere are in the business of self-production, establishing the bonds of solidarity as well as the boundaries of belonging that allow individuals to come to think of themselves and their neighbors as participants in the common project of mutual governance.

By celebrating culture in a prominent public venue, festivals aim to attract a broad audience, including members of dominant groups who may be unfamiliar with or are suspicious of the ethnic minority community staging the event.[5] Celebratory civics thus pushes for social change by making culture itself the target of its efforts, using the festivals to attempt a reshaping of the associations and conceptions that prevail in dominant cultural understandings of racial and ethnic minority groups, a process of redrawing symbolic boundaries that Wimmer (2008:1037) has called "transvaluation."

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[5] As is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, the location of the festivals in the downtown arts and entertainment plaza Seattle Center—home to the Space Needle and one of the city's premier civic venues—is seen by festival organizers as one of the program's greatest assets. According to my survey data, 21.2% of 773 visitors across five festivals happened upon the event by chance while at Seattle Center for another reason. For complete survey results and analysis, see Chapters 2 and 3.

A second distinctive quality of celebratory civics as a form of civic engagement is the centrality of emotions. The expansion of solidarity within the civil sphere requires the extension of emotional identification beyond the formal inclusion of individuals from denigrated groups. It also requires the integration of their distinct cultural characteristics into a pluralistic, multicultural civil sphere. Multiculturalism thus demands more of an emotional commitment from citizens than what is expected from classically liberal civic virtues such as toleration. According to Dewey (1954:50-51), "toleration in matters of judgment and belief is largely a negative matter. We agree to leave one another alone (within limits) more from recognition of evil consequences which have resulted from the opposite course rather than from any profound belief in its positive social beneficence." Brown (2006) has described the civic mandate of toleration as "regulating aversion," or the duty to forbear another's liberty, distasteful as it may be, with the expectation that such toleration will be reciprocated. One's personal judgments as to the virtues of any specific difference are therefore immaterial; toleration is a negative duty *not* to impinge upon values and expressions that do not violate personal freedoms. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, promises a different civic bargain: in fulfillment of the "positive duty" not just to endure, but to value and celebrate cultural differences (Ahmed 2010; Taguieff 2001), we all can share in the tangible collective benefits associated with diversity (Ivancevich and Gilbert 2000; Herring 2009).

Whereas toleration emphasizes civic *dis*engagement on questions of moral or cultural differences ("we agree to leave one another alone"), multiculturalism proposes a civic duty *to* engage across cultural lines, and to value difference *as such* (Taguieff

2001:26; Ahmed 2004:133). This shift in civic responsibilities from negative to positive duties is mirrored in the emotional valuation required of citizens under multiculturalism. As Modood (2013:38) has argued, "the appropriate sociological starting point [of multiculturalism] is that of negative difference," or the "stigmatic differentiating from others" (Ibid:33). Understanding and diagnosing the ways in which stigmatized cultural differences lead to durable forms of social inequalities leads to a "politics consist[ing] in seeking to turn the negative into a positive, not the erasure of difference but its transformation into something for which civic respect can be won" (Ibid:38). Thus, multiculturalism presents a civic narrative of recuperation and redemption that requires a change in the private emotional attitudes of dominant cultural groups towards difference.

This emotional component of multiculturalism as a "moral project" (Kivisto 2012:4) suggests a new normative orientation among citizens that cannot be expected to fall into place through demographic diversification alone (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005). Such transformations must arise through civic action. The strategy for achieving civic integration that Javad intuits at the beginning of this chapter—have them *feel* first so that they can *think* later—departs from the deliberative models of civil society and the public sphere (Habermas 1984, 1987, 1989; Cohen and Arato 1992), but enjoys an increasingly strong foundation in recent findings from the sociology of culture and cognition. Emotional processes guided human evolution in its early period of social development, and to this day "unconscious emotional thoughts…precede and strongly influence our rational decisions" (Massey 2002:25). As such they are not extraneous to reasoning, but integral to it (Tomasello 1999, Damasio 2003). Emotions have been called "the 'glue' of solidarity" (Collins 2004:103) but can also function as "a medium of social power"

(Moon 2013:261). Social psychologists have studied the role of emotions in governing implicit biases, positive or negative feelings towards social groups that are harbored unconsciously and are activated in routine interactions across lines of group difference (Fazio and Olson 2003; Staats et al. 2015). Because implicit attitudes are formed through "automatic emotional reactions" and can evade reflexive attention, they are more difficult to regulate through cognitive processes than are explicit attitudes (Rudman 2004:80). However, implicit biases that are manifest in stereotypes and racial prejudice have been shown to be "malleable" in response to positive emotional appeals (Rudman et al. 2001; Blair 2002; Craig et al. 2014; Kubato and Ito 2014).

Despite the recent explosion of research on the role of emotions in producing social change, the overwhelming emphasis in the literature on civic action has been on negative emotions, such as anger (Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Gould 2009; Ng and Kidder 2012; Woods et al. 2012; Benski and Langman 2013; Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013; Jasper 2014), fear (Bail 2012), disgust (Seidman 2012; Moon 2013), or shame (Schrock et al. 2004). Negative emotions can signal political urgency, mobilize supporters, and pressure policymakers to enact change, but recent research has indicated that disruptive and inflammatory messaging can also inhibit the wider population's "feelings of identification" with the movement (Feinberg et al. 2017). Positive emotions, on the other hand, are typically studied among scholars of collective action for their role *within* movement groups—sustaining participation (Gould 2009:196; Effler 2010), empowering group members (Eliasoph 2016), or providing "satisfactions along the way" to achieving movement goals (Jasper 2011:297). To the extent that positive feelings are incorporated into movement tactics, they are combined with traditionally contentious

protest emotions (Sampson et al. 2005; Browne 2007; St. John 2008; Bruce 2013; Galli 2016). They have yet to be studied as the *target* of collective action. Cultural festivals aim to do precisely that, extending goodwill and uplift, while enlisting audience participation in entertaining activities. Celebratory civics thus uses the public performance of positive emotions in order to produce feelings of identification and solidarity in the emotional attitudes of their audience.

1.3 Civic Action without Politics

A third distinctive feature of celebratory civics as a style of civic engagement follows from the second: If much of the everyday cultural practices that classify and stratify groups are motivated by *implicit* cognitive processes, bringing these issues to *explicit* attention may provoke unproductive and defensive reactions in audiences (Kahan et al. 2007; Feinberg et al. 2017). Broadly speaking, the scholarship on how *civil society* actors push for social change examines two different modes of engagement. The deliberative mode imagines civic actors as participants in a broadly accessible conversation working to identify and resolve common social and political problems (Habermas 1989, Eliasoph 1996; Ferree et al. 2002a; Perrin 2005; Perrin and Vaisey 2008). A second mode focuses on social movements or civic institutions—groups of citizens motivated by a shared grievance or a common vision for the future—who work collaboratively to shape an agenda for civic action (Tarrow 1994; McAdam et al. 2001; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Baldassari and Diani 2007; Tilly 2008; Bail 2012). Despite differences in the scope of action and the style of engagement, these two modes of civic action rest upon a set of shared assumptions about the fundamentally political

nature of change efforts suited to the institutional structure of social relations in civil

society: that the nature of the problem is made explicit, that it is articulated in the form of

a claim bearing on the interests of others, and that change is effectuated through

pressuring a decision-making authority to announce a resolution. In other words, barriers

to social change within a civil society organized by legal status are fundamentally

political in nature, and therefore must become subjects of *address*, their resolution

implies a competition among incommensurate *interests*, and change is announced by

arriving at a *decision*.

However, as argued above, the symbolic barriers of the civil sphere are

constructed upon the moral foundations for solidarity, which is extended or denied

through feelings of mutual identification (Alexander 2006; Modood 2013; Schachter

2016), deep cultural codes (Alexander and Smith 1993), and conduct in course of

everyday interaction in diverse social environments (Amin 2002)—attitudes and actions

that are embedded in routine practices that frequently evade political regulation.

Celebratory events like public festivals thus propose an alternative formulation for civic

action, one that resists the acrimony and conflict of speaking or acting in the political

register. Eliasoph (1998) argues that political conversation recedes as the contexts for

speech become more public—a production of apathy that is the unfortunate consequence

of an "official culture of political avoidance" rather than "a strategy aimed at avoiding

disagreement or any other conscious goal" (1998:38, 47). Public festivals also avoid

politics, but, unlike how Eliasoph describes, they do so purposefully. Festivals are not so

much *a*political as they are *anti*political, identifying controversy not only as a buzzkill

out of place at a public celebration, but as a serious threat to the civic purpose of the

events—a purpose that, by design, is never named out loud.[6] Their putative purpose is to entertain, but through this entertainment festival organizers also intend to displace possible misconceptions held by the mainstream culture and to model a different foundation for social relations that extend across ethnic lines. Through engaging in cultural activities together with the broader public, they shift engagement away from the discursive register, in which people relate as participants in an abstract political space of potentially competing interests, to a more affective register in which people interact as members of a shared local community. Whereas political debates or public demonstrations address their audience as citizens in civil society, through celebratory civics festivals engage them as neighbors in the civil sphere.

In short, celebratory civics is an understudied form of civic engagement that takes aim at social norms, rather than public policies or political rights; makes its appeal through positive emotions, not through rational discourse or heated demonstrations; and addresses its audience not as deliberating citizens, but affectively as neighbors. Ethnic community organizations describe symbolic barriers such as prejudice and unfamiliarity as placing palpable limits on their full civic integration in increasingly diverse, but stubbornly segregated societies.[7] Because this form of social control is so often experienced in routine encounters across lines of ethnic difference (Amin 2002), an individual's outward expression of ethnicity can prompt unwanted public attention or censure, and place burdens of self-explanation on persons unrecognized in mainstream

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[6] Festivals' eligibility for public funding requires that they do not advocate for particular public policies or political candidates. However, the ethnic community organizations involved in arranging festival content extend this regulation beyond its legal intent to include the avoidance of any controversy likely to upset members of their audience. On how this strategy of political avoidance advances some civic goals while also reproducing many ambivalences associated with the diversity discourse (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Bonilla-Silva 2009; Anthias 2013), see Chapter 5.

[7] The specific social topography of Seattle will be examined in Chapter 3.

culture (Ahmed 2000; Butler 2005). As Puwar (2004:50) notes, ethnic minorities have an "amplified presence" in public space, especially in consecrated places of civic importance (see also Shams 2017). The undue negative attention directed at individuals for their perceived group characteristics presents a classic condition for collective action, and festivals provide the opportunity for people experiencing similar problems to gather force through assembling and representing themselves as a group in the civil sphere.

1.4 Research Questions

Having explored the basic contours of celebratory civics as a distinct method of civic engagement suited to the affective register of action in the multicultural civil sphere, I can now put a finer point on the research questions asked and answered in this dissertation. After entertaining the fundamental questions of collective action in the pages above (*Who is involved, what do they want, and how do they propose to get there?*) and describing the solidary structure of membership in the civil sphere, I take for granted that public cultural festivals are both celebratory in nature and civic-minded in purpose. From this starting point, the dissertation asks:

R1) What role can cultural festivals play in achieving civic integration for ethnic and immigrant minority groups?

Recent sociological research on civic action among immigrants focuses primarily on how participation in voluntary associations helps immigrant groups to achieve "greater visibility and influence in politics" (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008:3), "communicat[e] their growing economic and political importance" (Brettell and Reed-

Danahay 2011:164), and adopt the civic norms that prevail in American civil society (Ramakrishnan and Viramontes 2006; Bloemraad 2006; Apteker 2015). This focus on building the capacity of immigrants to act as citizens in the political sphere is a critical part to achieving equality in civil society, but full membership within the multicultural civil sphere also requires "symbolic acceptance" of immigrant and ethnic minorities among society's dominant groups (Schachter 2016:985). That is, while the strengthening of immigrants' civic aptitude is important, changes in public attitudes towards cultural differences are also necessary to achieving civic integration (Ebert and Okamoto 2013).

Difficulties in transforming the public perception of minority groups become compounded as symbolic boundaries calcify into spatial boundaries, and majority groups self-segregate into homogeneous communities with few opportunities for intercultural interaction in everyday life (Crowder and South 2008; Crowder, Hall, and Tolnay 2011; Hall and Crowder 2014). A lack of shared space has been shown to produce intergroup biases (Enos 2017; Enos and Celaya, forthcoming), reduce levels of civic engagement (Putnam 2007; Rothwell 2012), and decrease overall levels of social trust (Uslaner 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014)—effects that are particularly pronounced among established white residents (Abascal and Baldassari 2015).

I show that cultural festivals provide immigrant and ethnic minority communities with a crucial civic resource—publicity—with which they can command the general public's attention for a participatory performance of cultural practices that may be unfamiliar or misunderstood by the broader population (Emirbayer and Sheller 1999). By assembling diverse crowds in the name of culture, these celebrations allow for public self-definition and the assertion of a claim to civic belonging based upon this identity

(Chapter 4). Furthermore, I demonstrate that by holding the events in a prominent public venue that attracts visitors for a number of different activities, festivals are able to engage an audience that is unlikely to seek out intercultural encounters in their normal activities in the segregated city (Chapter 3). Festivals can thus function both as a public reaffirmation of the civic value of diversity and as an introduction to ethnic minority groups to members of the dominant community who are most unfamiliar with them.

R2) How does the performance of positive emotions help to achieve civic goals?

Positive emotions such as goodwill, cheer, and enthusiasm have been shown to be important tools for sustaining the internal cohesion of civil society organizations (Gould 2009:196; Effler 2010; Jasper 2011; Eliasoph 2016), but their purpose and success in achieving civic goals have not been studied empirically. I show that positive emotions are expressed as a means of creating an atmosphere where members of the dominant community can feel comfortable engaging in cultural practices with which they may be unfamiliar or suspicious (Chapter 3). By inviting the participation of out-groups in entertaining activities alongside members of minority groups, the positive emotional outreach strategy of celebratory civics enlists audience members in a direct, experiential relationship with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

This experiential emphasis of Festál program participants signals the intentional targeting of emotional associations members of the dominant communitty may feel towards immigrants and ethnic minorities. These civic groups thus aim to displace stereotypes that are cognitively salient in routine interactions across lines of difference with direct, positive experiences with minority cultural practices (Rudman et al. 2001;

Blair 2002; Craig et al. 2014; Kubata and Ito 2014). I show that over the course of staging public festivals, organizers learn to attract and sustain their audience's participation through performances that emphasize entertainment, positivity, and interaction. Rather than address the issues of prejudice or stereotypes directly, which could bring down the mood of the festival and alienate the target audience (Kahan et al. 2007; Feinberg et al 2017), ethnic civic organizations promote a civic pedagogy of learning through feeling (Chapter 4).

R3) Why do participants in celebratory civic events avoid controversial subjects?

An important criticism of the dominant conceptions of multiculturalism and diversity is that issues of political and material concern cannot be articulated in what amounts to a civic discourse of "happy talk" (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Burke 2011; Ahmed 2012). This dissertation finds evidence to support this claim, as the strategy of celebratory civics adopted by festival organizers entails the active avoidance of controversial subjects and a reticence to draw attention to problems faced within ethnic communities. Municipal sponsors and community organizations believe that a focus on these problems will distract from the civic purpose of the festivals to achieve civic belonging through the de-stigmatization of cultural differences. At the same time, however, festival organizers also seek to avoid conflict within their communities that could potentially divide the group, derail the civic initiative, or distract from the message of unity promoted at the events.

These findings hint at a possible conflict between achieving symbolic and material goals, and at an intractable ambivalence in multiculturalism as a civic project.

However, they also show how civic groups who pursue celebratory civics weigh these trade-offs when choosing a method of civic engagement, and find the positive emotional resonance of the diversity discourse as a useful resource for deconstructing symbolic barriers and achieving civic integration (Chapter 5). It is these three research questions that focus the discussion throughout this dissertation and provide a framework for the analysis of my findings.

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2, *Seattle's Multicultural Civil Sphere: Case, Data, and Method* explores the Festál series of cultural festivals in depth, describing its origin and development over the years in concert with civic organizations representing minority ethnic groups in and around Seattle. The motivations initiating the festival series, as well as the rules of conduct governing it, demonstrate the shape of multicultural civic engagement fostered through the festival series. As a rapidly growing city with a rising percentage of foreign-born residents, Seattle represents a model case for understanding the challenges faced by immigrant communities as they attempt to assert their civic belonging. Its aggressively-marketed reputation as a tolerant and progressive city (Lyons 2004; Gibson 2004)—a reputation to which the Festál series is meant to testify—also suggests that the program could serve as a model for public programming in other cities. The level of municipal involvement is noteworthy: not only does the city's partnership with ethnic community organizations provide a compelling example of hybrid governance structures (Chaves et al. 2004; Boyte 2005; Ansell and Gash 2008; Fisher et al. 2015), it also establishes rules and regulations with which each festival must comply.

The city's relationship with participating ethnic organizations is a key element of the types of civic engagement they pursue, as well as the methods with which they undertake them.

This chapter also outlines my methodological approach to studying cultural festivals as a form of civic action in the multicultural civil sphere, the major theoretical contribution made in this dissertation. I describe and justify my selection of five cultural festivals—each representing a different segment of Seattle's minority groups—for closer analysis, and provide descriptive statistics of a sample of 776 visitors to the five events. This audience profile will provide an indication of the draw different events command and supply context for how their civic engagement messages analyzed in the following chapters are received.

In **Chapter 3**, *Establishing Common Ground: Space, Celebration, and Civic Engagement at Ethnic Cultural Festivals*, I examine how municipal officials and ethnic minority community organizations form a civic partnership to facilitate intercultural encounters in the rapidly diversifying, but stubbornly segregated city of Seattle. As a growing body of research demonstrates that increasing racial diversity and growing numbers of foreign-born residents contribute to lower levels of civic engagement and social trust (Putnam 2007; Uslaner 2011; Rothwell 2012; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014), I show how public cultural festivals constitute a "countertrend" (Putnam 2000; Fisher et al. 2015:45) that is successful not only in attracting the participation of different segments of the population, but can lead to other forms of intercultural civic activity.

Here, I introduce the concept of *celebratory civics* as a style of civic engagement that seeks to establish "common ground" for diverse audiences to gather in the names of

culture. I show that the Festál program organizes cultural festivals in a central downtown location in order to provide minority groups the opportunity to present aspects of their culture in a non-threatening way and, through this exposure, to build among the dominant population a base of experience seeing diverse cultural practices in public places. Festival visitors from among Seattle's majority white population describe how geographical distances in a segregated city become social distances that prevent routine intercultural encounters. However, their participation in the events provides a point of entry into cultural communities that can lead to future, and more substantial forms of civic involvement with diverse groups. In this chapter, I also demonstrate through survey data that festivals held in a prominent public venue are successful in attracting an "unsuspecting audience" of visitors who chance upon the event. Engaging members of out-groups in the celebration of ethnic culture can yield civic dividends, as attending festivals is shown to be accompanied by increased likelihood to engage in a number of different measures of civic engagement across lines of difference, including participation in community advocacy.

Chapter 4, *"We're Trying to Change the Wind": Celebration and the Transvaluation of Culture* explores how cultural festivals aim to enact social change through public celebration. Ethnic community organizations, municipal sponsors, and visitors to the events describe the barriers that impede the full civic integration of minority groups not as primarily political or economic, but as symbolic—expressed through everyday conduct by dominant groups that betrays hostility or unfamiliarity with ethnic or racial differences. Absent direct exposure to members of minority groups, dominant communities form judgments of cultural minorities from pervasive stereotypes

reinforced by negative media images. Festival organizers describe the events as rare opportunities for a public self-definition of group identity, offering an alternative image of minority culture at odds with dominant representations. This positive portrayal of cultural practices aims to displace these negative associations through enlisting participants in an experiential, emotionally engaging practice of communal celebration.

This affective approach to civic outreach eschews discursive modes of engagement that seek to solve problems through discussing them explicitly (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2010). I investigate the strategy of celebratory civics in light of findings on emotional reasoning in sociological studies of culture and cognition (Damasio 1994, 2003; Haidt 2001, 2012; Dimaggio 2002; Massey 2002; Vaisey 2009; Cerulo 2010; Martin 2010; Lizardo et al. 2016). I show how festival organizers structure the content of the events to pursue a process of ethnic boundary transvaluation (Wimmer 2008), in which ethnic cultural practices gain civic acceptance through a change to the emotional associations they trigger among dominant groups. Festivals thus promote a civic pedagogy of *learning through feeling*, making emotions both the method and the target of their outreach efforts.

In **Chapter 5**, *Inclusion and Celebration: Politics by Other Means?* I turn to what is left out when civic outreach is pursued through positive emotions. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between the municipal office overseeing the Festál program and participating ethnic community organizations to organize public events nominally committed to an ethic of inclusion. Creating an inclusive environment entails maintaining an attitude of goodwill and cheer, while making cultural practices accessible to people expected not to be familiar with them. I show how Festál officers serve as teachers of

outreach to ethnic community groups, instructing them how to view identity as a resource for entertaining activities that can attract and engage out-group audiences.

This avowed focus on positive emotions and the entertainment of a white audience confirms many of the criticisms of multiculturalism as a facile "happy talk" lacking in the vocabulary to problematize structural imbalances between majority and minority communities (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Bonilla-Silva 2009; Ahmed 2010, 2012; Anthias 2013). However, I also show how participating ethnic communities in many cases extend the prohibition of controversy within the festival space to advance a number of civic goals important to their organizations, from repairing fractures within local ethnic communities, to presenting a united front to an outside audience and enlisting the widest possible audience in the celebration. This chapter demonstrates how the ethic of "inclusion" relies upon strategic exclusions of disagreeable subjects, but that the decision to avoid politics can be a political one.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by synthesizing the arguments made in the foregoing chapters and providing a summary of my empirical findings. I revisit the concepts of celebratory civics and the multicultural civil sphere and discuss how the recognition of cultural practice as central to civic belonging causes us to engage with symbolic processes as fundamentally *civic* issues. Finally, I raise new questions and possible future directions prompted from this research.

Chapter Two: Seattle's Multicultural Civil Sphere: Case, Methodology, and Data

In the previous chapter, I laid out the strategy of *celebratory civics* devised by ethnic community organizations in partnership with the city of Seattle to promote intergroup contact through emphasizing goodwill, celebration, and the sharing of diverse cultural traditions in the public square. This strategy is notable for its embrace of positive emotions as an engine of social change, anticipating that affective outreach can make advances in civil solidarity that rational deliberation has not. But the celebratory civics practiced by the Festál series of cultural festivals is noteworthy for another reason: Not only are its tactics innovative, its explicit endorsement of ethnic and cultural diversity *as the basis for civic engagement* also runs counter to a growing scholarship showing the adverse consequences of increased diversity on a number of metrics measuring the strength of civil society, including social trust (Uslaner 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Abascal and Baldassari 2015), attitudes towards out-groups (Enos and Celaya, forthcoming), and levels of civic engagement (Putnam 2007; Rothwell 2012).

In this chapter, I dig deeper into the local social dynamics of Seattle that make it—and the Festál program of public cultural festivals in particular—an exemplary site for understanding the importance and impact of this nascent form of multicultural civic engagement. As research on civic action has repeatedly shown, context matters for the tactics organizations employ to spread their messages (Fisher et al. 2005). The demographic transition of Seattle over the latter half of the 20th century, coupled with an aggressive campaign to market itself as a progressive "city of goodwill," helps set the table for the emergence of the Festál series of public cultural festivals. At the same time,

as I discuss in detail in the pages to follow, the rapid growth in Seattle's diversity is an amplification of national trends meaning that, while Seattle's historically white-dominant population makes it somewhat exceptional among large U.S. cities,[8] it is not unlike many American communities that are only now beginning to experience an influx of foreign-born populations (see Figure 2.1 below). This legacy is important when considering how local minority communities structure their civic outreach efforts to the broader population.

After explaining the rationale for selecting my site in Seattle, I provide a brief history of the development of the Festál series at Seattle Center—a "hybrid governance structure" (Boyte 2005; Fisher and Svendson 2013) partnering local community organizations with the city of Seattle. I then turn to the study itself with a thorough explanation of my research methodology and a detailed account of my methods of data collection and analysis. This research adds to a growing body of sociological scholarship that uses mixed methods to account for issue complexity and "address different components of the research question" (Khan and Fisher 2014:188; see also Small 2011; Fisher et al 2015). The advantage of using various methods—including qualitative and quantitative approaches—is encouraging the "complementarity" of findings (Small 2011:64), allowing the researcher to "compensate for the weaknesses of one approach with the strengths of another" (Khan and Fisher 2014:188). As I demonstrate below, combining open-ended semi-structured interviews with Seattle Center employees, ethnic community organizations, and festival visitors—alongside ethnographic observations of planning meetings and scope sessions, participant observation among the crowds at

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[8] Even now, after four decades in which over 90% of population growth has come from foreign-born residents, Seattle remains the fifth-whitest among the 50 largest cities in the US (Balk 2014).

festivals, and surveys of visitors at five events—I am able to reveal key findings on how

the events are conceived, how they are executed *in situ*, and how participants reflect upon

their experiences. In addition to explaining the rationale behind my research design and

detailing each stage of fieldwork, this section will also provide a description of how the

qualitative data were coded. I close the section with some considerations of the

limitations of my data, as well as some of its virtues.

2.1 Seattle: "The Center of It All"

In 2016, the largest airline in the United States rolled out a new marketing

campaign to announce Seattle as its gateway to Asia. Shot in the Rem Koolhaas-designed

public library, one of a growing number of signature downtown buildings planned by top

international architects, the advertisement begins with the admission that the Pacific

Northwest is "not where you'd expect to find Delta's newest international hub" before

listing Seattle's virtues as a globally-connected "city with momentum." Flight paths

zoom out of a world map with Seattle "at the center of it all," connecting the Emerald

City via direct flights to Tokyo, Shanghai, and London. A deep-voiced narrator concludes

the spot with the triumphant tagline, "You can't stop Seattle."

Seattle's emergence as a city of global consequence is improbable given its

modest size and humble origins as a logging and fishing town with few extra-regional

ties. Long anomalous among American cities for its overwhelming racial homogeneity,

its population profile also had little to predict a cosmopolitan future. However, the rapid

shift of Seattle's economic fortunes in recent decades has been accompanied by a

demographic transition of equal impact. Whereas in 1950, 94.2% of the city was white,

by 2010 that figure had dropped to 69.5%. Most of this growth in racial and ethnic

minority populations—indeed, most of Seattle's overall population growth during this

period—has come from the immigration of foreign-born residents (See Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Growth of foreign-born population in Seattle and the US
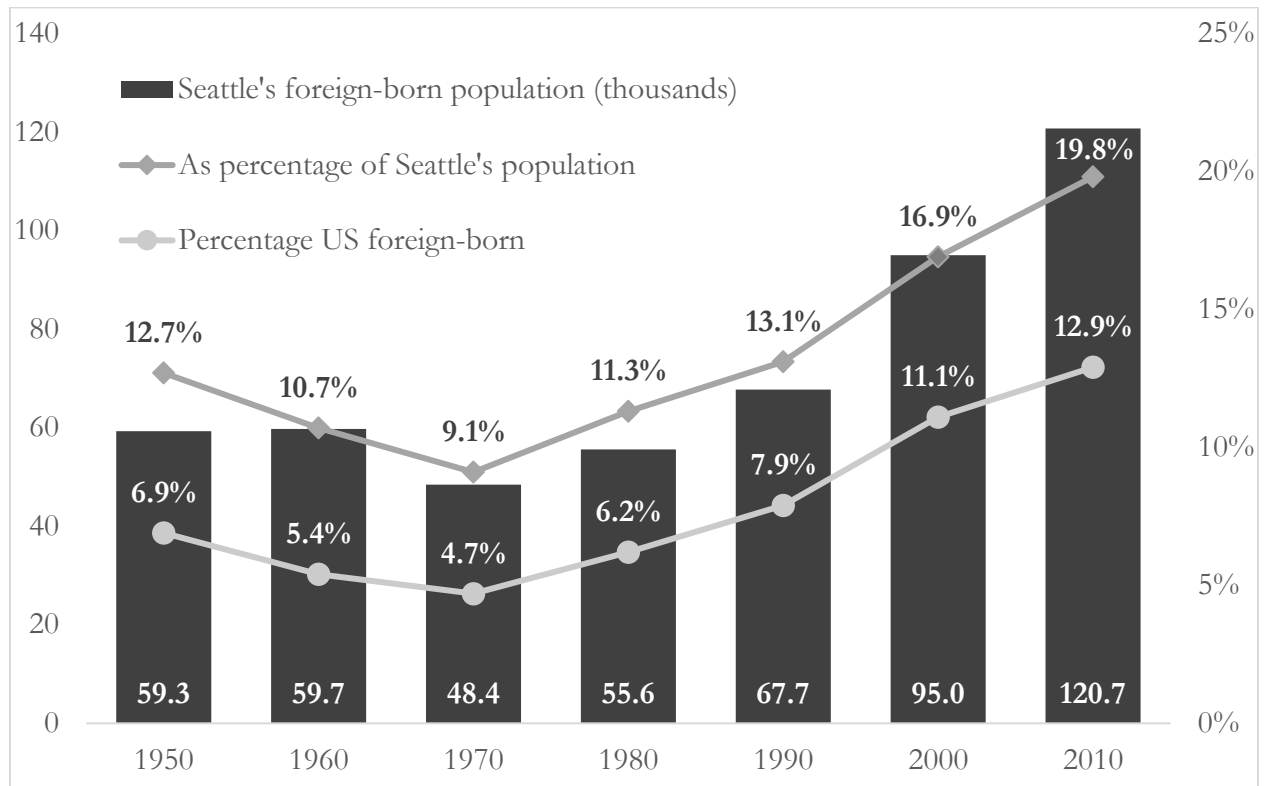
Source: U.S. Decennial Census 1950-2010, compiled by author.

As shown in Figure 2.1, the arc of foreign-born residents in Seattle reflects a

heightened iteration of the national trend, with a modest dip in the proportion of

immigrants in the decades following World War II before steady rises in both total

foreign-born populations and composition of immigrants in the population overall after

passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.[9] However, while the number of

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[9] https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty-years-1965-immigration-and-nationality-act-continues-reshape-united-states

native-born Americans continued to grow elsewhere in the US after 1970, it was nearly stagnant in Seattle. At the same time as the country at large was experiencing an upsurge in immigration, Seattle was suffering from the "Boeing Bust"—mass layoffs at the jet manufacturer that took its number of employees in and around the city from 100,800 in 1967 to 38,690 in 1971. The ensuing exodus was severe; concerned citizens sprung for a billboard just outside the Sea-Tac International Airport: "Will the last person leaving Seattle, turn out the lights?" (Lange 1999).

It took three decades for the city to return to its pre-Bust population (Ibid.). By then, the composition of Seattle was very different than it had been previously. In the period from 1970 to 2010, almost all of Seattle's growth—92.9%—came from an increase in foreign-born residents. This wave of migration remade the demographic profile of the city in two ways. Not only did it usher in a higher proportion of foreign-born population than Seattle had at any point earlier in the century, these new Seattleites also differed in their countries of origin. Whereas the majority of Seattle's earlier immigrants had come from Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe, the more recent migrants were coming primarily from Japan, China, Korea, and the Philippines, as well as from Mexico and Central American countries. The result has been a rapid increase in the racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity at a scale unprecedented in the erstwhile racially homogeneous Seattle.

Despite prominent political currents of xenophobia and white supremacy (Parker and Barreto 2013; Braunstein 2017), recent polls continue to show that strong majorities of Americans remain positive and upbeat regarding immigration and diversity. A survey by the Pew Research Center in July 2017 (Pew Research Center 2017) showed that 68%

of Americans agree that "openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation" while 64% say that "an increasing number of people of different races and ethnicities makes the US a better place to live." These figures testify as to the durability of the foundational notion that the United States as a "nation of immigrants" (Alba and Nee 2009), but they also reveal a notional attachment to ethno-racial pluralism as a positive ideal. Nationwide, invoking diversity reliably summons happy associations in the minds of most Americans—even as such feelings do not always predict support for social justice initiatives seeking redress for structural inequalities that disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Berrey 2015).

Diversity also emerged as a major buzzword in the marketing of cities, with the term serving as a stand-in for progressivism, cultural savvy, and, increasingly, innovation and market efficiency (Zachary 2000; Page 2007; Herring 2009). Highly paid urban consultants like Richard Florida (2003) toured North America arguing that a geographically and financially mobile creative class would seek employment in urban areas that could satisfy their taste for difference, and more and more cities began incorporating the diversity discourse in their promotional materials (Boudreau et al. 2009, Peck 2010). A newly diversifying and always-ambitious Seattle was no different. Local politicians like to tout Seattle's growing diversity, remarking that the city is home to "one of the most diverse ZIP codes in the country" (Call 2012). The concentration of diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups in a single postal code, however, betrays a greater truth about the residential patterns in the city (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Percentage of Foreign-Born Residents by Census Tract, 2014
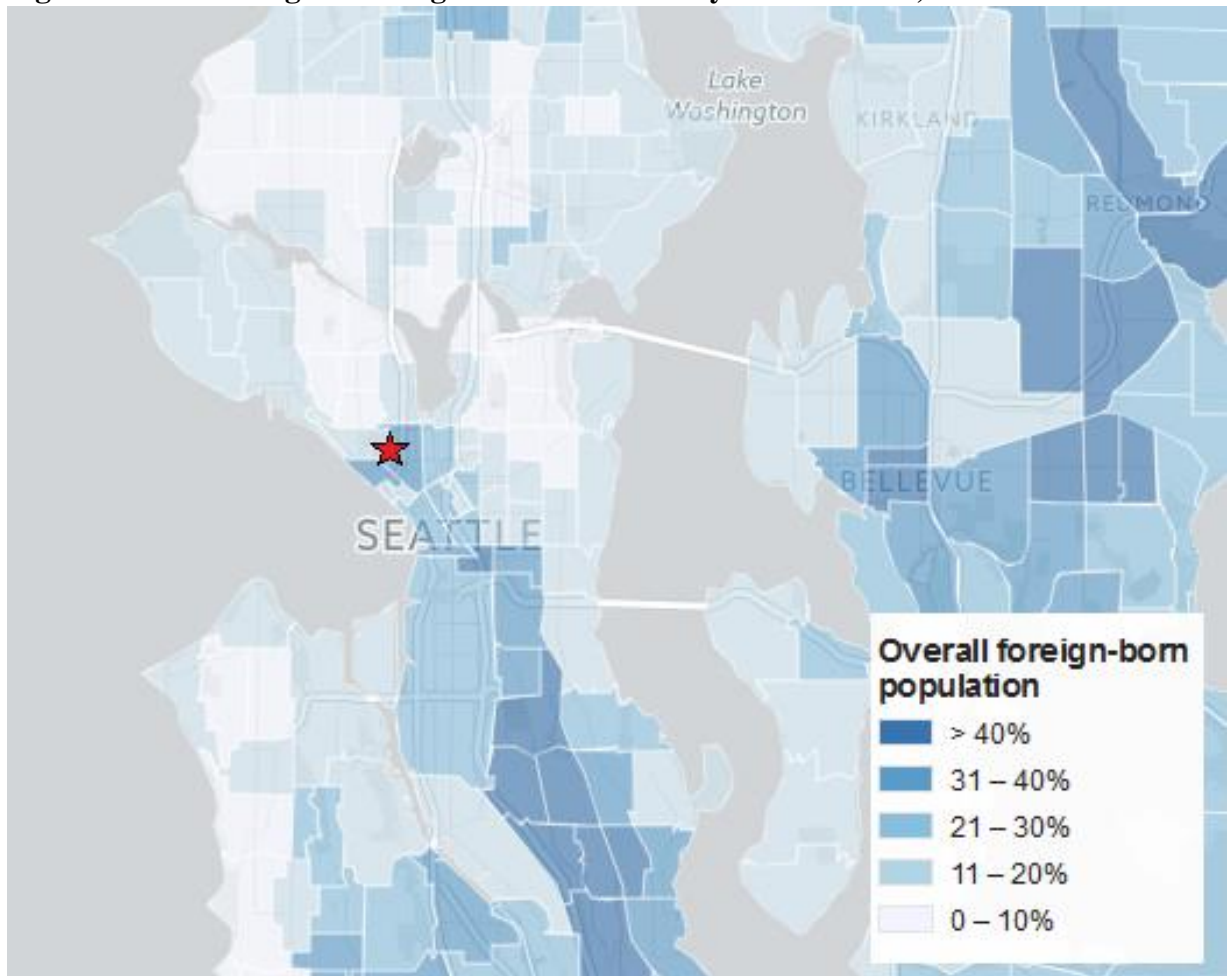
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau   *Map Source:* Reproduced from Balk (2015)

Seattle's growing foreign-born population is not evenly distributed throughout the city. The highest concentrations of immigrants in Seattle reside in neighborhoods South and East of downtown, within the dark-shaded Rainier Valley that has historically housed the majority of the city's racial minorities (see Figure 3.1 in the next chapter for a map of Seattle's non-white populations). This pattern of segregation is part of a long history of zoning restrictions and racial red-lining that has maintained the coasts and neighborhoods North of downtown as highly concentrated white enclaves (Silva 2009). More recently, rising rents and gentrification of neighborhoods near the urban center have pushed

increased numbers of minority residents into poorer neighborhoods outside of the city altogether (Dooling 2009; Kraeger et al. 2011). Indeed, the rising proportion of foreign-born residents greatly understates the growing ethnic diversity of the region: Each of the ten most diverse census-designated places in Washington lies in one of Seattle's King County suburbs, including the communities east of Lake Washington shown in Figure 2.2 above. Seattle itself ranks 40th most diverse in the state (Morrill 2011).

The apparent paradox between a national self-image of heterophilia with entrenched patterns of racial segregation and inequalities has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Some critical scholars have pointed to the gap between professed norms and observed behavior as exposing the hypocrisy of the former, demonstrating "the failure of Americans to live up to their own optimistic ideals" (Bell and Hartmann 2007:901). Others, like Putnam (2007), blame the cultural salience of ethnic identities for depleting communities' social capital and causing groups to isolate themselves. However, social attitudes are not separable from the spatial environments that shape interactions (Amin 2002; Richer 2015; Enos 2017). As discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, it is ethno-racial segregation—not diversity per se—that is primarily responsible for declining social trust (Uslaner 2011; Rothwell 2012; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Abascal and Baldassari 2015; Enos 2017). Absent the occasion or even the opportunity to interact across lines of difference, the intercultural identification necessary to produce civil solidarity cannot be formed (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005; Alexander 2006; Amin 2012).

Seattle satisfies the major social conditions that define the paradox of civic integration of immigrant and minority communities in the contemporary United States. Like most of the US, it is experiencing a rapid growth in foreign-born, as well as native

racial minority populations; it exhibits patterns of ethnic and racial segregation that mirror nationwide trends; and it actively promotes itself as a tolerant, forward-thinking city morally committed to enacting the multicultural ideals most Americans espouse. That the diversity it champions is of a recent vintage makes it an especially appealing city to investigate how public events that celebrate culture figure into the civic engagement strategies of ethnic community organizations. Seattle is therefore a case study that is at once comparable to other North American cities where cultural festivals are organized (Veronis 2006; Brettell and Reed-Danahay 2011; Baker and Draper 2013; Chacko 2013) as well as a harbinger of civic integration dynamics in smaller American towns as the US continues to become more diverse.

In the next section, I describe the structure of the civic partnership forged between the city of Seattle and participating community organizations to stage an annual series of free public festivals celebrating ethnic culture, Festál. The overview provided here is presented descriptively as a means of orientation to the genesis and organization of the program and of developing my methodological program of study into how festivals engage the public in intercultural encounters. The execution of the partnership between municipal and civic organizations, including the benefits and limitations to its approach, will be discussed in depth in Chapters 3 and 5, respectively.

2.2 Festál: "Discover the Art of Culture"

Festál is an annual series of cultural festivals presented free to the public on Seattle's 74-acre downtown public arts and entertainment campus, Seattle Center. The site was constructed for the 1962 World's Fair and includes several of the city's most

recognizable landmarks and museums, including the Space Needle, the Pacific Science

Center, and the Frank Gehry-designed Experience Music Project. These and other

attractions make Seattle Center, by its own estimates, the fourth-largest visitor destination

in the United States, with over 12 million visitors each year. In order to keep foot traffic

and revenue flowing to campus, the municipality founded Seattle Center Productions, a

programming unit charged with handling leases for paying tenants as well as staging

public programs free of charge.

Festál was one such program, begun in 1996 when the then-Director of Seattle

Center Productions, Virginia Anderson, proposed uniting a number of individual ethnic

festivals held on campus into a single series of cultural celebrations. Her purpose in

founding the program was to attract a sponsor, creating advertising revenue that could

offset municipal costs in sponsoring cultural events and fund their future expansion to

cover more weekends throughout the year.[10] But the series also reflected a desire on

behalf of the city to promote the civic integration of Seattle's growing minority

populations by celebrating culture in a prominent public forum. Several of the existent

cultural events on campus—including the Bumbershoot Music Festival and the children's

festival, Whirligig—were not to be added to the roster, which instead would focus

exclusively on ethnic culture and the arts. Among the early participants were the Seattle

Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival, which had been organized on campus

yearly since 1976 when it moved from a neighborhood park in South Seattle; the

Northwest Folklife Festival, the city's marquee Memorial Day Weekend event attracting

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[10] Per personal communication.

hundreds of thousands of people; and Festival Sundiata, an event celebrating the city's

African American population through art and musical performance.

The central involvement of the Seattle municipality is notable: whereas cultural

festivals are typically organized by ethnic groups and held within neighborhoods where

their community resides (Chacko 2013), Seattle devotes prominent public space and

financial resources toward showcasing the diversity of its population and fostering civic

engagement among residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. The Festál series is

consistent with the Seattle municipality's aggressive self-promotion as an emotionally

uplifting city (Lyons 2004; Gibson 2004). In 1990, the city council voted to change the

Seattle's motto to "The City of Goodwill," and, three years later, a local advertising

executive claiming to have invented the smiley face in the 1960s used the icon to launch

a bid for mayor. During the same decade, the success of several Seattle businesses

prompted a public and private partnership to "sell Seattle" as a lifestyle brand blending

progressive politics and an outgoing population in attempt to woo white collar workers to

relocate to the Pacific Northwest (Lyons 2004; Gibson 2004). Critics of Seattle's "left

coast formula" have argued that the public promotion of liberal virtues has relied upon

the subtle management of public space (Gregory 2015), creating a "spectacular city"

scrubbed of evidence of "disorderly" and "undesirable" populations (Gibson 2004;

Beckett and Herbert 2008).

Seattle's self-image as a progressive "city of goodwill," its dedication of

resources to public programming, and its recent influx of diverse populations sets the

context for the civic engagement strategies adopted by local ethnic minority groups.

Although Gibson (2010) has claimed that Seattle's heavy involvement in programming

events renders the city's few open public spaces unavailable for more spontaneous and bottom-up forms of civic action such as protests, the Festál series aims to enact a civic function that its promoters claim is unlikely to emerge organically (see Chapter 3). As a program, Festál represents a multicultural ethic that Hartmann and Gerteis (2005) have labeled "interactive pluralism," in which distinct groups and cultures enjoy wide recognition and public legitimacy while also pledging membership in a shared public sphere based on common moral commitments. This "thick form of solidarity" resists both the dissolution of group identity under liberal cosmopolitanism and the ethnic factionalism feared by many of multiculturalism's conservative critics, while acknowledging that demographic facts and normative obligations make moving past assimilation an urgent priority in contemporary US society (see also Chapter 5). Forging the kinds of substantive moral bonds necessary to sustain interactive pluralism requires ongoing encounters across various lines of difference in a self-reinforcing suite of social practices where "cross-cultural dialogue and exchange becomes the defining feature and value to be cultivated" (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005:231). In the hopes of program participants, Festál is organized to facilitate in practice the multicultural ethic that Seattleites claim to endorse.

By the time I began my research in 2014, the festival series had grown from a handful of festivals in 1996 to include 23 events. Each festival was formed in partnership between Seattle Center Productions and a local non-profit organization representing a different ethnic community in Seattle (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: The Roster of Festál Events for 2014

Festival Name	Date(s)
Seattle Tết Festival – Vietnamese Lunar New Year	January 25-26
Irish Festival	March 15-16
Seattle's French Fest: A Celebration of French-Speaking Cultures	March 23
Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival	April 25-27
Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration	May 4
Spirit of West Africa	May 10
A Glimpse of China – Chinese Culture and Arts Festival	Mary 17
Northwest Folklife Festival	May 23-26
Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	June 7-8
Festival Sundiata Presents Black Arts Festival	June 14-15
Seattle Iranian Festival	June 28
Polish Festival Seattle	July 12
Indigenous Cultures Day	August 16
BrasilFest	August 17
Tibet Fest	August 23-24
Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival	September 7
Seattle Fiestas Patrias	September 13-14
The Italian Festival	September 27-28
CroatiaFest	October 5
TurkFest	October 18-19
Día de Muertos – A Mexican Celebration to Remember Our Departed	November 1-2
Hmong New Year	November 8

Despite their inclusion in a unified roster of cultural events, the separate festivals
have a range of features that make them discrete and distinct events. Some festivals, like
A Glimpse of China or Turkfest, are organized according to a single national culture,
whereas others have a regional theme focusing on contiguous countries (Spirit of West
Africa, Seattle Fiestas Patrias, Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration),
language groups (Seattle's French Fest), or subnational areas (Tibet Fest, Live Aloha
Hawaiian Cultural Festival). Three represent ethnic cultures within the United States
(Northwest Folklife Festival, Festival Sundiata Presents Black Arts Festival, and

Indigenous Cultures Day). Some, like Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival, are organized to coincide with a given country's national day of independence, whereas others, like Seattle Tết Festival–Vietnamese Lunar New Year, have a more religious significance. These differences reflect the various intentions of the community groups that produce their respective content, a decision that Seattle Center reserves for the groups themselves to decide.

Festivals also differ in terms of their duration and the size of their footprint on the campus. As part of their agreement with Seattle Center, each festival must have its primary base of operation in the Armory Building. Promoted by the city as "Seattle's Living Room," the Armory is a central building on campus hosting public restrooms, a large area for public seating around several outlets selling food, coffee, and snacks, and the upstairs Armory Loft used for meeting rooms or gallery space throughout the year. It also features a sizable stage, foregrounded by open floor space that can be filled with rows of chairs or kept free as a dance platform. Each festival is granted eight hours of municipally-funded stage time for each event day, complete with lighting and sound technicians and other logistical support.

As will be discussed at length in Chapter 3, the mandatory presence in the Armory is cited as a key public benefit for the civic outreach efforts of the cultural festivals, providing not only a large sheltered area in the notoriously inclement Seattle, but also a venue that attracts a spontaneous audience of tourists and other passersby. Larger festivals with a track record of attracting high visitor turnout are offered additional venues on campus, such as the nearby Fisher Pavilion or SC Pavilion, or, in warmer months, the outdoor stage and lawn of the Mural Amphitheatre. Seattle Center

Productions does not undertake any direct efforts to measure attendance at cultural festivals, relying on imperfect proxies such as trash production and concession sales.[11] Although there have been periods in the program's history where particular events have taken issue with the resources available for their festival relative to others, Seattle Center Productions combines personalized reviews of event goals with community organizations, as well as standardized audits of events to determine where and for how long a festival may be scheduled.

Eligibility for public funds comes with certain legal restrictions regarding the structure of the participating organizations as well as the content of the presentations (the qualitative impact of these regulations on the expression of cultural practices is analyzed in Chapter 5). With very rare exception, Seattle Center Productions does not recruit participants in the festival series, preferring instead to be approached by a community representative wishing to stage an event at Seattle Center.[12] However, to become a member of the program, aspiring participants must be or form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to serve as the official liaison with Seattle Center Productions. Typically, these organizations are formed expressly for the intention of joining Festál, and do not engage in other civic activities throughout the year. They are usually small affairs, with one or two main representatives working alongside city-provided Event Coordinators at

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[11] Ethnographic observations from various events indicate that individual festivals vary widely in their attendance. Some of the larger festivals, such as the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival or the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival, occupy several venues on Seattle Central's campus and spread over multiple days; others, such as the Spirit of West Africa and the Seattle Iranian Festival, hold their events on a single weekend day in the central Armory Building. Seattle Center estimates that the smaller festivals will attract 2000 visitors to the event, whereas others bring in audiences upward of 50,000 people over the weekend.

[12] According the Managing Artistic Director for Cultural Programs at Seattle Center, Steve Sneed, the only time contact with an ethnic community had been initiated by Seattle Center Productions was when a replacement liaison was sought to revive an existing Festál event that had failed to meet program standards.

Seattle Center and an informal network of community leaders, local and regional cultural talent, and private sponsors. Nearly all events are run by one or more first-generation immigrants, and, as of 2014, only one event coordinator (the organizer for the Italian Festival) draws a salary from his organization.

The Director of Seattle Center, John Merner, claims that the small size of the community organization forming the partnership is an unofficial stipulation of the public-private arrangement between the city and the various ethnic communities participating in the program. Constraints on the number of city personnel available for coordinating the events and limitations of their ability to moderate intra-community disputes regarding the public representation of culture (see Chapter 5) mean that Seattle Center prefers a community to nominate a single liaison to represent the interests of the organization at program meetings. This request is uniformly observed in practice, although it is unclear the extent to which all festival committees designed their organizations to comply with Seattle Center's wishes; most bore the influence of a single director or, in some cases, a married couple who shared responsibilities.

Other formal regulations mandated by the eligibility of municipal funding include prohibitions on content that endorses specific political candidates or policies, or proselytizes on behalf of a particular religion—criteria that are also stipulated by the festivals' status as 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. These restrictions were recited continuously by participants in the program as "no politics, no religion," although, as I discuss in Chapter 5, formal accordance with this stricture is far from the only reason for the festivals' avoidance of potentially divisive issues, and the effective prohibition of such topics often exceeds what is legally required. More controversial within the program

is Seattle Center Production's additional request that festival content be made available in English in addition to the ethnic communities' primary languages—a policy the city defends on the grounds that it makes the festivals more accessible to the majority of the population and it facilitates stage communication with city employees. These regulations of content are especially notable given the centrality of religious beliefs and political commitments to cultural identities, and the lack of other opportunities for their public expression. As a great deal of scholarship is critical of diversity programming for excising cultural particularities that betray the "white normative center" of civic life (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Bonilla-Silva 2009; Hage 2000; Ahmed 2012; Anthias 2013), how such issues are negotiated in practice will shed light on how such hybrid public programs structure civic outreach.

After pitching a festival to Seattle Center Productions and forming a nonprofit organization to conform to eligibility requirements for municipal funding, approved festivals undergo a process of "incubation" during which they are given limited stage time to demonstrate to program coordinators that they can assemble entertaining cultural performances and attract community participation. During this two-year trial period, the applicant is not advertised as a member of Festál, but its representatives attend program meetings and other orienting events in order to acculturate the festival planners to the organizational mission of the series. Qualifying events, such as the Polish Festival Seattle in 2014, graduate to the status of official membership in Festál, with a recurring annual date and inclusion in the series' marketing campaign. From that point forward, all festivals are subject to the same conditions for contract renewal: two-year commitments from the city, subject to event audits conducted by officials at Seattle Center Productions.

Informally, festivals are also monitored by their peer participants in the program; part of each festival organizations' duties is to attend a specified celebration from a different ethnic community, after which they report assessments of strengths and weaknesses to the assembly of representatives for all Festál events. Such interactions across the festivals are actively encouraged by Seattle Center as a means of building the organizational capacity of individual festival teams and developing "best practices" to institute throughout the program.

The partnership between the municipal government of Seattle and participating ethnic community organizations to achieve intercultural civic engagement in a segregated city also involves a third party, uninvolved in event planning but nevertheless crucial to its success. Festival visitors comprise this group, and their participation contributes to the positive energy necessary to sustain a celebration (Katz 1999). As such, they do more for a festival than serve as an audience; their enjoyment of the event also performs the feelings of joy and goodwill that enact the mission of celebratory civics. Festival visitors come from a variety of different backgrounds—from diverse ethnic origins to distinct neighborhoods in Seattle—and arrive in groups of friends, as families, or on their own. Together, they form an intercultural crowd of people linked for the moment by their common interest in celebrating culture. This commonality provides the geographical availability and the emotional opportunity for different groups to interact among one another, and, in the hopes of program participants, replace negative stereotypes bred from unfamiliarity with positive associations from real experiences shared together (the institutional promise of celebratory civics to achieve these results will be examined in Chapter 4).

Understanding why and how intercultural engagement is pursued through celebratory civic events requires studying these three distinct groups of people involved in conceiving, producing, and performing the festivals. In the next section, I describe the research methodology I employed to study these different, but intimately connected populations at the multiple stages of event production and execution. After outlining my mixed methods research design, I provide an overview of the qualitative and quantitative data produced in the study and summarize how these data were managed, coded, and analyzed. I conclude with an examination of some of the strengths and limitations of the research design for understanding celebratory civic events.

2.3 General Methodology

Public cultural programming like the Festál series of cultural festivals at Seattle Center enlists the efforts and civic participation of a number of individuals and groups, including municipal officers, nonprofit ethnic community organizations, and everyday urban residents who attend the events. The different sectors of organization and varied levels of participation among the parties involved have led scholars of such civic partnerships to employ mixed methods of data collection (Fisher et al. 2015). Recent research has emphasized that mixed methods approaches are best suited to "deal with social complexity" (Creswell 2009:203) and offer "a comprehensive approach that stresses the tight link between theory and research" (Hesse-Biber 2010:9). As my study of Festál engages with different actors on institutional and micro-interactional levels, a variety of methods is appropriate. Mixed methods are often praised for allowing "complementarity" of findings, emphasizing "the ability of one type [of method] to

compensate for the weaknesses of the other" (Small 2011: 64; see also Tashakkori and Teddlie 2002) in the way that a compass can complement a map in navigation (Small 2014).

Empirical research utilizing mixed methods shows that approaching a population of interest using both qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement can produce a robust dataset capable of providing a more complete answer to a research question. Fisher and her colleagues' (2015) study of volunteer tree planters in a civic program in New York City used a mix of interview and survey data among urban environmental stewards to demonstrate the influence of personal narratives and organizational ties in driving and sustaining participation in green initiatives. Limiting such a study to one or the other type of data would not allow the researcher to capture the full picture of civic engagement in municipally-sponsored stewardship.

Other research has employed a mixed methods approach to test hypotheses that emerge through the data collection process itself. For example, Small and his colleagues' (2008) study of neighborhood effects on organizational connections uses data collected from interviews with directors and staff of childcare centers, as well as with parents who use these resources, to develop further questions that are then answered through survey data collected at the centers. The qualitative data signaled organizational priorities and anticipated resources that could be measured through quantitative analysis.

My research design draws inspiration from both of these studies, employing a multi-stage, mixed methods approach in order to understand how celebratory civic events are conceived, produced, and performed—as well as what other kinds of intercultural civic engagement they may help to engender. Following Small et al. (2008), I conduct

interviews with staff at Seattle Center Productions and representatives of participating ethnic community organizations—alongside ethnographic observation of planning meetings, scope sessions, and festivals—to develop a deep, qualitative understanding of the organizational missions and desired outcomes that motivate the civic outreach strategy I am calling celebratory civics. I use my survey and interview data of festival visitors to see whether and how the festival audience is apprehending this message, and demonstrate the extent to which the organizational mission of civic outreach is achieved at and after the events themselves. Following Fisher et al. (2015), I use in-depth interviews of a sample of my survey respondents to develop a fuller narrative portrait of festival participation that the survey instrument could not measure on its own.

Whereas the data in the study are designed to be complementary during analysis, this research was also designed to facilitate a "constant comparative approach" in which data gained from each stage contributed to the framing and conduct of successive stages of data collection (Glaser 1965). A sequential mixed methods study benefits both from the consistency and rigor of a theoretically-informed design, while maintaining adaptability to themes and dynamics that emerged through the stages of research. As data accumulated, they informed decisions about subsequent stages of research, including activities of interest for participant observation, emergent themes that guided probes to interview questions, and a representative sample frame for follow-up interview subjects, among other benefits. As I will explain below, I was also aided in the development of my final research design by preliminary fieldwork at Seattle Center that was not included in the completed dataset.

Although some forms of data were collected concurrently with others, the research design can be described as taking place in four stages, which I will explain in detail in the following pages. As previously noted, the first stage involved interviews with representatives of Seattle Center Productions and those of participating ethnic community organizations. These interviews provided information on the structure and mission of the program, strategies developed and implemented to achieve program goals, and challenges met with when partnering in the name of celebrating culture in the public square. The second stage involved ethnography of the event series through observations of planning meetings and other behind-the-scenes interactions among program organizers, as well as participant observation at festival events. During the third stage, I collected survey data of a sample of visitors to the festival, allowing for the development of the demographic profile of the audience attracted by different events and for a dataset of other forms of intercultural civic activities these visitors participated in over the previous year. Finally, the fourth stage involved in-depth follow-up interviews with a random sample of survey respondents who provided a more open-ended picture of what factors motivate festival participation, as well as the audience's reflections of their experiences at the events. I will describe the data produced by each stage in turn.

Preliminary Fieldwork: Orientation to Festál Events and Finalizing Research Design

Beginning September 2013, I established contact with two representatives of Seattle Center Productions from the Cultural Programs Office, scheduled preliminary meetings, and discussed the nature and scope of the research project. I made further

contact with a member of the organizational board from one of the community organizations staging an annual festival as part of Festál, and collected secondary data in the form of meetings minutes, programming plans, and budget outlays. These contacts were important in identifying key decision-makers and stakeholders before the period of formal data collection, helping me to develop a positive research relationship with key actors and to avoid institutional gatekeeping (Tisdale 2004). I moved to Seattle in December 2013 and met the Seattle Center Productions team in person to lay out my research goals and anticipate any difficulties of access prior to finalizing the formal methods of data collection, including the participant observation schedule, survey instrument, and interview protocols. I also attended Festál's first festival of 2014, Seattle Tết Festival – Vietnamese Lunar New Year, as a participant observer, using this experience to get a sense of the Armory space to develop a sampling strategy for the collection of survey data and to monitor the kinds of intercultural interactions to pay attention to during the key festivals of study. The combination of these preliminary fieldwork activities informed my final research design.[13]

Although I would eventually come to attend nearly all of the 23 events in the festival series, returning in the summers of 2015 and 2016 for follow-up fieldwork, for purposes of in-depth analysis I selected five festivals representing a variety of festival size, time of the year, geographic region celebrated, and representation among Seattle's ethnic minority populations. These festivals included the first to host its event at Seattle Center (the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival), the most recent to join the series' roster (the Polish Festival), as well as the Spirit of West Africa, the Iranian

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[13] Data collection for all stages of this project was conducted in accordance with University of Maryland policies on the research on Human Subjects (IRB Protocol No. 584403-1).

Festival, and the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival. Variance in community size and tenure in Seattle also allowed me to observe similarities and differences among organizations' objectives for staging an event at Seattle Center, as well as the various civic engagement strategies they pursue through their festivals.

Stage 1: Interviews with Seattle Center Representatives and Participating Organizations

Formal data collection began with a series of open-ended semi-structured interviews with the team of city employees working for Seattle Center Productions (n=6) and representatives from each of the five festivals selected for closer research (n=9; see Table 2.2 below). The small number of interview subjects in this stage of the study reflects the tight organizational structure of Seattle Center Productions (their entire staff numbers seven employees, one of whom was an administrative aide uninvolved in the planning or production of the actual events), as well as the limited number of community leaders in charge of running the individual events. As explained in the previous section, festival organizations are almost universally small and purpose-built: the nine people who participated in this interview stage represent the directors of the events charged with conceiving the festival, liaising with Seattle Center Productions, and recruiting performers, vendors, and sponsors.

The purpose of the open-ended semi-structured interviewing technique is to pursue a general guideline of interview questions related to a research question while allowing the researcher "to follow any theme that emerges in an interview that may be relevant to the research project" (Fisher 2014:110). For my interviews with members of

Seattle Center Productions, questions focused on the role of the Seattle municipal

government in the sponsorship and production of cultural festivals, including its criteria

for selecting and approving festivals, organizational objectives, subjective assessments of

past performance, and goals for Festál's 2014 roster of festivals. These areas of

concentration were selected based on critical sociological studies of diversity and

multiculturalism, including how issues of social justice that disproportionately affect

ethnic and racial minority groups may or may not be addressed through public

celebrations (Collins 1995, 2006; Hage 2000; Hall 2000; Bell and Hartmann 2007;

Ahmed 2012; Anthias 2013). This structured element of the interview process allowed

me to compare answers across the various official positions of the municipal employees,

Table 2.2: Interview Subjects at Seattle Center and Selected Festival Organizations

Participant Name	Position
Seattle Center	
John Merner	Director of Seattle Center Productions
Steve Sneed	Managing Artistic Director for Cultural Programs
Barbara Bryant	Customer Service Manager
JulieAnn Clifton	Production Manager, Seattle Center Productions
Jennifer Basiliko	Event Coordinator, Festál
Paula Araya	Event Coordinator, Festál
Community Org.	
Yutaka Sasaki	Co-Organizer, Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival
Tazue Sasaki	Co-Organizer, Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival
Thione Diop	Director, Spirit of West Africa Festival
Suzanne Simmons	Organizational Associate, Spirit of West Africa Festival
JP Paredes	Co-Organizer, Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival
Melanie Paredes	Co-Organizer, Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival
Ali Ghambari	Organizer, Seattle Iranian Festival
Kassra Oskoori	Seattle Iranian Festival Advisory Council Member
Danuta Moc	Organizer, Polish Festival Seattle

while the open-ended format allowed me to pursue emergent themes, probe responses for more complete answers, and allow the respondent to drive the conversation towards issues of importance that I had not anticipated when designing my interview protocol.

These interviews each took place on site at Seattle Center Productions' main offices in the Armory Building, and lasted an average of 83 minutes. In addition to these formal interviews, I continued to interact with members of the Festál staff on a weekly basis, and often more frequently. Interview data with these participants provided important information about how the position of Seattle Center Productions as an important stakeholder in cultural festivals may influence the forms of intercultural encounters that take place at Festál events (Quinn 2003).

My interviews with the voluntary leaders of ethnic community organizations who designed and coordinated the stage content and festival activities were also semi-structured and open-ended. Whereas employees at Seattle Center Production took a broader view towards celebratory civic events that reflects their responsibilities for overseeing each of the 23 festivals that comprise the series, the festival organizers I interviewed were more able to speak to the particular civic goals of the communities they represent. Although each participant had enlisted in the program willingly and were equally subject to its mission and regulations, their events also emphasized the distinct social positions of the minority group vis-à-vis the broader Seattle population. Questions for these interviews probed for such specificities, as well as for their experiences in working with the city to promote civic outreach through celebrating ethnic culture. Following research on festivals that speaks of a trade-off between organizational autonomy and local representation in community-based festivals, and the potential for

civic outreach to the broader community promised by public, centrally-located events (Veronis 2006; Peterson 2012; Chacko 2013), I engaged these organizers on the decision to organize their festival at Seattle Center in partnership with the city rather than in another location closer to where members of the community reside.

There were also differences in their organizations' structures that bear mention. Two of these festivals—the Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival and Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival—were run by married couples who had been involved in festival organization for years. Spirit of West Africa has a single Director who enlisted the former Organizer of Festival Sundiata for additional guidance and support. The Seattle Iranian Festival was organized by Ali Ghambari, who is also the founder of the Iranian American Community Alliance NGO in Seattle, which contributes some logistical support to the festival. The Polish Festival Seattle has only a single organizer, and is the newest addition to the Festál series, having just graduated from the "incubation" period.

In cases where there were two organizers, I made an effort to schedule an interview with one subject before the event and one after, in order to gain perspectives on the organizers' intentions and ambitions for the festival, as well as their reflections on its execution. These interviews took place at various locations, including the subjects' workplace offices and at Seattle Center, and lasted an average of 70 minutes. Each interview with both populations of subjects was conducted after receiving the consent of the participant, and was recorded for transcription and analysis (discussed at further length in the data management section below).

Stage 2: Ethnography of Festival Planning Sessions and Participant Observation at Events

In addition to interviews with the key parties involved in organizing and staging the festival series, over a period of eight months, I attended organizational and planning meetings at Seattle Center between representatives of Seattle Center Productions and community organizations. Observing these interactions allowed me to witness how the civic outreach priorities revealed during the interview process were actualized through the process of planning and organizing the events themselves. In particular, attending these meetings provided insight into the working partnership between the municipality and participating ethnic community organizations. It is in these sessions that Seattle Center Productions *teaches outreach* (see Chapter 5), encouraging organizations to promote aspects of their culture to an audience expected to be unfamiliar with them.

In addition to more informal gatherings, meetings were of two main types: mandatory monthly Festál Meetings that required attendance and participation of representatives from each festival, and smaller Scope Sessions between an Event Coordinator at Seattle Center Productions and one or more representatives of individual festivals in the weeks running up to their events. The relationship I developed with Seattle Center Productions during the interview stage enabled them to feel comfortable with my attendance during these meetings, and gained me entry to the chief community organizers planning the events. During these meetings, I acted as a silent observer, eschewing the interference in the proceedings that my participation would have required. The longer I remained in the field as a non-participant observer, the easier it became for

me to fade into the background, where I could take notes on the subjects discussed in the meetings for later write-up and analysis.

At the festivals, themselves, however, I took on a more active role, engaging in participant observation of celebratory civics in action. As Fetterman summarizes, the participant observer "adopts a cultural lens to interpret observed behavior, ensuring that the behaviors are placed in a culturally relevant and meaningful context" (2010:1). The festivals contained a broad range of activities to engage their audience, including stage shows, workshops, exhibits, information booths, vendors, cooking demonstrations, beer gardens, food tents, film screenings, tea ceremonies, dance lessons, craft tutorials, book readings, costume studios, and others. Additionally, the open plan of the festival venues lent to spontaneous interactions among the participants—key data points for a festival series organized to promote intercultural encounters. During festivals, I participated in a number of the activities on offer, observing how other audience members interacted. I also was active in conversation with visitors, venders, and performers within the festival space. These interactions emerged spontaneously, whether while waiting in line for food, watching stage entertainment, or discussing items on the program. At each festival, I also devoted a short time to collecting survey data (see Stage 3 for more detail), at which point I also engaged visitors in conversations about how they came to attend the festival, what kinds of activities they engaged in, and their experiences at the events.

This component of the research was critical for analyzing the process of cultural learning at the moment of encounter (Goffman 1961; Amin 2002). I looked for ways in which festival visitors selected activities, interacted with festival performers and fellow visitors, and evaluated performances and products at the event. Data were collected in the

form of field notes detailing real-time, *in situ* conduct within the setting as well as more subjective memos regarding researcher interpretations of cultural interaction and emerging themes. Participant observation data were also used as a validity check on survey reports and the subjective evaluations of cultural festivals collected in the qualitative interviews (see Stage 4). Kim states that participant observation "exposes the frequent differential between what people *report* and what they *do*" (2008:258, emphasis in the original; see also Jerolmack and Khan 2013), which is consistent with the disconnect between the "happy talk" of diversity discourse and the actual practices of cultural openness described in Bell and Hartmann's (2007) research.

Stage 3: Surveys of Visitors at Five Key Festivals

Stage 3 of data collection involved the production of a quantitative data set. In order to be able to maintain my availability to engage in participant observation on festival days while gathering survey data of festival visitors, I recruited a research team of seven undergraduate students and one graduate student from the University of Washington, where I had a Visiting Scholar appointment in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. This position allowed me the opportunity to recruit a diverse group of students enrolled in the program to assist in survey data collection. In the weeks prior to the event dates, I held training sessions and facilitated role-playing with these research assistants, instructing them in population sampling, survey distribution, data notation, and how to answer basic questions about the intentions of the research and the contents of the questionnaire.

On event days, two or more of these research assistants met me at the festival to begin four-hour shifts of data collection.[14] Following a sampling frame established in previous population research studying crowding effects at Seattle Center festival events (Anderson et al. 1998), I positioned research assistants near the entrances to the event venue and had them approach every fifth person as he or she entered the building to complete the two-page survey instrument. For large events utilizing a neighboring building or the outdoor Mural Amphitheater, I divided the research team among the venues and had them identify the most heavily trafficked point of entry. To facilitate a high response rate, survey distributers were provided by Seattle Center Productions with a badge identifying them as affiliates of the Festál program.

The survey instrument was designed to measure the outcomes desired by the participating organizations as well as investigate other ways in which festival visitors may engage in civic activities that require intercultural interactions (see Appendix for a copy of the survey instrument). Collecting demographic information of festival visitors allowed me to test if hosting celebratory events in a prominent public venue would be successful in attracting diverse audiences with different levels of connection to the ethnic community being celebrated. By asking respondents about cultural activities they have participated in over the previous year (such as visiting an ethnic museum or community center, traveling abroad, or engaging in ethnic community advocacy), I produced data that could help answer the question of whether festivals could be a way to reverse the declines of civic activity Putnam (2007) and others associate with increasing diversity (Chapter 3). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, having respondents report on past actions

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[14] These assistants were compensated monetarily for their valuable efforts by the researcher.

rather than signal future intentions or describe cultural attitudes helps to reduce the social desirability bias that can affect surveys that touch on normatively appealing issues such as intercultural interactions and diversity. It is also a more reliable way to measure engagement in civic activities (see Fisher et al 2015).

Table 2.3 displays the number of surveys completed at the five festivals in my study. Because these festivals varied in the size of audience and duration of event, it was appropriate to collect a greater number of survey responses at some events rather than others. Previous quantitative research at urban cultural festivals predicts a high rate of response, from 47% (Baker and Draper 2013) to 60% (Anderson et al. 1996). My response rate was slightly lower than this range (41.6%), which may be explained by the high concentration of people moving within the festival space who had not planned to attend the event. As described above, the Armory is a public building that attracts a large number of people on Seattle Center's campus for other activities. While this population represents an appealing potential audience for festivals designed to attract participation from out-group members, such visitors may also have been disinclined to participate in a research study of celebratory civic events (see Chapter 3). Anticipating that events celebrating the culture of ethnic minorities might attract large numbers of visitors for whom taking a survey in English would not be possible, I instructed my research assistants to keep separate tallies of visitors who cited a language barrier as the reason for their refusal. To my surprise, this potential liability proved to be less severe than I had feared; only nine festival visitors overall were unable to participate in the survey due to the language of its questions. In each case, these were visitors to the Cherry Blossom Festival, and are accounted for in their response rate listed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Festival Characteristics and Survey Participation Data

Festival Name	Dates	Venues	Respondents (N)	Refusals (N)	Response Rate (%)
Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival	April 25-27	Armory, Fisher Pavilion, SC Pavilion	273	193	58.6%
Spirit of West Africa Festival	May 10	Armory	119	74	61.7%
Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	June 7-8	Armory, Mural Amphitheater	157	138	53.2%
Seattle Iranian Festival	June 28	Armory	111	81	58.0%
Polish Festival Seattle	July 12	Armory, Mural Amphitheater	116	67	63.4%
		Total	776	553	58.4%

Appendix A provides a demographic profile of festival visitors as an initial description of my quantitative data before further analysis in Chapter 3. As intercultural participation is a key civic goal animating the festival series, I report these data separately for respondents who reported having "personal or familial heritage" with the community being celebrated. Note how this attribution is separate from self-reported racial categories. For example, only 51.6% of survey respondents who identified as in-group members declared themselves as Asians, with 22.1% self-identifying as white and a further 23.2% listing their race as mixed race. These figures indicate both the prevalence of interracial partnership in this population and the willingness of individuals who do not identify themselves as Asian to claim Japanese heritage. Furthermore, there is observable variation of racial identification among Iranians, who occupy a controversial position within American standards of racial classification (Tehranian 2010; Magbouleh 2017). Because my survey instrument invited respondents to provide their own racial identification, rather than have them select among provided choices, many visitors to the

Seattle Iranian Festival wrote in Persian as their race, which I have reported at "Other" on the Table in Appendix A.

Though not the case for each of the festivals in the sample, a larger overall percentage of my survey respondents (56.4%) classified themselves as having no personal or familial heritage with the ethnic group being celebrated at the festival. The differing number of out-group members at the various events reflects several factors, from the size of the local ethnic community (there are many more Filipinos in Seattle than there are West Africans), to the level of awareness of the broader community about the event (the Cherry Blossom festival has been held at Seattle Center for decades, while 2014 was the first year to host Polish Festival Seattle). Between in- and out-groups, there are very slight differences in the average age of visitors (41.3 and 40.5 years, respectively), and, consistent with other research on civic engagement (Fisher et al 2015), both populations were highly educated. Both populations attracted more women than men, a finding that was particularly pronounced among out-group visitors; 60.0% of out-group respondents who listed their gender identified as women.

On these questionnaires, participants were given the option of leaving information by which I could contact them for a voluntary follow-up interview. In total, 23.1% of survey respondents agreed to participate in an interview. There was no significant difference between in-group (23.9%) and out-group (22.6%) members on this question. To minimize selection bias among potential interview participants, I used demographic data from the completed surveys to recruit a purposive sample that represented the overall population profile of event attendees—in most cases, this decision was made to ensure that the percentage of interview participants claiming ethnic heritage with the

community being celebrated and the percentage of out-group interview participants matched the respective proportions of the surveyed audience. I describe the follow-up interview process in Stage 4.

Stage 4: In-Depth Follow-up Interviews of Survey Respondents

The final stage of data collection consisted of interviews conducted with festival attendees recruited through a random sample of survey respondents (n=33). For this stage of interviews, I used in-depth qualitative interview techniques designed to elicit "narrative stories from the respondents that indicate the meanings they give to those aspects of their life-world relevant to the interview's topic" (Warren and Karner 2010:236). This stage of interviews focused on participants' reasons for attending the festival, the activities and stage performances they engaged in, and their assessments of the purpose and content of the event and the Festál series.

As I show in Chapter 3, a sizable number of festival visitors (21.8%) attended the event from beyond King County or from out of state. Although these survey respondents were less likely than their peers to volunteer for follow-up interviews, I eliminated them from the candidate pool for two reasons. The first was logistical: given limited travel resources and my desire to maintain consistency of interview format to maintain high levels of data comparability, I concluded it would be appropriate to limit my follow-up interviews to areas whose distance would allow for a face-to-face interview. Secondly, because a stated goal of the festival series was to promote intercultural interactions within the Seattle area, sampling among this group would produce data liable to reveal findings

that were locally salient and consistent across the everyday experiences of residents in and around the Seattle region.

Table 2.4 displays characteristics of my interviews with these subjects. This round of interviews generally took place in cafes or other public places, and audio recording proceeded only after receiving the consent of the subject. Interviews, on average, lasted 55 minutes.

My sample of follow-up interview participants included 14 men and 19 women with ages ranging from 19-67 for an average age 38.5. In total, I interviewed 21 members who stated personal or familial heritage shared with the ethnic group celebrated at the festival and 12 out-group members. Although the conversational nature of the in-depth interview technique allowed for subjects to participate in steering the conversation toward areas of importance to their experiences (Warren and Karner 2010), patterns emerged between the two key populations that structured interviews in distinct directions. In-group members demonstrated a keen interest in how their self-identified ethnic culture was represented at the festival, suggesting that they be considered alongside festival organizations as stakeholders in the events. As will be shown in Chapter 5, many were reflexive regarding issues of public representation, authenticity, and civic outreach to the broader community, and saw their visitation at the events as participation in the civic mission of the festival series. Interviews with out-group visitors, on the other hand, were more focused on the experiences of the subject at the event, with less discussion of the broader civic issues involved in public festivals. However, these interviews shed light on the barriers to entry and patterns of participation among out-group members who profess interest in intercultural encounters (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.4: Interviews among Festál Festival Visitors[15]

Participant Name	Festival	Age	Sex	Ethnicity
Adrian	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	28	Male	In-Group
Amanda	Polish Festival Seattle	25	Female	In-Group
Andy	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	48	Male	Out-Group
Ardeshir	Seattle Iranian Festival	NG*	Male	In-Group
Bart	Polish Festival Seattle	37	Male	In-Group
Chelsea	Polish Festival Seattle	28	Female	In-Group
David	Spirit of West Africa	27	Male	Out-Group
Devin	Cherry Blossom Festival	33	Male	In-Group
Eileen	Cherry Blossom Festival	30	Female	Out-Group
Elsie	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	NG*	Female	In-Group
Faith	Spirit of West Africa	56	Female	Out-Group
Genny	Seattle Iranian Festival	19	Female	Out-Group
Gina	Cherry Blossom Festival	54	Female	In-Group
Javad	Seattle Iranian Festival	31	Male	In-Group
John	Cherry Blossom Festival	63	Male	In-Group
Kimberlee	Seattle Iranian Festival	54	Female	In-Group
Larisa	Spirit of West Africa	67	Female	Out-Group
Limei	Cherry Blossom Festival	35	Female	Out-Group
Linda	Polish Festival Seattle	30	Female	Out-Group
Lionel	Spirit of West Africa	27	Male	Out-Group
Lori	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	NG*	Female	In-Group
Lucia	Polish Festival Seattle	44	Female	In-Group
Maciej	Polish Festival Seattle	55	Male	In-Group
Mark	Cherry Blossom Festival	51	Male	In-Group
Matt	Polish Festival Seattle	26	Male	In-Group
Meagan	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	43	Female	In-Group
Mika	Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival	44	Male	In-Group
Neda	Seattle Iranian Festival	36	Female	In-Group
Samira	Seattle Iranian Festival	25	Female	In-Group
Sean	Cherry Blossom Festival	37	Male	Out-Group
Simone	Spirit of West Africa	26	Female	In-Group
Stephanie	Spirit of West Africa	57	Female	Out-Group
Tiffany	Cherry Blossom Festival	19	Female	Out-Group

*Age not given

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[15] Because respondents were recruited from among public celebrations and interviews did not discuss sensitive issues, the omission of their last names is sufficient to protect their anonymity.

Data Coding and Analysis

The overall mixed methods data set includes 48 interviews, 776 surveys, and hundreds of hours of observation recorded as field notes and memos. These distinct forms of data required separate forms of coding and analysis. Survey data were compiled and entered as a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel to be converted into a STATA file for statistical analysis. The results of this analysis are discussed in Chapter 3.

Interview data collected across the stages of research were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using the qualitative software, QSR NVivo. I began my data analysis with open coding of my interview data. The purpose of using open codes is to avoid overdetermining the results of the analysis based on a pre-decided set of themes informed by existent scholarly literature (Benaquisto 2008). Because the unique, mixed methods data sets produced data from a number of different actors involved in the production and participation in these events, this form of coding was appropriate to initiate my analysis. The codes that emerged from this initial analysis of the data, however, were not random. My first analytical decision was to code the data from my interview populations together. Contrary to findings from public-private festival partnerships elsewhere (Chacko 2013), there was no evidence of major dissonance between the parties involved in festival production, suggesting a unified sense of purpose for the festival series. Coding the data together allowed for a more complete picture of this relationship to emerge, as perspectives among these populations were collected side by side. NVivo's reference system also enabled the easy determination of the source of individual quotations to keep track of how various groups contributed to the code. Also, because my interviews had been informed by the research questions that animated my study, and these interests

themselves had been developed through the currents of research on issues of diversity and multiculturalism, civic engagement, and emotions, dominant themes emerged from the first round of coding that contributed to my development of the concept of celebratory civics.

Six major codes came from this first round of analysis. *Civic Outreach* was the emergent master code that contained subjects' understandings of the events as interactive and engaging of out-groups, rather than as simply entertaining events or parties. *Common Ground* contained references to the geographical location of the festival, as well as other related spatial topics, such as community events or cultural activities elsewhere in the city. *Inclusion and Exclusion* covered how respondents talked about issues of representation and the orientation of the festival content towards various demographic groups. The other three master codes emerged out of the interview subjects' discussions of the role of emotions at the festivals. *Positive Focus* was the major code describing the dominant emotional theme of celebration, goodwill, and joy within the festival space. *Non-Contentious* contains references to the festivals' avoidance of controversial subjects that could upset or divide the audience. *Dissuading Dissent* collected the more active interventions into the emotional content of the festivals, including the episodes of conflict or protest discussed in Chapter 5.

Hand-written memos and fieldnotes were also transcribed and entered in NVivo, but were analyzed separately from the interview data. Because these data reflected the spontaneous *in situ* analysis that is unavoidable by the field observer (Fetterman 2010), they were already attentive to thematically important material. Fieldnotes taken from Festál Meetings and Scope Sessions were coded by the type of organizational purpose,

such as strategies of civic engagement, marketing of the cultural content of particular festivals, and logistical considerations on event days. I then coded within these master codes for themes that would help to characterize the working partnership between Seattle Center Productions and ethnic community organizations, including a dominant theme, "teaching outreach," which is the subject of Chapter 5.

Fieldnotes and memos from festivals were coded first by type of interaction observed, whether stage content, interactions among participants, or personal communications while in the festival space. For purpose of easy comparison across sections of the data, I then coded these data according to the same codes that emerged from the interview process. This process enabled me to examine the conduct of the celebrations according to the intentions of festival planners and the reflections of participants.

Limitations and Virtues of the Data

The Festál series represents the efforts of nearly two-dozen ethnic community organizations working with the city of Seattle to stage 36 days of festivals that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors a year. This diversity of groups and individuals involved in making these civic events rewards a multi-stage and mixed-methods approach to data collection. Each set of data helps to answer questions raised by the others. Interviews with festival organizers about their priorities for the events are reinterpreted in light of observation of their interactions with the municipal offices

charged with overseeing them. Surveys of festival visitors help to test the assumptions of Seattle Center Productions that hosting cultural events in a public space can attract members from the broader audience and to assess the strategy developed by community leaders that celebration of differences can promote more intercultural engagement elsewhere and at other times. Investigating these survey respondents further with follow-up interviews helps to uncover how celebratory civics works on a more practical level, demonstrating the real-life challenges and opportunities to achieving interactions among different ethnic and racial groups within the contexts of a seemingly well-intentioned, but stubbornly segregated city.

However, even a mixed methodology cannot offer a *full* picture of the festival series. The present study relies upon a limited sample of the roster of 23 events, a necessary reduction given the availability of resources. Selecting five of these events for closer analysis means that survey data and formal interviews with organizers and visitors to the other 18 events are not included in the study. This limitation is worthy of consideration, given that diversity is an organizational premise of the festival series. Indeed, as will become apparent in the analysis, each event has developed a unique approach to hosting the event that suits both the personality of its organizers and the social position of the community they represent vis-à-vis the greater population in Seattle. Such differences also impact the reception of the event by their audiences— differences that would be difficult to capture fully as the population of interview subjects breaks down into smaller, but important, demographic differences. This dissertation, then, does not—and cannot—claim to speak to the entirety of the program in either the intention, execution, or reception of its civic outreach initiatives.

What it aims to do instead is develop a concept that—even within the limited breadth of its cases—presents a range of what can be attempted and accomplished through the use of positive emotions as the basis for civic outreach across lines of cultural difference. As the following chapters demonstrate, celebratory civics envisions a method of civic engagement that differs in kind and in purpose from what is commonly expected from models of the civil sphere that rely upon discourse and contention as the medium and method of social change. Festival organizers recognize that persuasion first requires gaining a sympathetic audience—when neither the audience nor its sympathy is supplied by spontaneous interactions in a segregated city short on social trust (Chapter 3). They believe that learning tolerance for diversity comes not from discussion of differences but by *feeling* a common experience of celebration. They see performance as an opportunity for self-definition before the public, playing up the positive sides of culture against a host of negative associations that attach themselves to minority groups (Chapter 4). And they confront the discomforting possibility that confrontation leads to discomfort, and that achieving civic solidarity in divisive times means that discussing weighty topics may need to wait (Chapter 5).

Chapter 3: Establishing Common Ground: Space, Celebration, and Civic Engagement at Ethnic Cultural Festivals

> *Questions of* who *owns publicly-accessible property in any meaningful sense matter deeply to what public space* is*, what it can be, what it is not, what it cannot be; they matter critically to who is an who is* not *included in the public…Being present in public space—making claims to and becoming visible in the streets, sidewalks, squares, and parks of the city—is a vital, necessary step in making claims* on *the public and* as part of *the public.*
>
> — Lynn Staeheli and Don Mitchell[16]

> *The public space of the cosmopolitan canopy encourages us to express our better selves and reminds us to keep our ethnocentric feelings in check. Ethno-leaning people can practice acting cosmopolitan, even if they need to put on gloss to give a convincing performance…The resulting folk ethnography serves as a cognitive and cultural base on which denizens are able to construct behavior in public. And often, though certainly not always, the end result is a growing social sophistication that allows diverse urban people to get along.*
>
> — Elijah Anderson[17]

In the heart of Seattle Center, beneath the soaring saucer of the city's iconic Space Needle, stands one of the largest public art pieces in the Pacific Northwest. It is a mosaic, 60 feet long and 17 high, with a gentle curve to its expanse that draws the viewer inward. Commissioned for the 1962 World's Fair, it announced Seattle to the world in a complex collage of glass tiles of various size and shape. Its artist, previously known for his monochromatic ink wash paintings, expanded his palette for the occasion, choosing 160 color variations to stand out against the city's famously drab skyline (Johns 2008:55-58; see Picture 3.1). But in the decades since its installation, the piece has taken on new meaning in the public imagination as it has been put to new purpose. It now serves as

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[16] Staeheli and Mitchell (2007:xxii), emphasis in the original.
[17] Anderson (2011:271, 277).

backdrop to Seattle's premiere public amphitheater, a stage that every year hosts dozens of free concerts and performances representing cultures from around the world. Meagan, a visitor to one of these events, sees the mosaic as a powerful symbol of unity in difference: "It shows the complete cosmopolitan culture, which for me is like, that's the best world. The mural represents that space."

Meagan is a second-generation Filipina-American on her mom's side, and has spent her entire life in Seattle. She knows all the best spots in the city to keep her daughters plugged into Pinay culture—weekend events in Seward Park, the grocery store in the SouthCenter mall with three aisles of lumpia, the food stand down on 15th and Columbian Way. But her family also seeks out engagement with the broader community in Seattle, frequenting the Mural Stage for cultural festivals. "We always go to the Center, specifically for those. Always. There's always something going on. Sometimes it's Russian folk dancing, sometimes it's square dancing… So it's always, for me, a great place for exposure to culture."

Picture 3.1: The "Best World." Paul Horiuchi's Mural Amphitheatre Mosaic.

Photograph copyright Ali Eminov, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0

Meagan's story reflects the cosmopolitan ambitions of Seattle Center Productions to achieve the "best world" of a tolerant, inclusive, progressive, multicultural civil sphere by assembling diverse audiences in the name of culture. But it also reflects the real-world conditions of Seattle's social geography, which, like most American cities, remains heavily segregated by race. Seattle's recent wave of foreign-born residents arrived to find a city that is abnormally white for its size, and with minority communities pocketed in neighborhoods South and East of downtown (see Figure 3.2), the same areas where Meagan and her family go to find Filipino food and events.

Urban sociologists have long stressed that the spatial isolation of communities of color represents a major challenge to achieving social equity in cities, as key resources like jobs and quality schools concentrate in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods inaccessible to minorities (Massey and Denton 1993; Sharkey 2013; Massey 2015). But racial segregation also poses obstacles to social contact among various groups of urban residents, inhibiting the kinds of everyday interactions across lines of difference that are critical to maintaining a healthy and vibrant civil society (Putnam 2000, Alexander 2006, Fisher et al. 2015; Enos 2017, Enos and Celeya, forthcoming). A lack of shared space has been shown to produce intergroup biases (Enos 2017; Enos and Celaya, forthcoming), reduce levels of civic engagement (Putnam 2007; Rothwell 2012), and decrease overall levels of social trust (Uslaner 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014)—effects that are particularly pronounced among established white residents (Abascal and Baldassari 2015).

Figure 3.1: The Real World of Seattle. Percentage of Non-Hispanic Whites by Census Tract

Source: Calculated from Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Riper, and Steven Ruggles. IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 12.0 [Database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. 2017. http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V12.

Moreover, in diversifying cities like Seattle, where foreign-born population growth outpaced overall population growth four to one throughout the 1990s (City of Seattle 2008:38; see also Chapter 2), the effects of segregation are compounded (Enos 2017). Segregation begets more segregation, as whites move out of neighborhoods as immigrant populations move in (Crowder, Hall, and Tolnay 2011; Hall and Crowder 2014) or stay firmly ensconced within white enclaves as surrounding neighborhoods

become more diverse (Crowder and South 2008). Indeed, even as broader King County

has become increasingly diverse, Seattle's white population has grown rather than shrunk

in percentage, as immigrants and people of color continue to move South and East of the

city (Balk 2014).[18]

How do you erase a trust deficit when the shape of the city is stacked against it?

This chapter examines the Festál series of public cultural festivals as a partnership

between the City of Seattle and participating ethnic community organizations to promote

civic outreach to a dominant community unlikely to encounter them in their normal

movements throughout the city. Presenting interview data from Seattle Center officials,

event organizers, and festival participants alongside survey data of visitors, I demonstrate

how the goal of civic outreach across group differences is pursued through a strategy of

place-making (Peterson 2012; Wynn 2015; Meier 2017), reshaping Seattle Center every

weekend as a space welcoming to members of the dominant, white community to share in

the celebration of ethnic culture. My findings reveal evidence to support organizers'

hopes that holding public festivals downtown will succeed in attracting participation

among out-group members in Seattle. Furthermore, both visitor testimonials and reported

behavior indicate that the celebration of culture can amount to more than "happy talk"

(Bell and Hartmann 2007); the exposure to cultural difference engendered through

attending ethnic festivals can promote further and more substantial civic engagement

among out-groups with ethnic minorities in the Seattle region.

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[18] The percentage of foreign-born residents of King County is 21%, but only 18% in Seattle. Bellevue, a suburb East of Seattle across Lake Washington, has 34.6% foreign-born residents. http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/~/media/depts/health/data/documents/demographics/foreign-born.ashx

In other words, celebratory civic events that assemble people in the name of culture constitute a "countertrend" in civic engagement (Putnam 2000; Fisher et al. 2015:45), bucking Putnam's (2007:151) fears that "diversity…bring[s] out the turtle in all of us." Furthermore, far from arguing that America should embrace a "post-ethnic" ethic that reduces the social salience of ethnic identities, as Putnam (2007:161) suggests, the evidence put forward in this chapter demonstrates that celebrating cultural diversity in public can help bring people out of their shells.

As I will argue below, public space is not "common ground" by default, but must be achieved through civic action. The spaces in the city described as public enforce a number of exclusions, sometimes through the force of law (Kohn 2003; Beckett and Herbert 2009), but frequently through custom (Puwar 2004; Ahmed 2006; Richer 2015). Because who belongs where and who belongs elsewhere is as much a matter of our norms and expectations as it is about physical location, achieving common ground requires bridging both spatial and social distances. In other words, common ground is both literal and metaphorical, at once a geographical and a symbolic accomplishment.

My argument proceeds in three sections. In the first, we see the strategy of celebratory civics illustrated through the story of Yutaka, who, alongside his wife, founded the first ethnic festival at Seattle Center. The experience of hosting an event celebrating a minority community in a public park both exposes the difficulties of finding common ground in a segregated city and lays out a strategy to resolve them. The second section investigates the spatial dynamics that play into visitors' decisions to attend festivals at Seattle Center. Each participant profiled in this section describes a different set of geographic-cum-social barriers that hinder their engagement with ethnic minorities

elsewhere in the city, and highlights the potential for public celebrations to bridge these sociospatial gaps. In the final section, I analyze the results of my survey data, showing the different patterns of participation among out-groups who sought out the festival and those who chanced upon it while at Seattle Center for another reason. This latter, harder to reach group represents an ideal target for the civic outreach efforts of festival organizations. I demonstrate evidence that festival planners have reason to believe that engaging out-groups through public, celebratory events can spark their further involvement in other cultural activities.

3.1 Selecting Seattle Center

Yutaka Sasaki is legendary among the participants of Festál, and his uplifting story is often retold to newcomers as foundational to the civic mission of the festival series. He and his wife, Tazue, have been involved in organizing the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival at Seattle Center since 1976, when, in gratitude for Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki's gift of 1000 cherry trees to Seattle to celebrate the US bicentennial, the mayor of Seattle invited members of the local Japanese community to host a festival at its downtown civic campus. In years prior, Seattle's Cherry Blossom Festival had been held in a large public park well south of the city, closer to the neighborhoods where most of Seattle's Japanese community lived. In Yutaka's telling, the move was not popular among all members of the community. "Mostly at that time the Japanese community was still looking inward," he told me. "[It was] not something that they would go outside and show to the American public what the Japanese have done.

Japanese wanted to celebrate within the community, to try to preserve it, to transfer to their own families what 'Japanese' is."

Yutaka admits to other reasons for their reticence, including wounds not yet healed from World War II, when thousands of Japanese families in the region were forcefully relocated to internment camps hundreds of miles away (Takami 1998). Those who returned to the region after the war primarily settled in the newly named International District south of downtown, or in the peripheral suburbs of Seattle—an isolation engendered through deed restrictions targeting immigrants and minority groups (Silva 2009). Such geographic segregation made closing social distances between the Japanese community and Seattle's white majority difficult, and the general population proved less hospitable than had the mayor in welcoming the festival into its civic plaza downtown. "Initially we had some complaints from the public," Yutaka recalled. "'Why are the Japanese coming into Seattle Center? Seattle Center is like a big living room for *here*, not for some minority community to have a party!'"

Yutaka's description of Seattle Center as a "living room"—a bit of branding begun by the city government—shows an idealized relationship between the publicity of civic space and the intimacy of a close-knit community. But it also reveals how public spaces come to assume the character of the people who frequent them, taking shape around the practices and preferences of those who feel most at home there (Puwar 2004; Staeheli and Mitchell 2008; Richer 2015). A place of public intimacy like Seattle Center—"a big living room for *here*"—also sets lines for exclusion: communities who belong *over there*. In Yutaka's case, a party organized for "some minority community"

would upset the unwritten assumptions regarding who belongs and how to behave in public.

The change in venue for the festival, then, also meant a change in its purpose, and Yutaka and the organizing committee worked to make Japanese culture accessible to the general public. The Cherry Blossom Festival—or Sakura Matsuri—is a traditional Spring event in Japan, during which families come together in parks to share food and festivities while admiring the cherry trees in full bloom. In inclement Seattle, the April festival was allotted a spot inside the Armory, a large, open building renovated to serve as Seattle Center's town square. Its vaulted, skylit ceilings shelter a community stage, surrounded by a food court with restaurant chains catering to the American palette. For Yutaka, the new location was "a really nice space and a good opportunity" to share Japanese traditions with the broader community.

> There [was] pizza there, and other food like hamburgers and hot dogs. *Then* when you [add] a little sushi and Japanese food, people tend to be a little more, "Let's try this thing!" … We learned you can share with the people, and the people are more willing to try what you bring to them instead of stay away from it.

Locating the festival in a park south of downtown, or ensconced in the isolation of the International District, not only constructed a geographical barrier limiting the attendance and participation of non-Japanese groups—it also erected an emotional barrier. Yutaka describes a common finding in sociological understandings of geography, that people are averse to what is unfamiliar. They tend to "stay away from" people, places, and things that are different from their experiences (Enos 2017). By moving the festival to Seattle Center, and presenting Japanese culture as an offering that can be taken or left among other more familiar choices, Yutaka found that "a lot more people felt comfortable to join it without worrying." The positive emotions of *sharing* in a space

where out-group communities felt *comfort* led to less *worry* and more *willingness* to try something different.

This positive reaction among the public proved reciprocal, as mutual suspicion yielded to a desire for deeper involvement. Japanese cultural organizations like Taiko drumming schools or teahouses that had been reticent to relocate to the Armory building began seeing unanticipated benefits:

> They had people coming in, they were asking questions, they showed interest. Pretty soon they say to me, "Oh, Mr. Sasaki, *this is fun!"* So they started enjoying teaching the other people and showing [off]. And then they had people who were interested, "Can I come join your school?"…That's when it started to be a big tool for recruiting new members for all those organizations.
> Social psychologists have shown that feelings can be contagious, as "emotional

energy" transfers from person to person in chains of interaction (Collins 2004:105; Horberg et al. 2011). The act of celebrating culture among diverse populations with various degrees of familiarity with the meanings of cultural practices amplifies the goodwill engendered at the festival. Positive emotions excite, and demonstrate "a forward-oriented causality" that animates people to be more active and engaged (Collins 2001:30). For the instructors participating in the festival, sharing traditions with non-Japanese Americans and sparking their interest proved to be fun. For the visitors, the enjoyment of learning something new and exciting led them to seek out future participation by joining an organization. The practice of sharing culture shows that the uninitiated can be made not to "stay away from" unfamiliar practices, but can actually become motivated to pursue them further, beyond the festival and Seattle Center itself.

Yutaka's vision of achieving civic belonging for ethnic minorities through emphasizing goodwill and sharing cultural practices describes a civic engagement strategy I call *celebratory civics*. Celebratory civics derives from and confronts the real

conditions of segregation and social exclusion faced by minority groups in Seattle and other divided urban areas (Massey and Denton 1993; Logan 2013; Sharkey 2013)—the same dynamics that have repeatedly been shown to heighten intergroup tension (Enos and Celaya, forthcoming), lower social trust (Uslaner 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014), and depress civic participation (Putnam 2007; Rothwell 2012). Cultural festivals thus appear to be something of a "countertrend" in civic engagement (Putnam 1995, 2000; Fisher et al. 2015), zigging into the zag of what is expected from diversifying communities such as Seattle. But these celebratory events are also unique in another way: they employ positive emotions as a means to lessen the tension and hostility exacerbated by group segregation and to bring people out of their shells (cf. Putnam 2007). In other words, ethnic community organizations use festivals to *establish common ground*, both literally through sharing space in a segregated city and metaphorically by producing positive experiences across group differences.

I use the word 'establish' with intention. Common ground is not so much *found*, as the idiom more commonly goes, as it is *made* (Emirbayer and Sheller 1999). The social and emotional geographies of segregated cities do not lend themselves to the spontaneous creation of neutral spaces where members from diverse communities can interact without stigma.[19] Even public spaces such as Seattle Center are governed by legal regulations (Kohn 2003; Beckett and Herbert 2009) or embodied norms (Puwar 2004;

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[19] Exceptions to this trend, however, are notable. Anderson (2011:xiv) has referred to such places as "cosmopolitan canopies" or "settings that offer a respite from the lingering tensions of urban life and an opportunity for diverse peoples to come together." His ethnographic study of Philadelphia focuses on how the racial animus evident elsewhere in the city becomes muted in such contexts, and "ethnic and racial borders are deemphasized" (Ibid.:xvii). Clearly, the centrality to ethnic identity at a cultural festival differs from Anderson's conception of a cosmopolitan canopy as a "neutral social setting" (Ibid.:275); my focus is on how such contexts may come into being.

Ahmed 2006; Richer 2015) that produce social exclusions. If such common spaces are to arise at all, it is through the civic efforts of concerned citizens to create them.

This by necessity implies a greater initiative by ethnic community organizations than simply "meeting in the middle." Yutaka's story of racial rapprochement begins with a problem of mistrust for which he assigns blame to both sides: the Japanese community for "looking inward" and the dominant community for attempting to keep them away from downtown. But in drawing this equivalence, Yutaka also claims agency in addressing the problems of institutional and interpersonal discrimination against the Japanese and Japanese-American community in Seattle—taking the painful, but necessary first step to reach out to the dominant community. Downtown in Seattle Center, with its iconic Space Needle, classic American food, and heavy patronage by white Seattleites was a far more effective, and therefore sensible, location for him to make his cultural offering, even if it meant relocating the community festival away from the neighborhoods to which the Japanese community had been banished.

As the next two sections will show, there is reason for Yutaka to believe that the segregation of Seattle's minority communities makes out-group members wary and suspicious of engaging with them, but there is also evidence to show that public cultural celebrations can attenuate those negative feelings and engender future, deeper interactions across lines of difference. Before turning to a broader statistical analysis of festival visitors, I profile audience members from three different festivals—Larisa from the Spirit of West Africa, Genny from the Seattle Iranian Festival, and Chelsea from the Polish Festival Seattle—each of whom describes a different spatial barrier to engaging with ethnic minorities in Seattle, and how the Festál series may serve as a gateway to

further participation. These visitors describe their encounters with ethnic minority cultures in Seattle as being conditioned by the shape of Seattle's social topography, as geographical distances come to produce social and emotional barriers to interaction across ethnic lines.[20]

3.2 Festival Visitors Seeking Common Ground

Larisa would like to attend all the Festál events, and now that she's retired, she finally has the time. She first became interested in different cultures when she moved to Seattle from Bellingham, Washington—a small city near the border with Canada where nearly everyone, like herself, is white. She remembers that, at the time in 1986, "there were more and more people coming into the country from other cultures. It's pretty amazing, people come from all over…and just the people who live in this community have so much to offer."

Genny is 19, a student of biology at a small private college in Seattle. She was introduced to Festál by her Croatian freshman roommate, who brought her along to CroatiaFest. When they arrived at Seattle Center for the event, she says, "we saw the banner [for] a bunch of different culture fests, and we were like, 'Oh, we should definitely stay tuned for this!' And [now] we've been to several."

Chelsea's grandmother—her *babcia*—is Polish. Chelsea remembers holiday visits from her *babcia* while growing up, learning Polish Christmas songs "and little things like that that I didn't think twice about." Now she's 28, and preparing to get married in the

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[20] The socio-spatial problems described by the respondents profiled are representative of those described in the general interview sample, but a detailed profile of the three cases allows me to exhibit the full narrative arc of their resolution (see Wellman 1993; Bonilla-Silva 2001).

fall. Her fiancée is of Italian heritage, and they decided to incorporate traditions from each of their ethnic cultures in their wedding ceremony. She's on the lookout for jewelry reminiscent of her *babcia*'s—"all the crystals and the amber and little things"—and came to Polish Festival Seattle to browse the market.

Each of these three festival visitors expresses a wish to become more involved in intercultural activities. But all three also live in the northern suburbs of Seattle, areas ranging from 80-90% white and with much lower proportions of foreign-born residents than the city as a whole.[21] Attending a festival, then, requires searching out another area of the city where such events might be thrown. Like most large cities (see, e.g. Veronis 2006; Baker and Draper 2013), Seattle's minority communities host events in neighborhoods where the population is strong: the host of the Spirit of West Africa festival owns a live music venue in the historically Black Central District, the Iranian community holds a huge picnic in the Eastern suburb of Issaquah for Sizdeh Be-dar, and the Polish community center features events every weekend in Capitol Hill. Larisa, Genny, and Chelsea are aware of these opportunities and others like them, but, for different reasons, have chosen Seattle Center as their point of entry into the community. Each of their stories represents a distinct challenge to encountering cultural differences in a segregated city. Understanding these obstacles to intercultural interaction, and the role of festivals in providing future opportunities for engagement, speaks to the hopes of Yutaka and others who believe that sharing positive feelings in a publicly accessible area can help ameliorate different emotional and geographic barriers.

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[21] According to five-year population estimates from the American Community Survey, 2012-2016.

Larisa and the Liberal Dilemma

For Larisa, the demographic transformation to Seattle in the 1980s she describes with enthusiasm coincided with other changes she found less welcome. She says that the crowds and the crime came to be too much for her, so she moved to a bedroom community just north of Seattle for retirement. She'll still come into the city for festivals, but is cautious about how she arrives, and the areas of the city she needs to pass through. She prefers to take the monorail to Seattle Center, rather than the bus, so she "can avoid 3rd Ave., which is really bad."

> Not all the neighborhoods are that great in Seattle. Personally, I wouldn't want to live in Seattle. It's kind of become a dangerous place. A lot of the areas where the community festivals are, I wouldn't go to those areas—like South Seattle—because I don't think they're that safe. I'd probably be fine, but I just wouldn't feel right doing that.
>
> *Interviewer*: You would feel threatened?
>
> *Larisa*: Yeah, it would feel a lot safer at Seattle Center.

Larisa's attitudes toward the growing ethnic and racial diversity in Seattle are clearly in conflict. On the one hand, she is excited about her new neighbors as having "so much to offer" the community. On the other, she associates the neighborhoods where they live as "not…great" and "dangerous." Like many whites whose racially secluded neighborhoods grow in diversity, she moved to an area of the city that is more racially homogeneous (Crowder, Hall, and Tolnay 2011; Hall and Crowder 2014). Yet, she'll take weekend trips back down to the city just to take part in festivals celebrating ethnic minorities.

Larisa evinces what researchers have taken to calling a "new liberal dilemma" in the current age of migration (Kumlin and Rothstein 2010; Reeskens and van Oorschot

2012; Steele 2016): adopting a progressive posture towards hypothetical or superficial expressions of ethno-racial differences coupled with a more blithe neglect toward structural inequalities experienced disproportionately by minority groups. Some scholars suggest that Larisa's simultaneous espousing of the virtues of diversity and fear of otherness exposes her affirmations of difference as hypocritical, insincere, and self-flattering (Bell and Hartmann 2007). However, beliefs, feelings, and actions often vary immensely by situation, and contradictory attitudes on controversial subjects are seldom separable into "real" and "assumed." They can reside at the same time in the same person, with each activated under contextually specific conditions (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006).

The ambivalence that Larisa is describing is expressed as a conflict between her thoughts and her feelings. Rationally, she recognizes that "I'd probably be fine" attending a cultural festival in an ethnic community, but emotionally she "just wouldn't feel right doing that." Instead she "would feel a lot safer at Seattle Center." It is the hope of community organizers like Yutaka that these feelings are not fixed, but can change through exposure to the positive, participatory emotions on display at celebratory events.

Larisa indicates that, at least provisionally, they have. One of the festivals she has attended multiple times over the years is the Tết Festival Seattle, a celebration of the Vietnamese New Year. Like all Festál events, Tết features many activities that invite easy participation among members with all levels of familiarity with Vietnamese culture, including food, musical performances, exhibits, and workshops: "One thing I like about Festál that compares to maybe something in the International District is that they go out of their way to educate the public about their culture and they have displays and things

like that, so you can learn more about [them]." This ease of access and ready information, however, also offers emotional dividends that she has difficulty expressing. "It's just something about the Vietnamese people that I like and I can't really explain what it is," she said. "It's hard for me to put words. I can talk *around* it. There's sort of a friendliness and openness, good-naturedness about them, that I want to be around that feeling."

Larisa's growing interest in the Vietnamese community is described as a "feeling" that is "hard for [her] to put into words." As will be discussed in further detail in Chapters 4 and 5, community organizations employing celebratory civics actively promote this tactic of *learning through feeling* as a matter of civic outreach. As a method of civility that uses emotional appeals rather than discursive deliberations to resolve tensions that might arise in pluralistic environments, celebratory civics differs from what is expected by dominant theories of civil society and the public sphere (Habermas 1984, 1987, 1989; Cohen and Arato 1992, see also Chapter 4). Instead, the changing sensations that Larisa describes indicates that the transference of emotional energy (Collins 2001; 2004) from celebrating ethnic communities to their audiences can be successful. Such feelings may also persist beyond the scene of interaction, motivating future behavior. For Larisa, who made friends with a Vietnamese woman at the festival, the experience has stirred her to explore areas of the city she would ordinarily eschew:

> She showed me some places that I could go to during the day. It's not my favorite part of Seattle, but you take the light rail…down to a stop called Othello, and it's in the middle of Little Vietnam. She took me there by car and she pointed out the pho [Vietnamese noodle soup], and she showed me all the Vietnamese delis which is where she goes to get all the sandwich foods and all of that. So I'm going to do that, maybe this week.

Genny and Geographies of Privilege

For Genny, coming to Seattle for college meant leaving the familiarity and
comfort of her upbringing in small-town Vancouver, Washington. Like a lot of young
people experiencing their first taste of independence in new city, Genny says that she is
motivated by an intense "desire to soak up Seattle, to soak up the culture." This ideal of
urban cosmopolitanism is also reinforced by her college's emphasis on engaging culture
and participating in service. Yet it did not take long for Genny to discover that this
romantic notion is seldom matched in practice in her new city, and is even rare to see at
her own school. She speaks of this growing realization in her freshman seminar,
"Encounters":

> [The professor] was talking about encountering cultures, and I was sitting in this
> classroom thinking, "Yeah, culture, man!" And then I realized—I looked around
> the classroom and I was like, we're all white, middle-class Americans, and we're
> probably all straight, and it sort of made me start thinking I have this extreme
> advantage that I'm not even aware of most of the time.

The characteristics of the social spaces we most frequently inhabit tend also to
inhabit us (Bourdieu 1993; Butler and Robson 2003; Richer 2015). Space can take on a
racial character, reflecting back these social contingencies that become reified as natural
(Puwar 2004; Ahmed 2006). Bonilla-Silva (2006:104) has argued that racial segregation
can have the same effect on a wider scale, creating what he calls a "white habitus…that
conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their
views on racial matters." Genny speaks of her whiteness (as well as the privileges of her
class, nationality, and sexual orientation) as an "extreme advantage" that she is "not even
aware of most of the time." In social psychological terms, these personal traits are never

made salient in the everyday situations that make up her real encounters. It took the dissonance of speaking positively of the virtues of "encountering cultures" within a highly homogeneous social environment to spark Genny's realization that something was amiss.

A growing body of scholarship has shown that spatial segregation is not merely a product of structural inequalities and discriminatory intergroup relations, but has an independent, *causal* effect on social relationships (Sharkey 2013; Cashin 2014; Enos 2017). Spatial segregation works in this way by isolating groups in distinct social environments, decreasing the opportunity for either casual interactions in everyday life or sustained relations that persist over time. Absent these encounters, people tend to fill in their experience gap with group-based assumptions that explain and justify this difference, creating a "vicious cycle" wherein segregation reproduces the conditions for its own existence (Enos 2017).

But in seeking to overcome her white habitus, Genny was also confronted with a logistical problem that is also the direct result of spatial segregation: the communities with whom she seeks to encounter reside at a great physical distance from where she lives. Her college not only selects a student body that looks a lot like her, but is also situated within one of the city's whitest districts, north of downtown. Despite referring to herself as a "big bus rider," Genny also recognizes the distance of community festivals as a major obstacle to her attendance. Seattle Center, by contrast, is far more accessible to her neighborhood—which in itself is a product of the geographic privilege of easy access afforded to dominant groups.

> It's really helpful that Seattle Center, as a neighborhood, is [in] more of the center of Seattle because it's easier to get to. Because I feel like a huge problem with

some of these [community-based cultural festivals] is that they're really out of the way, and so it's like, who wants to go to 'Obscure Meeting Town Hall 1' or whatever?

Genny displays a degree of reflexivity regarding her privileges, but also reveals some limits to her willingness to move beyond them. Attending a cultural festival closer to the communities of the celebrants necessitates traveling "really out of the way" from "the center of Seattle." As she explains, understandably, "the idea of transferring three buses is not my thing." These distances, however, work in both directions, signaling the added burden of segregation borne by communities of color who live far from the urban amenities at Seattle Center.

As our conversation continued, Genny admitted that it is not just the length of the journey that has prevented her from seeking out festivals or other cultural events further afield. After all, she recognizes, "if you really want to go somewhere, you will make it happen." She also speaks of the feelings of belonging engendered by the segregation of groups into distinct, distant communities that can subdivide urban geography into "territories" more or less appropriate for people like her.

> The thing with Seattle Center is that it's more of a neutral territory, if you will, so I feel more comfortable going there, as opposed to something that's a little more out of the way, because it's a bit more intimidating because it's like you have to meet them on their turf. Which isn't a bad thing necessarily, and I realize [that] no matter where they are, if they're a minority they have to meet us on the majority turf all the time. So I realize that it's probably a good exercise getting out of my comfort zone a little bit and engaging across the culture, but it's also something like [takes a deep breath].

Genny lacked the words to complete her thought, instead concluding with a heavy sigh to communicate the extra effort of having to escape her "comfort zone." The involutions she shows in this explanation—"Seattle Center is…more of a neutral territory" although "minorit[ies] have to meet us on the majority turf"—reveal her

internal struggle to reconcile her enthusiasm for the cultural events with the underlying structure of ethno-racial relations that give them shape. Neighborhoods become ethno-racial property—"turf"—when they concentrate only certain groups of people, and crossing these spatial boundaries requires crossing a social boundary that Genny describes as "intimidating." However, she, like Larisa above, shows some willingness to branch out beyond the festival. Although she maintains that at a community event she "would feel slightly intimidated going there at first…I feel like obviously if they're hosting it and making it public, they care about people outside the culture coming… [When] you go to small places and everyone's in there for the same purpose you kind of share an energy."

Chelsea and Reconnecting with the Community

Unlike Larisa or Genny, who attended the festivals at Festál as strangers to the culture being celebrated, Chelsea shares heritage with the organization hosting the Polish Festival Seattle. But there wasn't much of a Polish community where she grew up in Montana, notwithstanding the visits from her *babcia*, and she let her ties to Polish culture fade when she moved to Seattle. Aside from infrequent visits to the Polish deli "down in Federal Way [a suburb South of Seattle]," she says, "I didn't try to find [Polish] people or anything like that."

For Chelsea, the festival presented her an opportunity to reconnect with Polish traditions and to meet members of the Polish community. Although she originally attended the celebration with the explicit purpose of searching out Polish jewelry to

include in her wedding, she felt surprised by her feelings of recognition from her past, and pride in their representation to the broader public. "I was impressed by just the sheer numbers of people they had going through the different activities… It was fun because I have actually been to Poland a few times, so it was like, "Oh yeah, I remember that!"

Chelsea had been to the Italian Festival at Seattle Center before, alongside her Italian-American fiancée. But she describes the feeling in seeing the display of her own ethnic heritage—and introducing it to her partner—as being a different quality of experience: "Oh yeah, it felt very different… [at] the Polish Festival. I notice things to the extent that, it's just me bragging—well, not bragging—but I guess yeah, sort of bragging! 'Hey! We did that! And we had that!' So that was kind of the fun part of it."

In seeing Polish culture celebrated in public, Chelsea describes a growing sense of pride, in spite of her lapsed connection to the Polish community. The fun she expresses in sharing these traditions with her non-Polish partner is not unlike the sentiment Yutaka described as felt by the first Japanese community organizations to participate in the festival series. And, like the festival organizers themselves, she sees the festival as a way of reaching the broader community, making them more familiar with Polish culture through sharing positive experiences together: "Everyone seemed to be having a good time regardless of their reason for being there. So my hope is that that kind of gets the word out."

Despite Chelsea's evident enthusiasm in participating at the festival and her warm recollections of her connection to Polish culture, she, too, describes sensations of distance from Seattle's Polish community that echo the discomfort expressed by Larisa and Genny in visiting Seattle's ethnic enclaves. Chelsea says that having the festival at Seattle

Center, rather than at the Polish community center, Dom Polski, "made it easy for me to go there, because I already go [to Seattle Center] for Bite of Seattle or for this or that. So, yeah, it's a venue I go to all the time, so it added a level of comfort, like, 'Hey, I don't have to step that far outside of my comfort zone to try something a little bit different that may or may not be comfortable for me.'"

Chelsea has family members who are Polish immigrants, and has visited Poland a number of times. But her assimilation into Anglo-American culture means that visiting a Polish community center remains "something a little bit different." By contrast, the public space of Seattle Center—already familiar to Chelsea through the other events it hosts on campus—can attenuate that feeling of difference, adding "a level of comfort" to her experience. The Polish Festival Seattle provided Chelsea with a point of entry into the Polish community in Seattle and an opportunity to reconnect her ethnic heritage with her current identity. After having severed her ties to Polish culture in her previous home, Chelsea now says that her experience at the festival may jumpstart further involvement with the Polish community.

> I liked seeing it in Seattle Center, because that obviously pulled me in. Now I'm more intrigued to go see some of these events that are maybe closer to the community. It kind of took that bigger, kind of neutral, common ground where there are a lot of events and festivals and things like that, to get me to step out. I'm interested, but that really piqued my interest so now it's, hey, what else do I want to be a part of?

Larisa, Genny, and Chelsea each describe how the shape of the segregated city sets limits on their willingness and ability to interact with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, despite their interest in cultural engagement. Larisa reveals that her evident passion for cultural diversity coincides with more troubling feelings of threat from communities of color. The festivals that make up Festál have been able to activate her

positive associations with ethnic minorities, establish friendships, and begin to venture into parts of the city she had previously thought of as unsafe. For Genny, the geographical distance of community festivals from her white residential enclave presented barriers to her participation that were at once logistical and symbolic. There was simply more space separating her from areas of the city where more minorities lived, but at the same time, this segregation divided the urban landscape into ethno-racially identifiable territories—"turf"—that "belonged" to one or another group. Chelsea, too, divided the city into neutral ground and ethnic territory, even in the case where the ethnicity in question is one that she shares.

In all three cases, Seattle Center is described as a location where curious, but hesitant people could safely visit events celebrating the city's minority populations. Their stories reflect the assumptions that Yutaka and other community organizers have made about the general population of Seattle, and exhibit the various geographic puzzles that Festál festivals are attempting to solve. They show that holding celebratory events in public space can succeed in Yutaka's civic mission of establishing common ground in a segregated city, and hint at the possibility that his efforts of outreach may be reciprocated in the future. But do the testimonials of these three visitors merely reflect a socially desirable avowal of cultural diversity that stops outside the festival gates? Will they follow through with their stated intentions to seek out intergroup interactions elsewhere in Seattle? In the next section, a review of the broader population of festival visitors in my survey data gives reason for optimism that celebratory civic events may accomplish exactly that.

3.3 Can Public Festivals Promote Intercultural Civic Engagement?

Space matters for who participates in cultural festivals, and a "party" thrown by "some minority community" can actually become a civic event for the city at large. My survey at five Festal events collected demographic and activity data of 776 festival visitors in order to measure who comes to the public stage in the name of culture, how they came to attend the festivals, as well as the other intercultural activities in which they participate in and around Seattle (for the full survey instrument, see Appendix B).

Based on my survey of festival visitors, we can see in Figure 3.2 how each event attracts audiences with distinct connections to the celebrating ethnic group. The population marked 'In-Group' represents those respondents who share "personal or familial heritage" with the culture being celebrated; respondents classified as being 'out-group' members do not identify themselves as sharing such heritage with the culture being celebrated, and represent a more racially diverse population of visitors (see Appendix A for demographic characteristics of festival visitors and pages 56-58 for a description of these data). The difference in the proportion of in- and out-group visitors at the various events is notable, and can be explained according to the relative size of the ethnic population in Seattle, the season during which the event is staged, and the number of years over which the festival has taken place at Seattle Center. The Cherry Blossom Festival, for example, is the event with the longest tenure, dating back to the 1970s, and its April dates mean that there are fewer tourists on Seattle Center's campus from which to attract passersby. By contrast, the Polish Festival was in its first year as part of the Festal program and featured a large beer garden outside on the main lawn to take advantage of the July weather—these factors contributed to a lower percentage of out-

group visitors than the Cherry Blossom Festival (48.6% to 63.6%, respectively) and a higher percentage of visitors happening upon the festival while on campus for another activity (30.2% to 8.8%). Furthermore, the small size of the West African community in Seattle provided a smaller community from which to draw in-group members (21.4%) than the Philippine Festival (60.0%), which has a large presence in the Puget Sound region. Despite these differences in the proportion of in-group members at the various festivals, they constitute a minority (43.6%) of festival visitors overall. This fact means that among all of the events surveyed, people who have no personal or familial connection to the ethnic group hosting the event actually outnumber those who do (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Festival Visitors by Ethnic Group Affiliation, %
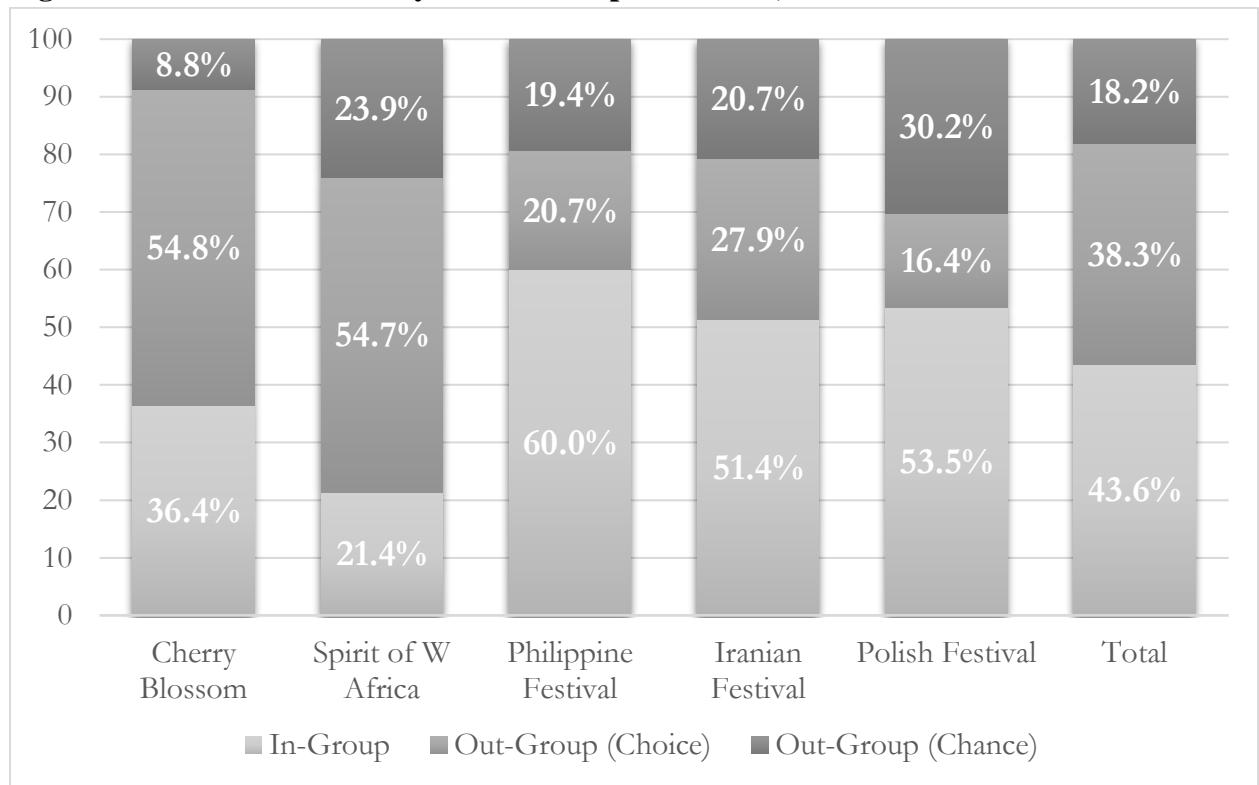
Within this larger group out-group visitors, I have highlighted one key distinction. Because Seattle Center is a prominent public space, housing a number of attractions that bring in visitors from all over the city and the country, many members of the festival audience are people who chance upon the event while already on campus for another purpose. Indeed, there is reason to assume that the number of out-group visitors who attended the festival by chance—just under a third of out-group visitors and 18.2% of visitors overall—are underrepresented in the sample.[22] People who have chosen to attend a festival may be more likely to stay longer at the event, increasing the likelihood that they would be recruited for participation in the study. Similarly, visitors motivated to join in the celebration may also be more willing to fill out a survey than those who stopped by for a short time on their way to or from another attraction.[23] These factors suggest that the number of out-group members who were exposed to the festival, however briefly, is even greater than what the survey instrument measures.

This segment of Seattle's population matters, since "chance" visitors are, by definition, less likely to seek out interactions across lines of difference than are out-group members who have chosen to attend the event (See Figure 3.3 and Table 3.2 below). The casual and open form of civic engagement that takes place at festivals means that many participants are recruited spontaneously, or are unwittingly exposed to the expressions of minority cultural practices which more typically take place in areas of the city they are unlikely to encounter. Since urban segregation creates a vicious cycle wherein dominant

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[22] For further information about the survey sample and data collection, see Chapter 2.

[23] Although it would of course be impossible to calculate the different response rates of these groups, since it is only through the survey that I could know their reasons for attending, their decision whether or not to participate in a follow-up interview can serve as a reasonable proxy for enthusiasm. Both in-group and out-group members who sought out the festival were much more likely to be interviewed (23.9% and 25.4%, respectively) than were survey respondents who chanced upon the events (16.8%).

groups "pull in like a turtle," (Putnam 2007:149) and become increasingly unlikely to interact with members of minority groups (Uslaner 2011; Rothwell 2012; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Abascal and Baldassari 2015; Enos 2017), the criss-crossing foot traffic on Seattle's civic campus makes Seattle Center an attractive venue both for out-group members looking for a "comfortable" space with which to seek out ethnic culture—people like Larisa and Genny—as well as for passersby who are drawn in by the free entertainment of the festival.

Each festival's demonstrated success in reaching hundreds of members from this elusive audience proves the assumptions of Yutaka and his fellow ethnic community organizations correct: hosting the festival in a public place could lead to greater opportunities to engage the broader public. This feature was also a major factor motivating the city's investment of municipal resources in the program. As John Merner, the Director of Seattle Center Productions told me, "We've always talked about the unsuspecting audience. You could do A Glimpse of China [Festál's Chinese Festival] in the International District, but doing it here, people who didn't even plan to see it would come upon it and learn something and create a greater understanding for our community." The "unsuspecting audience" John targets shares surprising similarities with other festivals visitors. Out-group visitors who arrived by chance do not differ significantly from other out-group visitors by race; indeed, both groups closely match the overall racial composition of Seattle's population. Given that few of Seattle's individual neighborhoods contain the diversity of the city as a whole—the proportion of white residents ranges from over 90% in Madison Park to under 10% in Beacon Hill (see

Figure 3.1, above)—the demographic makeup of Seattle Center makes the potential

audience of Festál events a microcosm of the greater city (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Racial Composition of Out-group Members

Race	Out-Group (Choice)	Out-Group (Chance)	Seattle Population*
White	61.4%	64.1%	66.3%
Black	7.7	4.6	7.7
Asian	18.4	14.5	13.7
Hispanic[†]	4.8	6.9	6.6
Mixed	4.4	6.1	4.4
Other	3.3	3.8	1.3
Total	100	100	100

*2010 US Census Figures †Non-White Hispanic

Out-group visitors who sought out the festivals did differ from this unsuspecting

audience in other key respects, however, that made them an attractive for the civic

purpose of outreach practiced by the festivals. Figure 3.3 and Table 3.2 show other forms

of interactions that festival visitors had with ethnic minorities in the past year. Measuring

levels of engagement in this way asks participants to reflect on their actual activities

rather than their more hypothetical intentions (Fisher et al. 2015). This feature may be of

greater importance on issues related to race and diversity, subjects that are sensitive for

many people (see e.g. Bell and Hartmann 2007). Asking respondents about their attitudes

towards various ethnic and racial groups would leave the data liable to the social

desirability biases of participants, perhaps especially so in the "normative context of

multiculturalism" of a festival, where positive representations of ethnicity are salient

(Voyer 2015). Although the problem of social desirability cannot be avoided entirely, by

asking respondents about their participation in concrete activities within a bounded

period of time, the respondent is required to speak about their personal experiences rather

than their self-perceived attitudes. Corroboration of interview data with survey responses also helps to counteract the "attitudinal fallacy" wherein research participants verbalize a flattering self-portrait that is not always manifest in situated behavior (Jerolmack and Khan 2014).

As can be seen in Figure 3.3, there is a great deal of variation in the type of cultural activity engaged in by each of these three groups. Entertaining, easy-access activities, such as dining at an ethnic restaurant or watching an ethnic movie or TV program, are more popular among all groups than are the more challenging activities that demand deeper investment in the community, such as participating in an online forum on ethnicity or participating in ethnic community advocacy. Although in-group celebrants were slightly more likely than their out-group peers to engage in these kinds of politically oriented activities, out-group members who sought out the festival were actually more likely than members of the celebrating ethnic group to engage in intercultural activities associated with leisure, such as traveling abroad or visiting an ethnic museum or community center.

Looking more closely at the out-group populations—the audience most targeted by the strategy of celebratory civics practiced by the ethnic community organizations staging the festivals—it is evident that visitors who chanced upon the event were less engaged in other kinds of cultural activities involving contact with minority groups (see Table 3.2). Perhaps unsurprisingly, members of the choice out-group were more likely to attend additional cultural festivals (2.9) than festival visitors who attended the event by chance (2.3). A two-tailed difference of means t test of these averages reveals that the

difference is significant at the 0.001 level. However, we also see that chance visitors were

less likely

Figure 3.3: Participation in Cultural Activities, By Ethnicity

Activity	In-group	Out-group (Choice)	Out-Group (Chance)
Participated in an online forum on ethnicity	9.0	7.3	4.8
Hosted a guest and/or student from abroad	13.6	9.6	8.0
Participated in ethnic community advocacy	16.3	15.4	12.0
Taken a course related to ethnic language/culture	16.0	20.0	13.6
Read an ethnic newspaper or magazine	38.5	31.9	23.2
Attended an ethnic play or concert	36.2	40.8	28.8
Visited a website oriented towards an ethnic group	39.5	40.4	31.2
Traveled outside of the U.S.	41.9	51.9	41.6
Visited an ethnic museum or community center	42.9	53.1	36.8
Watched an ethnic movie or TV program	70.4	70.9	68.0
Dined at an ethnic restaurant	83.1	86.9	84.0

than choice visitors to engage in each of the 11 forms of cultural activity asked on the

survey. On average, chance visitors reported participating in nearly one fewer cultural

activity (3.9) than their festival-seeking peers (4.8), a difference significant at the 0.01

level. Lesser levels of statistical significance were also found for several of the individual

activities, including visiting an ethnic museum or community center and attending an

96

ethnic play or concert.[24] These results indicate that festival organizers are justified in anticipating that this "unsuspecting audience" who did not intentionally seek out the festival is also less likely to engage in interethnic activities elsewhere in the city.

Table 3.2: Out-group Members' Participation in Cultural Activities

Type of activity	Out-Group Chance (%)	Out-Group Choice (%)
Dined at an ethnic restaurant	84.0%	86.9%
Watched an ethnic movie or TV program	68.0%	70.9%
Visited an ethnic museum or community center	36.8% *	53.1%
Traveled outside of the U.S.	41.6%	51.9%
Visited a website oriented towards an ethnic group	31.2%	40.4%
Attended an ethnic play or concert	28.8% *	40.8%
Read an ethnic newspaper or magazine	23.2%	31.9%
Taken a course related to ethnic language/culture	13.6%	20.0%
Participated in ethnic community advocacy	12.0%	15.4%
Hosted a guest and/or student from abroad	8.0%	9.6%
Participated in an online forum on ethnicity	4.8%	7.3%
Activity score	3.9 **	4.8
Number of cultural festivals attended in last year	2.3 ***	2.9

*Two-tailed difference of means t test is significant at the 0.05 level
**Two-tailed difference of means t test is significant at the 0.01 level
***Two-tailed difference of means t test is significant at the 0.001 level

For festival organizers, these unwitting participants represented an ideal audience for the celebratory civic events. Because this audience has fewer strong ties to the celebrating community and less engagement with out-groups more generally, they were at once more difficult to reach and had potentially the most to gain from their random encounter with ethnic minority cultures. John's optimism that people at Seattle for other events would "come upon" the festival and, through this ephemeral encounter, "learn something and create a greater understanding for our community" was a recurrent theme

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[24] The associations between choice status and foreign travel, visiting a website, and reading an ethnic magazine or newspaper were weaker, significant at the 0.10 level.

among festival organizers. In sharing the findings of my questionnaire with the program, it was the percentage of chance out-group visitors that received the most consistent comment. As Jennifer, an Event Coordinator at Seattle Center, told me, these data show that "people just stumble upon the shows. People who would never think to make an effort to learn about West African culture came for a hamburger and got to have fun and maybe learn a little something and maybe pique their interest."

Jennifer describes a chain of potential actions that describes festival organizers outreach strategies of reaching a broader audience through public celebrations. Hosting the event in a prominent civic space will lead people whose lives rarely intersect with minority communities to "stumble upon" them; the lively and inviting atmosphere of the joyful event will draw them in, providing them an opportunity to "have fun"; in the process of being entertained through an unfamiliar activity, these casual audiences will "maybe learn a little something"; and this positive experience of learning through feeling in a space of familiarity and comfort will "maybe pique their interest" to engage in future cultural interactions down the line.

Social psychologists have shown that context matters for the reception of messages, and that audience responses vary based on what interpersonal characteristics are made salient in a situation (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006). Racial and ethnic biases that people may hold are not always determinative of their actions; they can be activated or muted depending on the mode and setting of an interaction. A growing body of research has shown that positive emotional appeals—like the fun and goodwill signaled at a public celebration—can alter negative attitudes towards out-groups (Rudman et al. 2001; Blair 2002; Craig et al. 2014; Kubato and Ito 2014). However, it is

less clear how durable such changes are, and what kinds of behavioral changes may accompany these attitudinal shifts. If the ephemeral and casual one-day contact that takes place at cultural festivals is simply a one-off, then we have good reason to believe that these events will not achieve their desired effects. Or worse, they provide further evidence of how the celebration of diversity is empty calories tailor-made for the enjoyment of dominant groups (Hage 2000; Bell and Hartmann 2007; Anthias 2013; Berrey 2015). The testimonials of Larisa, Genny, and Chelsea provide narrative evidence that attending cultural festivals can be a way in, leading not just to other forms of interaction across group differences, but to more substantive forms, as well. But surveys, too, indicate that celebrating culture is not an end to civic engagement, but is positively associated with a suite of other civic activities.

Table 3.3 shows that the more cultural festivals attended by members of ethnic out-groups, the more likely they are to participate in other key forms of intercultural activities. Out-group survey respondents who had not attended another festival in the previous year were unlikely to engage in many other forms of activity that required them to interact with other cultural groups, with the exception of dining at an ethnic restaurant (85.8%) and watching an ethnic movie or TV program (56.7%). However, out-group members who attended a higher number of ethnic festivals also showed increased engagement in other activities—exhibiting higher percentages of participation in each of 11 categories. A Pearson's chi-square analysis shows that increased participation in five of these activities is statistically significant at the 0.001 level and a sixth is significant at the 0.05 level. Among these activities are those that demand a deeper involvement and investment in ethnic communities, such as visiting an ethnic museum or community

center, reading an ethnic newspaper or magazine, or participating in community

advocacy on behalf of an ethnic group.

Table 3.3: Out-group Attendance at Ethnic Festivals and Participation in Other Cultural Activities, %(number)

Type of Activity	Only this Festival	2-4 Festivals	5-7 Festivals	8+ Festivals	Pearson's χ^2
Dined at an ethnic restaurant	85.8% (115)	86.5% (160)	83.9% (26)	93.8% (15)	0.94
Watched an ethnic movies or TV program	56.7% (76)	77.3% (143)	71.0% (22)	93.8% (15)	18.56***
Visited ethnic museum or community center	30.6% (41)	55.1% (102)	67.7% (21)	81.3% (13)	31.92***
Traveled outside the U.S.	44.0% (59)	48.7% (90)	64.5% (20)	50% (8)	4.27
Visited website oriented towards an ethnic group	27.6% (37)	36.8% (68)	64.5% (20)	75.0% (12)	24.90***
Attended an ethnic play or concert	22.4% (30)	43.2% (80)	45.2% (14)	68.8% (11)	23.20***
Read an ethnic newspaper or magazine	20.2% (27)	30.3% (56)	58.1% (18)	56.3% (9)	23.25***
Taken a course related to ethnic language/culture	16.4% (22)	16.8% (31)	29.0% (9)	37.5% (6)	6.85
Participated in ethnic community advocacy	8.96% (12)	15.7% (29)	19.4% (6)	31.3% (5)	7.85*
Hosted a guest and/or student from abroad	6.0% (8)	9.2% (17)	12.9% (4)	25.0% (4)	7.08
Participated in an online forum on ethnicity	2.2% (3)	9.2% (17)	9.7% (3)	6.3% (1)	6.67

*Chi-square is significant at 0.05 level
**Chi-square is significant at 0.01 level
***Chi-square is significant at 0.001 level

Members of dominant ethno-racial groups who visit ethnic festivals in Seattle Center do not merely return home to their ethnic enclaves, never to engage with minority groups again. These data suggest that Larisa, Genny, and Chelsea may indeed follow through with their stated intentions, using the "common ground" of a public cultural festival as a launch pad to participate in other forms of activity with minority groups elsewhere in the city. Furthermore, they indicate that the strategy of recruiting an "unsuspecting audience" through sharing culture can be effective in drawing uninvolved and hard-to-reach populations deeper into involvement with the broader community, providing evidence for Yutaka's civic hopes that a "party" thrown by "some minority community" can actually become a civic event for the city at large.

Yutaka's efforts, however, are not without tradeoffs. Achieving this civic diversity in segregated Seattle requires that in-group visitors—members of the ethnic community whose culture is being celebrated—shoulder a greater geographic burden than do visitors from out-groups. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, rising rents and a legacy of redlining have made the city of Seattle whiter than the population of the county it resides in (Balk 2014), and many of the region's racial ethnic minorities and its new immigrants settle in suburbs or on the outskirts of town. These patterns are visible in the distance these different populations traveled to attend the festival (see Figure 3.4). Whereas the majority of out-group visitors who sought out the festival were residents of Seattle (54%), fewer than two-fifths of in-group visitors were Seattleites (37.8%). For

those visitors who are from Seattle, in-group members on average live further away from

Seattle Center (4.31 miles) than do members of out-groups (3.73 miles).[25]

Figure 3.4: Festival Visitors' Place of Residence, by Connection to Ethnic Group (%)
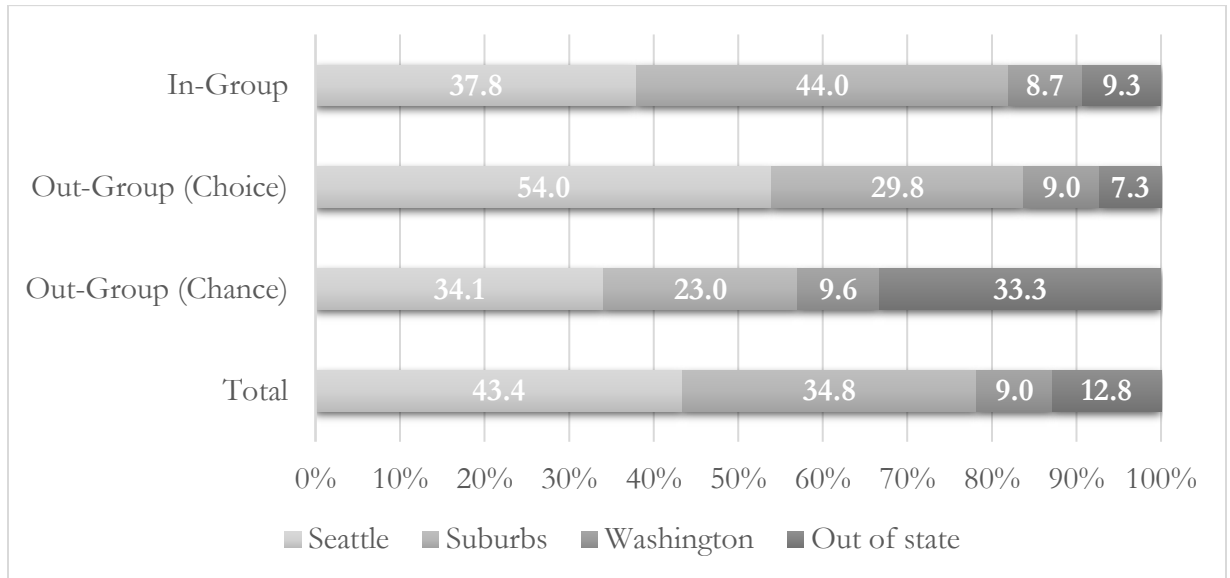
Seattle Center officials frequently claim that the status of campus as common

ground makes it the ideal location for the festivals. But these government employees have

the order flipped. Rather, it is *through* the civic action of ethnic minority organizations to

bring their members to Seattle Center that the conditions of commonality in a segregated

city can be achieved. Ethnic minority communities who participate in the Festál program

meet the broader community more than halfway. Their engagement efforts demand not

only the organization's commitment to civic outreach to the broader community, but

enlist members of minority groups in traveling to the center of a city that marginalizes

them to participate in a celebration accessible to a dominant group unlikely to encounter

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[25] As these figures were calculated by measuring the linear distance between Seattle Center and the centroid of the survey respondents' reported zipcodes, they actually underestimate the greater distance traveled by in-groups to attend the festival.

them otherwise: they make the long haul because they know visitors like Genny won't. But through their engagement in civic outreach, they also make the city more amenable to their presence within it, engender encounters the segregated shape of the city does not naturally provide, and encourage further, more substantial interactions elsewhere in Seattle. Recognizing that the "best world" of cosmopolitan solidarity captured in Paul Horiuchi's mural does not exist spontaneously, participants in public celebrations come together in an attempt to create it.

These accomplishments are not only anomalous to what is predicted in segregated, diversifying cities, they produce outcomes opposite to studies that show increased urban diversity *lessens* civic engagement (Putnam 2007; Rothwell 2012), social trust (Uslaner 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Abascal and Baldassari 2015), and intergroup relations (Enos 2017; Enos and Celaya, forthcoming). Putnam (2007) has famously prescribed that minority groups adopt a "post-ethnic" identity, lest the social capital of individuals drop as they "hunker down" within homophilous social networks. Celebratory civic events like festivals thus constitute a "countertrend" (Putnam 2000; Fisher et al. 2015:45) in civic engagement, demonstrating that making ethnic culture salient—in a public place and in positive manner—can actually help bring people out of their shells.

The evidence presented in this chapter also demonstrates that celebration can be an effective civic strategy to engage the public in intercultural activities. The "happy" associations associated with diversity may amount to more than mere ideology; they can be mobilized into civic events, signaling the goodwill of minority groups, and serving as a point of entry for future engagement. But how does this happen? If public celebrations

can be shown to attract audiences and propel engagement, what takes place at the festivals to produce this effect? In the following chapters, I will show how the strategy of celebratory civics takes shape through a partnership between the city of Seattle and ethnic minority organizations, a hybrid governance structure (Boyte 2005; Fisher and Svendsen 2013) that teaches outreach to the community. Festival planners design their events to appeal to the emotions of their audience, engaging them in fun, participatory activities that leave them with a positive impression of a minority culture. Contrary to the dominant, deliberative tradition of civic discourse, they pursue a strategy of *learning through feeling*. The next chapter explores this novel approach to civic engagement.

Chapter 4: "We're Trying to Change the Wind": Celebration and the Transvaluation of Culture

In order to feel kindly toward a person to whom we have been inimical, the only way is more or less deliberately to smile, to make sympathetic inquiries, and to force ourselves to say genial things. One hearty laugh together will bring enemies into a closer communion of heart than hours spent on both sides in inward wrestling with the mental demon of uncharitable feeling. To wrestle with a bad feeling only pins our attention on it, and keeps it still fastened in the mind: whereas, if we act as if from some better feeling, the old bad feeling soon folds its tent like an Arab, and silently steals away.

— William James[26]

Politics begins, strictly speaking, with the denunciation of this tacit contract of adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa; in other words, political subversion presupposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision of the world.

— Pierre Bourdieu[27]

Steve Sneed likes to retell stories. As Managing Artistic Director to the 23 festivals that make up Festál, each representing a different ethnic or racial minority group in Seattle, communication is a big part of his job. He stores up stories as ways to develop a theme, deliver a message, or drive home a point about the sharing of culture. He'll often ask you to stop him if you've heard this one already, and then jovially disregard your attempts. Some messages bear repeating.

One of his favorite stories is of his first meeting with the organization that runs Tết in Seattle, a celebration of the Vietnamese New Year. The organizers had just

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[26] James (1911/1963:239).
[27] Bourdieu (1991:127-128).

finished laying out their vision for the program, including work they had done over the previous year to put together a program including various community artistic and cultural groups. As Steve reviewed the logistical details of staging a large public event at Seattle Center, he probed for the motivation behind the group's desire to engage in the festival series. As Steve tells it,

> I said, "Why would we do this?" and they said, "We want to come together and have a good time." And I say, "Come on, now. You've spent a year, you're raising all this money, and this is hard work. Why are you really doing this?" … I wanted them to know that I wanted to hear the *real* reason, so I had to ask them three times. I had to say, "No no no, you're giving me that government speak. You're trying to talk to me like a bureaucrat here, and I don't buy that. There's another reason that you do this, because you don't give up this kind of effort and galvanize all these people." So, finally, he said, "So you want to know why? The reason why we do this is we want people to understand that *we're not boat people*." Because that was the prevailing image of Vietnamese people at the time. And I said, "Oh I get it, that's why you work so hard—because you want to say, 'This is who we *really* are.'"

The story is told often enough in Festál's offices that it is repeated to me by others, including by Steve's boss, the Director of Seattle Center Productions, for whom it serves as shorthand for the mission of the festival series and the power of celebratory civics. It crops up again at a public discussion panel honoring Festál's 20th anniversary, encapsulating the promise of pubic programming to produce change for the city's immigrant and ethnic minority groups. In its frequent retelling, the story becomes lore, a crystal of wisdom whose meaning is self-explanatory. But if the civic goal is to convince the broader population that something they believe about the Vietnamese community is not true, then why is a festival the best way to go about it? What is it about a festival that holds the potential to change minds in this way?

106

Steve's story gains its punch in part from the festival organizers' reticence to put into words the "real reason" motiving their civic efforts. The group's initial explanation—celebration for its own sake—struck Steve as unsatisfactory, even implausible, given the amount of volunteer hours and hard work necessary to pull off a festival. But it was not easy for the committee organizing Tết in Seattle to share with him the impetus for joining Festál; Steve had to coax it out of them, asking three times and refusing to take their first answer at face value. The puzzle is resolved when a festival organizer reveals that the event can be an opportunity to present a different image of Vietnamese culture than the one commonly held by most residents of Seattle. Against a prevailing view based on unfamiliarity with or prejudice against Vietnamese people, Tết in Seattle allowed the Vietnamese community to command the public stage for a cultural performance that redefined identity, declaring to all observers "who we *really* are."

Such acts of public self-definition have gained increasing attention in recent years as the sociological study of the civil sphere has placed greater focus on the role of symbolic exclusions in impeding the civic integration of immigrant and minority groups (Alexander 2001, 2006; Bloemraad 2007; Wimmer 2008, 2013; Brettell and Reed-Danahay 2011; Kivisto 2012; Modood 2013; Voyer 2013; Ebert and Okamoto 2015; Schachter 2016; Shams 2017). The demographic changes across the US discussed in Chapter 3 have made perceived cultural values of ethnic minority groups into dominant markers of civic belonging, demonstrating challenges to achieving social solidarity in the multicultural civil sphere (Alexander 2006; Modood 2013). The strategy adopted by the Tết in Seattle committee aims to challenge these symbolic boundaries by repositioning

Vietnamese culture as worthy of admiration and celebration—a process of popular re-interpretation that Wimmer refers to as transvaluation (2008:1037).

Their chosen method of delivering this message reveals a belief held in common by the festival organizers who participate it the Festál program. Representatives of Seattle's ethnic minority communities describe distinct—and distinctly *emotional*—challenges to their civic acceptance by the broader community, from feelings of suspicion and distrust to those of pity and derision. Despite the differing contents of these stereotypes, however, festival organizers see the participatory, upbeat style of interaction promoted at public celebrations as the most effective means of correcting the misconceptions that lead to their symbolic exclusion from the civil sphere. In pursuing this strategy of celebratory civics and using positive expressions of goodwill, cheer, and entertainment as tools of outreach, they are engaging their audience in a manner distinct from the rational, deliberative manner of address expected by prominent models of civic discourse (Habermas 1984, 1987; Cohen and Arato 1992). Skeptical of the availability and efficacy of conversation to reverse long-standing prejudice, they advocate a civic pedagogy of *learning through feeling* that hopes to cut straight to the emotional bases for the ill-will many members of dominant groups express towards minorities. If social stigma is driven by negative images of groups and individuals, they reason, positive emotions may have the power to displace them.

This chapter explores why leaders of ethnic community organizations decide to use public celebrations, and the expression of positive emotions in particular, as means to transform symbolic boundaries and to assert a claim to civic belonging. As Steve's story illustrates, stereotypes can be difficult to speak aloud, but they are palpably felt.

Admitting that a civic purpose of the festival is the public self-definition of ethnic identity can be uncomfortable, making an emphasis on simply having "a good time" an appealing excuse—even in the context of a small meeting with a sympathetic partner like Steve. Scholarship on the efficacy of conversation to change attitudes regarding group differences presents a mixed portrait. Social environments that foster deliberative principles in speech—such as including all present participants and providing reasons for claims—do see a greater likelihood of speakers to change their minds than in less structured contexts (Schneiderhan, Khan, and Elrick 2014; see also Bahns, Springer, and The 2015). However, critics have noted that there are few natural venues in which to discuss problems of racism and ethnic prejudice in the normal course of social life (Young 1990, Fraser 1992), and—contrary to what might be hoped from deliberative theories of civic engagement (Habermas 1984, 1987; Cohen and Arato 1992)—the tendency to avoid these uncomfortable controversies becomes greater as the context for speech becomes more public (Eliasoph 1996).

Furthermore, social psychologists (Merrit, Effron, and Monin 2010) and sociologists of culture and cognition (Vaisey 2009; Khan and Jerolmack 2013) have demonstrated that values expressed in speech, including values towards ethnic and racial out-groups (Monin and Miller 2001; Effron, Cameron, and Monin 2009; Lizardo et al. 2016:296), can have little to do with the actual attitudes or practices of the speakers in everyday social interactions. Sometimes, engaging conversations that explicitly raise issues of race can have adverse effects on feelings of prejudice. Conversations that threaten the status position of dominant identity groups can trigger self-justifying

discourse and lead to the retrenchment of negative views towards groups perceived as different (Hunter and Hughey 2013; Hikido and Murray 2016; Schachter 2016).

These studies indicate a less than optimistic account of the availability and efficacy of public discourse across lines of ethnic and racial difference, but they also point to an understudied avenue for ethnic transvaluation that is pursued through the strategy of celebratory civics. Although rational deliberation is a vital component of civic reasoning, it is not the only way in which people arrive at decisions, nor is it alone in determining social action (Damasio 1994, 2003; Haidt 2001, 2012; Dimaggio 2002; Massey 2002; Vaisey 2009; Cerulo 2010; Martin 2010; Lizardo et al. 2016). Instead, reasoning "uses two complementary paths" (Damasio 2003:149), integrating deliberate, rational, and slow cognition of information with automatic, emotional, and fast cognitive processing (Kahneman 2011).

These are not heuristic categories; sociologists of culture and cognition have developed dual process models to test empirically how these distinct forms of cognitive processing are activated in different social situations (for a state of the field, see Lizardo et al. 2016). As Martin (2010) has argued, culture is too large and variegated to be stored in the mind like data on a hard disk. Rather than faithful recordings of experience to be recalled in the decision-making process, cognition occurs through triggering neural networks that have become habituated through a person's history of pragmatic dealings in the social world (Damasio 1994:103-104). An emotional response registered in the body—what Damasio (2003:148) calls a "somatic marker"—is especially expedient in cognitive processing, as it drastically "narrows the decision-making space and increases the probability that the action will conform to past experience." Deliberative cognitive

processes, on the other hand, weigh a greater number of potentially relevant action criteria, which, while cognitively costly (Whitehouse 2004; Lizardo and Strand 2010), allows the conscious mind to chart a more detailed plan of action.

Questions of social identity are of particular interest to dual process models, given that they are directly related to an idealized self-concept that the conscious mind is invested in protecting (Haidt 2012; Simi et al. 2017). Group-based prejudices are especially likely to be activated automatically in encounters with out-groups; social psychologists have developed the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which measures subjects' responses to fast flashes of images and words in order to register their automatic, emotional reactions ahead of any potential attempts of the self-protecting, rational brain to supersede group-based associations (Shepherd 2011, Fazio and Olson 2003; Staats et al. 2015). Furthermore, feelings of prejudice frequently persist even after racist ideologies have been consciously abandoned. As Simi et al. (2017) have recently shown, patterned emotional responses continue to reside in the bodies of former members of hate groups, and thus remain ready at hand when group differences are made salient despite "cool-headed" attempts to forestall such reactions.

If the emotional brain is instrumental in the processes of cognition, reasoning, and forming action plans, then emotions would seem a critical point of intervention for civic engagement. If group prejudices reside not only in the rational mind, but are embedded deeply in the emotional processes of the body (Goffman 1963; Damasio 1994, 2003; Ignatow 2009a, 2009b; Simi et al. 2017), then any attempt to reverse them should speak to the body as well as to the mind. However, despite the growing attention to symbolic boundaries as constitutive of civic solidarity in the age of multiculturalism (Alexander

2001; Wimmer 2008; Voyer 2013; Ebert and Okamoto 2013), there remains little

empirical attention to how processes of transvaluation are effectuated in civic action. And

despite the recent explosion of interest in dual process models of cognition and reasoning,

"cultural sociologists tend to privilege Type II [deliberative] cognition and generally

bring in Type I [emotional] cognition only residually, if at all" (Lizardo et al. 2016:293).

By considering the strategy of celebratory civics practiced by ethnic community

organizations participating in the Festál program, this chapter explores how civic action

that uses positive feelings as *the mode and the target* of its engagement seeks to dispel

negative stereotypes and assert civic belonging. In doing so, I expand upon the concept of

celebratory civics in two ways. First, through an analysis of interview data with festival

organizers and visitors, I demonstrate how the objective of intercultural learning desired

by this approach to civic outreach is pursued through appeals to the emotions of their

audience members, a civic pedagogy I call *learning through feeling*. This emphasis on

emotions does not contradict deliberative theories of civic reasoning, but rather

complements them by attending to the role of feelings in generating bonds of civic

solidarity (Alexander 2006; Modood 2013; Schachter 2016). The decision to avoid

deliberation is deliberate; organizers express that reasoned explanations of the error of

stereotyping are less effective than the sharing of positive feelings with an audience so as

to bring these feelings about in them.[28]

Second, I focus more closely on the specific symbolic boundaries that different

minority communities seek to shift through their positive cultural performances. Festival

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[28] The avoidance of controversy and political issues at the festivals is consistent with sociological critiques
of contemporary discourses of diversity and multiculturalism (Bell and Hartman 2007; Ahmed 2010, 2012;
Anthias 2013). These criticisms suggest serious, if not disqualifying, limitations to the strategy of
celebratory civics, and will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

organizers describe the representation of culture at ethnic celebrations as competing within a broader symbolic space dominated by negative media images and commonly held misconceptions. Although the prejudices among mainstream groups take many different forms specific to particular minority groups, the festival organizers all see positive, participatory performances of goodwill and cheer as having the power to displace them. They view the celebratory events as a prominent opportunity for self-definition before a skeptical or unfamiliar public, and use festival content not only to display an alternative image as a data point in a range of associations accrued by their audience in the course of their experiences, but also to enlist festival visitors in an embodied, participatory activity in which positive emotions are performed and shared among a diverse assembly of people. Celebratory civics, then, is an affective mode of engagement aimed at strengthening the emotional bonds of civic solidarity, as dominant groups learn to extend recognition by feeling a shared experience.

Conceiving of the civil sphere as an arena of social solidarity across lines of ethnic and cultural differences means understanding the process of civic integration of immigrant and minority groups as a fundamentally emotional one requiring the transformation of boundaries of belonging to incorporate a wider range of cultural identities (Seidman 2012; Voyer 2013; Schachter 2016; Shams 2017). This is not to say that more traditional metrics of civic integration--such as citizenship and economic participation (Bloemraad 2006; Apteker 2015)—are unimportant. Rather, while the formation of symbolic boundaries is never fully independent of structural inequalities, neither are group prejudices reducible to purely material explanations (Ridgeway 2009;

Schachter 2016). Understanding multicultural civics as a process of transvaluation (Wimmer 2008:1037) requires attention to the role of emotions in reasoning.

This chapter presents interview data illustrating why festival organizers and participants pursue positive emotions as tools for civic outreach, and how they seek to induce their audience to learn about minority groups not through explanation or discussion, but through active engagement in emotional experiences. The inclusion of voices from among the festival visitors is important, as members from within the ethnic community being celebrated recognize a common purpose with organizers in having the festival portray the community in a positive light. Out-group members also provide testimonials of how they engage in festival content and provide further evidence that public celebrations can lead to deeper, more sustained levels of intercultural engagement beyond the festivals. After describing the range of negative emotions that celebratory performances are aimed at displacing, I conclude the chapter with an analysis of this multicultural form of engagement and point to potential problems in using upbeat messages in civic outreach.

4.1 Learning through Feeling: The Civic Pedagogy of Celebration

In Chapter 3, I showed how the expression of positive emotions at cultural festivals constitutes a "countertrend" (Putnam 2000; Fisher et al. 2015:45) working against the forces of ethnic and racial segregation that depress civic engagement. By hosting an event in a space frequented by the dominant population and emphasizing goodwill and cheer, festivals succeed in attracting diverse audiences to celebrate culture. These events establish common ground—both literally and metaphorically—by achieving

inter-group contact discouraged in everyday life by the shape of the segregated city. Furthermore, festivals were shown to be a gateway to further engagement by ethnic out-groups with minority communities. Festival visitors are often enticed to engage in more than just the "happy talk" of the diversity discourse (Bell and Hartman 2007); celebrating culture in public space can be part of a suite of civic activities that require deeper and more substantive forms of interaction across lines of ethnic and racial difference—including participating in community advocacy.

However, just because members of the dominant community in segregated Seattle may have few organic opportunities to interact with people from minority ethnic groups does not mean that mainstream America has no exposure to representations of minority cultures (Alexander 2006:421). As indicated by Steve's story at the top of this chapter, powerful prejudices frequently precede ethnic groups as they take the public stage for a festival. Representations in the media are frequent drivers of stereotypes, as news stories pursue emotional narratives related to violence or social scandal that can depict groups in a negative light (Koopmans 2004; Adut 2012; Bail 2012). For Steve, the sharing of culture at Festál events can be a way to engage an audience on your own terms: "What you get to do with the festival is you get to define how you're viewed. So you say, 'Well, I can allow the stereotypes to dominate the airwaves, or I can do a festival.'" Among the ethnic community organizations participating in the festival series, this emphasis on crowding out dominant images from the public sphere in favor of a more positive self-definition was the most frequently cited impetus for presenting their event at Seattle Center.

Kimberlee, the white wife of an Iranian immigrant to Seattle, and the mother of

two mixed-race children[29], remembers sharing conversations years ago with the founder

of the Seattle Iranian Festival and other members of Seattle's Iranian community during a

shared outing:

> We were all talking about what we could do to put Iranians in a positive light in
> Seattle because the media does a lovely job of bashing Iran and bashing Iranians.
> So we thought, "Our kids are experiencing this, what can we do?" ... The
> prejudice, it's racism! It's hard to hold your head high and say, "I'm Iranian."
> People even say, "I'm Persian." So I think doing something in the community that
> puts them in a positive light was very motivating and still is. Because people—
> you start interviewing people about Iran, I'm sure you get some very interesting
> ideas.

Kimberlee describes the negative, anger-inducing media narrative that drives

dominant American ideas about Iranians and other Muslim-Americans (Mamdani; Bail

2012; Shams 2017; Braunstein 2017), and that preempts everyday encounters her family

experiences in Seattle. For her, the celebratory promise of multiculturalism can help

reverse and supplant these associations with happier ones, by shining a "positive light" on

Iranian culture. She suggests that, under typical circumstances when Iran might come up

in conversation, "people don't want to talk about the ancient ruins and old art and Shiraz

grapes." She gives name to the "prejudice" and "racism" that drive the popular

imagination of Iranian culture and to which the festival was organized to function as a

corrective. Her vigilance with regard to Seattle's anxious and negative associations

extends to speculation and concern about what messages I may have heard about Iran

from other festival attendees in the course of my interviews.

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[29] According to most demographic accounts in the US, Iranians and Iranian Americans are considered
white. This fact, however, is disputed within the community (see also Tehranian 2010 and Magbouleh
2017). In this case, I defer to Kimberlee's designation of her children's race.

If Kimberlee sees a focus on cultural celebration as a corrective to the American media's negative narrative of Iran and Iranians, Ali Ghambari, the founder and chief organizer of the Seattle Iranian Festival, is a veritable evangelist for the power of positive feelings to build solidarity across cultural lines. His foundation, the Iranian American Community Alliance, is resolute in its mission to fulfill the promise of multiculturalism to, in his words, "appreciate diversity and build unity, demonstrate dedication and passion, and commit to positive change." In his vision of the festival, negativity doesn't have a place at all—"Not on our table!" Instead, the festival is purely about positive affirmation:

> It's all about this energy and this positive energy that elevates everybody. All of a sudden, you come to an understanding that [the festival] is bigger than you, but you're so in love with what you're getting and you're really a whole family with it [so] that love overcomes everything. And that's what we're about...It's not about, "You're Persian, you abuse human rights!", and "Leave the Jewish people alone!" That's the *rage*. But that's not what is going on today. Today, this is the passing on of what *we* have, that's what I want *them* to see.

As Puwar (2004: 50) has noted, large groups of minorities in public places produce an "amplified presence" that can serve as an emotional trigger for members of the dominant culture and make ethnic stereotypes cognitively available. Genny, a visitor to the Seattle Iranian Festival admitted to me that "in general the only time you hear about Iran in a modern context is the Middle East and conflict and Iraq and ISIS and all that stuff, so you usually hear it in a negative way and so politics shapes our quick half-second idea of our enemy." This "quick half-second idea" is, for many non-Muslim Americans the immediate representation brought to mind through triggering automatic associations of conflict and fear. As Shams (2017) has shown, the "hypervisibility" of Muslim Americans leads to strategies of self-presentation in public that aim to dissociate

from negative stereotypes by presenting a positive, participatory, and energetic alternative. For Ali, controlling the public stage means controlling the message; his audience sees "what I want them to see." People may come into the festival with preconceived notions of grievance or hostility, but these are forced to yield to a happier message that does not discriminate against persons based on race, ethnicity, or nationality. Although the cultural offering that Ali describes is fundamentally asymmetric—sharing positive feelings from the Iranian community when met with the "rage" of his audience—he draws no distinction about who is the beneficiary of this goodwill. Although the festival is organized and staged by the Iranian community, its "positive energy," as Ali says, "elevates everybody."

Ali is adamant that this participatory, affective form of engagement is best suited to easing the acceptance of Persian people and their customs within Seattle's civil sphere. In addition to the stage performances, the Seattle Iranian Festival features other opportunities for festival visitors to engage actively in Persian traditions. One area of the event space is set aside for a Persian Tea House, with carpets laid over raised rafters inviting people to sit and chat (see Picture 4.1). The Tea House presents the opportunity for casual, even mundane participation in a cultural activity whose unfamiliarity may in other circumstances be met with discomfort or disdain. As Ali says, visitors "feel the energy of what you're doing at the celebration. This is what has to happen. People say, you know, we should reach the point where you don't have to say anything, you can just do your thing."

Picture 4.1: Carpeted Seating at the Persian Tea House, Seattle Iranian Festival

Photo by the author.

Constituting the multicultural civil sphere requires feelings of solidarity and recognition among the different ethnic groups that make up American society. Ali's goal is to render these differences unremarkable which, perhaps paradoxically, means first performing them as a celebration. The visibility of Iranians in a prominent public place produces familiarity, inviting members of the dominant community to partake in interactions across lines of difference. Engaging this audience through positive emotions and goodwill aims towards a point at which no further explanation is needed, differences are unspectacular, and can return to their inhabited practice by communities for whom they serve as components of identity. For Neda, an Iranian visitor to the festival, the positive feelings that accompany celebrations can leave a lasting emotional impression on people who may otherwise be fearful of Iranians in public. Rather than discussing

divisive issues outright or calling attention to ethnic tensions, Neda describes a power of

positivity consistent with Ali's purpose for the festival:

> If you have an opinion that's [hits fists together] a feud, and you come here and
> you actually meet some of those people that are your enemies, you might go home
> with a different opinion, even though you're not going to go up and say, 'You
> know, [then US Secretary of State] John Kerry's doing a good job in the Middle
> East', you know what I mean? You may not have that conversation at a festival,
> but they may go home feeling, "Oh they're pretty cool."

Many among Seattle's Iranian population have, like Ali and Neda, had to leave

their home country because of a political duress for which they bear responsibility in the

eyes of many Americans. By focusing on culture, rather than politics, Ali hopes to shift

the emotional resonance felt by mainstream Americans in regard to Iran away from

geopolitical conflict, religious extremism, and ethnic persecution to a happier one based

on the uniting principle of diversity. In this case, the emotional approach to civic

engagement is directed at an American population that is overwhelming fearful of the

Middle East (Mamdani; Bail 2012; Shams 2017; Braunstein 2017), but other community

organizations engaging in celebratory civics believe that happiness has an even broader

range of emotions that it can overrule, including pity and despair. These emotions, to

return to Steve's phrase, "dominate the airwaves" of American prejudice with regard to

different cultures. As Thione Diop, the founder of the Spirit of West Africa, tells me: "All

American TV, whenever I see [it], as African, I never see something make me happy

about that. There's always something bad about us, not happiness."

Thione is a griot, a keeper of oral cultural traditions from his ancestors in his

home country of Senegal. His attachment to the festival is therefore not only personal as

part of his birthright, but a responsibility he feels toward the community. In his adopted

hometown in Seattle, where he owns a music performance studio and concert venue in

the city's Central District, he sees the festival in part as a way to compensate for the negative images that dominate the attention of most Americans regarding the African continent—pictures of "black kids dying of hunger, with flies on their faces." Thione says that this image is dominant not only in news coverage of Africa, which he says neglects the aesthetic and the social contributions of African cultures; it is also the face of American civic and voluntary missions, effectively, if unintentionally crowding out any other associations Americans might have with African culture. "I'm just like, 'Enough of this image!", you know? What about something fun?... Every culture has something positive, and something negative, but it looks like too many people focus on the negative side, so I show them the positive side."

Suzanne, Thione's partner in organizing the Spirit of West Africa festival also describes media representations that prejudice Americans towards seeing Africans as dependent: "What we see in the news is really negative stuff, or, you know, '[Africans] need our help, they can't do things on their own, they're in the Third World.' That's the image." The popular represesentation of Africa that Thione and Suzanne describe is one of pity, hopelessness, and despair—one that can turn off members of dominant communities from further engagement in African culture. The repetition of such negative emotional messages can cause them to lodge themselves firmly in the cognitive associations of out-groups, causing what Hochschild (2016:146) calls "sympathy fatigue." Thione views the constant calls for aid to Africa as producing an effect opposite of the one that is intended. When I asked Faith, a white visitor to the Spirit of West Africa festival, if she would have liked to see more information or exhibits at the event, she was frank about her feelings towards Africa as pathological:

I'm not sure I would want to go have a political discussion about what's going on in the Ivory Coast or Nigeria, or any of those countries...but still, it'd be interesting to know more about the different tribes and the political geography, without getting involved in current-day politics.

Interviewer: Why do you want to avoid current-day politics in particular?

Faith: Because I find them incomprehensible and I don't go to those festivals to ... get solicited to donate money or sign a petition or take a political stance…That wouldn't draw me—"Oh, come learn about the politics of this country or that country!"—it probably wouldn't draw me there.

Faith's admission of the limitations of what she is willing to learn about African culture is jarring, but it also reveals the sense of helplessness at the "incomprehensible" problems that is fostered by representations of Africa in the news and by aid missions. Thione describes his motivation for organizing a public cultural festival as showing the general audience in Seattle that Africans are not only passive recipients of American assistance, but can also extend goodwill in the form of arts and culture: "I saw a lot of African people here [in the US] who want to do fundraising, you know, about HIV or taking money to Africa. I see that all the time, and I'm sure you see that, too. So I said we [should] do something where we're not asking for *nothing*, but sharing something positive."

Like Ali, Thione organizes the festival to minimize discursive engagement in order to enlist visitors in participatory activities that produce affective, bodily engagement with culture. Unlike the other festivals that participate in the Festál program, which line up rows of chairs from which the audience can watch performances, the Spirit of West Africa festival keeps the area in front of the stage open, allowing it to serve as a dance floor. Suzanne, whose day job is as the proprietor of a dance studio in downtown Seattle, hosts unstructured dance tutorials in the space, encouraging people in the Armory

building who may not be familiar with West African dance to participate in the festivities (see Picture 4.2).

Picture 4.2: Dance Floor at the Spirit of West Africa Festival

Photo by the author.

For Thione, who frequently joins the stage performers with his djembe, it is this participation in the music and dance of West African culture that members of out-groups can come to a greater understanding of the positive contributions West Africans have to offer: "Music and food brings people together more than anything…so let's come together and just share something positive, because you can teach people without talking to them too much, with just visual, you know *vision*, when they *see* people are getting along together and sharing something positive…I feel like we really give people something."

Dual process models of culture and cognition demonstrate that "enculturation [i]s a process of internalization of experiential patterns encountered in the world via a

developmental learning process" (Lizardo 2017:4; cf. Tomasello 1999). Learning is not something that occurs only through rational processing of information, but is a cognitive activity that "uses two complementary paths" (Damasio 2003:149). Thione describes how interactive dance performances at public cultural festivals "can teach people without talking to them too much," eschewing discourse in favor of embodied participation in music and the shared experience of enjoying an activity in common with others. Negative feelings toward Africans as dependent and pitiable are not made salient while a new and fun form of experiential association is forged. David, a white visitor to the Spirit of West Africa festival who also likes to seek out lectures on culture and identity at the Seattle Public Library, describes his participation in the dance workshop as offering a different point of entry into understanding West African culture. "You're not really going to get the same kind of information in a lecture setting that you are with dancing," he told me. "…[At a festival] you can get a little bit of history just in like tidbits here and there, whereas a straight-up lecture is just information, information, information, information. I mean, you're still learning about the culture [at a lecture] but you're not really *experiencing* it."

As the organizers of the Seattle Iranian Festival and the Spirit of West Africa festival illustrate, popular prejudices against their respective ethnic cultures are driven by negative media representations and emotional associations that attach themselves in minds of many Americans. In other cases, however, stereotypes can provide dominant groups with *positive* emotional feelings by denigrating or mocking minority cultures. The pervasive emotional resonance of ethnic jokes can be particularly difficult to dislodge, as such associations do not need to be endorsed explicitly to be triggered automatically

124

(Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006:695). But here, too, festival organizers see celebratory civics as offering greater hope for correction through positive emotional appeals rather than scolding explanations. For Danuta, the organizer of the Polish Festival, stage performances provide an opportunity to present a message different from prevailing beliefs, and in a format more effective at sticking with an audience: "I came here in [19]95 with my professional degree in engineering and still I hear 'stupid Polish' jokes," but at the festival, "you show your better side. You have to! You don't write to people [to tell them] 'Don't say statements like that.' You *show* your other side and that's what they think."

Social psychologists note that mentioning stereotypes overtly can trigger negative emotions by making these associations cognitively available (Fazio and Olson 2003; Staats et al. 2015). Regardless of the individual's intention to resist potentially negative emotional reactions (Simi et al. 2017), these embodied processes occur separately from the control of consciousness and occur automatically (Damasio 2003). However, these feelings are neither destined to become active in every encounter with stigmatized groups, nor are they immutable once enculterated. Because culture is ensconced in bodily dispositions that are pragmatically oriented rather than stored as hard data (Ignatow 2009a, 2009b; Martin 2010), stereotype activation can be mitigated by not making them discursively salient and are malleable through sustained exposure to experiences that defy them (Rudman et al. 2001; Blair 2002; Craig et al. 2014; Kubata and Ito 2014). Danuta describes a stubborn stereotype of Polish people that precedes her interaction with Americans; despite her educational attainment and career success, she is still subject to "'stupid Polish' jokes." However, Danuta believes that it will not be through patient

explanation of the error of such stereotypes that they are likely to change. Language is of little use in such matters. Instead, she says that a positive performance of identity can offer an alternative association that can replace enculturated prejudices.

The Polish Festival Seattle includes a number of activities in which visitors can engage in Polish culture. Marked by colorful signposts (see Picture 4.3), the variety of activities presented unfamiliar, but curious audiences with the opportunity to select their own itinerary of engagement. Danuta divides the festival space thematically, with vibrant, participatory activities on the main stage and at the Mural Amphitheatre outdoors and informative, educational exhibits and films in the Armory loft upstairs. Even the more traditionally educative activities feature interactive elements designed to promote positive feelings towards the Polish community, with costumed attendants answering questions about the bravery and cunning of the Polish military during World War II.

Picture 4.3: Signs Direct Visitors to Various Cultural Experiences at Polish Festival Seattle

Photo by the author.

The diversity of events encourages visitor movement throughout the festival space, inviting them to stop by particular events and exhibits that struck their interest. As the event was in its inaugural year as part of the Festál program, it was the first opportunity for many Seattleites to interact with so many elements of Polish culture in public. For Lucia, a second generation Pole who grew up attending weekend events at the Polish Home in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, this engagement by outsiders—even those who stumbled upon the festival while at Seattle Center for another reason—is the most striking element of the event: "What was really cool was that they were getting exposed, when they went in for coffee or something. They think, "Oh, my girlfriend from college was Polish, and I remember such-and-such from her!" And they wander around and they get exposed, and they get treated warmly, and they have good memories and things. That's what I thought was really cool." The vibrant design scheme of the festival, variety of performances and events, and goodwill expressed from members of the Polish community in Seattle allows out-group visitors to form connections from their own tangential experiences with Polish culture, reinforcing positive memories through embodied expressions of warmth and entertainment.

In Chapter 3, I introduced the strategy of celebratory civics through the pioneer of the Festál series, Yutaka Sasaki who, along with his wife, Tazue, organized the first ethnic festival at Seattle Center. As discussed in that chapter, Yutaka wanted to move the Cherry Blossom festival from the ethnic enclave of Seward Park to a venue more likely to attract members of Seattle's non-Japanese community. Yutaka describes American attitudes towards Japanese people at the time as suspicious and distrustful, aware of

Japan's rising economic stature but hostile towards their increased visibility. As he

recounted to me:

> I had one experience when I [was] in the office, a guy approached me. He hated
> Japanese. He's yelling and so on. And he pulled a knife! And he opened the knife,
> and he told me, "This knife is made in Japan. And it cuts so good. It'd cut your
> throat, too!" What's wrong with this? People appreciate the work that Japanese
> do, at the same time they do not appreciate the people making those [products],
> which means that we are doing something wrong, the Japanese. We are not selling
> the Japanese people who are making those products.

The disjuncture Yutaka describes between the appreciation Americans have

towards Japanese craft and their hostility towards Japanese people demonstrates

viscerally how, in Schachter's (2016:1008) words, "structural mobility does not

inherently transform into symbolic acceptance from white society." Yutaka describes a

persistent symbolic boundary that impedes the civic integration of Japanese Americans at

a moment of rising economic status and cultural visibility. Scholars of the multicultural

civil sphere emphasize that symbolic boundaries are only shifted once the cultural

characteristics of ethnic groups become recognizable according to the universal standards

of the dominant community (Alexander 2001, 2006; Modood 2013). This process need

not occur through the privatization or exclusion of cultural practices that differ from

those of the mainstream, as in the model of assimilation; rather, symbolic inclusion can

be achieved through transforming the emotional valences of such practices in the

experiences and associations of dominant communities (Wimmer 2008).

Yutaka and Tazue designed their festival to showcase Japanese crafts and customs

in an experiential, participatory way that featured workshops and tutorials that allowed

festival visitors to partake directly in the practice of Japanese culture (see Pictures 4.4

and 4.5). Participants who are curious about Japanese material culture get hands-on

Picture 4.4: Garment Studio at the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival

Photo by the author.

Picture 4.5: Crafts Studio at the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival

Photo by the author.

experience making origami figures, drawing calligraphy, trying on traditional outfits,

weaving fabrics, participating in a tea ceremony, and other activities producing items that

they can take back to their homes. These workshops are attended by volunteers from

Seattle's Japanese and Japanese-American community, many of whom practice Japanese arts professionally or own studios or performance spaces in the city. Participating in a workshop on ikebana hooked Sean into joining a class in the Japanese art of floral arrangement, where he is the self-described "only white guy."

Sean appreciates the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival because it encouraged him to dig deeper into his interest in Japan that reached back to his high school language classes. He describes the festival as an opportunity to access aspects of a culture that he is loosely aware of, if unfamiliar with some of its practices. "If you don't know what it is then you don't have a chance to engage it. I see a lot of people happen across it, saying, 'Oh, what is this? Oh, it's Japanese flower arrangement.' And I think, definitely, you're giving people an opportunity to check that out, to see certain aspects of the culture." Ikebana provided Sean with a point of entry into Japanese culture and introduced him to members of the Japanese community in Seattle. "I was talking to Nori [the instructor of Sean's ikebana course] about what she eats, and I think, I would never think of eating that. It would never cross my mind! To be exposed to that, to be aware of that, to take part in that, is not an opportunity we always get a chance to [have]."

The successes of the cultural festivals that make up Festál are measured in the little victories, like Sean's joining an ikebana class, David learning West African dances, or passersby stopping for tea at the Seattle Iranian Festival. They are reflected in the greater tendency for festival visitors to branch out into other forms of intercultural civic engagement, as shown in Chapter 3. These forms of sustained interaction across group differences signal a widening of symbolic boundaries of civic belonging without displacing the particularities of cultural practices that make them so vital to the cohesion

of distinct group identities. Although they are small-bore and diffuse in the everyday

practices of ordinary people, such transvaluations of ethnic culture are not trivial. As

Yutaka claims, they have the potential to effectuate a larger shift in the civic belonging

than can be accomplished through conventional forms of politics:

> I think the American people in general are very nice people once they understand,
> but they just are scared about something strange that looks different...Those things
> have to be changed. How do you want to approach it? You tell me it's the
> government officials and all those so-called scholars? I do not believe that. What
> is the Japanese government employee or even the business trying to do? Pushing
> the weather vane so it changes the direction. They send the lobbies to
> Washington, D.C. and want to change it. But what are we trying to do? We're
> trying to change the *wind*. Not the direction of the weather vane.

Members of ethnic minority groups seldom get to occupy the public stage; for the

community organizations who plan and host cultural festivals, Festál is that rare

opportunity to command the public's attention, however tenuously, and to set the terms

of their appraisal, however imperfectly. Festival organizers describe a broad range of

stigma and prejudice that construct emotional barriers to the civic integration of their

communities, and which celebrating culture can help to ameliorate. Yutaka and Tazue

started the Cherry Blossom festival to ease the suspicion and distrust most residents of

Seattle felt towards the segregated Japanese community; Ali wished to counter the fear

and anger spurred by mass media coverage of Iran; for Thione and Suzanne, constant

appeals for humanitarian aid made West Africa a place of pity and helplessness in the

eyes of most Americans; Danuta wished to reclaim Polish culture from the mockery and

derision expressed in ethnic jokes. For each community, the festival is a chance to correct

the record or, perhaps more urgently, change the emotional tenor of dominant American

attitudes towards ethnic and cultural minorities. It is the hope that in translating the

"happy talk" of diversity (Bell and Hartmann 2007) into the embodied practice of

celebratory civics can forge new associations of minority groups, promoting a pedagogy of learning through feeling.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter has considered 'celebratory civics' as a strategy and a practice of multicultural civic engagement aimed at promoting the civic integration of ethnic, racial, and cultural minorities. In speaking with municipal officers and ethnic community organizations partnering in the staging of public cultural festivals, I show the motives and methods behind a civic outreach strategy utilizing—and hoping to achieve—positive emotional feelings of solidarity, cheer, and celebration. These actors direct their civic efforts based on the belief that a harmonious multicultural society cannot be achieved without replacing negative associations and prejudices held by the dominant culture with positive feelings and memories of encounters with cultural difference.

If the broader civic purpose of the cultural festivals is to make viable the everyday practice of culture, the events themselves provide a concrete example of how such a multicultural civil sphere may appear. The celebratory cultural performances from the stage constitute a civic engagement effort to introduce and recuperate cultural difference to a mainstream public unlikely to encounter them firsthand. In the face of disparaging media depictions, festival organizers hope that the uplifting emotional performances can be contagious—that spreading positive energy can and will be reciprocated by an audience slowly, but surely won over.

This strategy, however, is not without trade-offs. Critics of this upbeat style of diversity have pointed out that positive performances lack the vocabulary to name social

problems experienced by immigrant and racial minority groups in the US (Hall 2000; Collins 2006; Ahmed 2010; 2012; Anthias 2013). Beneath their celebratory surface, cultural festivals require discipline and sacrifice among their participants, frequently privileging accessibility over authenticity and emphasizing unity in a manner that denies or marginalizes legitimate differences within and between groups. In the next chapter, I discuss how a form of civic engagement nominally committed to the widest sense of inclusion also depends on excluding expressions of controversy or dissent.

Chapter 5: Inclusion and Celebration: Politics by *Other* Other Means?

There is no civil discourse that does not conceptualize the world into those who deserve inclusion and those who do not.

—Jeffrey C. Alexander[30]

Throughout the year there were small scattered islands of time, strictly limited by the dates of feasts, when the world was permitted to emerge from the official routine but exclusively under the camouflage of laughter. Barriers were raised, provided there was nothing but laughter.

—M.M. Bakhtin[31]

If there is a single organizational principle guiding all civic efforts of Seattle Center Productions, emphasized with such frequency that it assumes the inviolable air of the sacred, it is the principle of inclusion. Inclusion is described at once as the ends and the means of the Festál series—the goal towards which cultural celebrations aim and the method through which they hope to achieve it. 'Inclusion' signifies an invitation that offers all it has to give to anyone who is wanting, making a universal promise that refuses to discriminate. Under the umbrella of inclusion fit all the other values fostered by Festál—community outreach, diversity, and pure positivity.

For Seattle Center employees, inclusion serves as an organizational mantra. "As Seattle Center culture, we kind of say, 'The more the merrier. Bring everybody in,'" says Jennifer, an Event Coordinator (EC) for Festál. Her colleague, JulieAnn, echoes the point: "Overall, our mission is, 'Everybody in. Everybody gets to be in the pool.'"

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[30] Alexander (1992:290-291).
[31] Bakhtin (1984:90).

According to Customer Service Manager Barbara Bryant, the motivating force behind celebrating culture is that it offers something for everyone: "We all learn from each other in these cultural activities, whether it's entertainment, whether it's art, it could be food, children's activities. We all can participate in that." For Director of Seattle Center Productions, John Merner, inclusion even acts as the ultimate mediator, preemptively settling disputes before they can take root: "Rather than say we're going to ban anything, we're going to include everything." There is seemingly no end to what can be accomplished as long as everyone is involved and nothing is ruled out.

Inclusion, of course, is a foundational tenet of democracy and a crucial objective for civic action, especially when it comes to disempowered groups like immigrants and ethnic minorities. But what does it mean to include everybody? And how can such inclusion be achieved? This chapter examines how pursuing a strategy of civic outreach based on inclusion, celebration, and goodwill is messier business than it first appears. Like any form of civic action (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014), public celebrations involve making some choices that necessarily preclude others, particularly when managing limited resources, complying with formal regulations, and adjudicating between incommensurate claims. Other exclusions are required to stay on message and promote the organizational mission—even when that mission itself is inclusion.

As a city program that devotes municipal resources in support of Festál, some of these exclusions are structural, such as the restrictions on political and religious content at the festivals. Similarly, the ethnic community organizations—each registered as 501(c)3 nonprofits—are required to avoid endorsing policies, candidates, or religious programs. However, as this chapter will show, the biggest exclusion of all at Seattle Center—over

and beyond the legal requirements for public programming or the stipulations for tax-exempt status—is the exclusion of any performance, exhibit, or expression of negativity that would bring down the ebullient atmosphere promoted at the festivals. For celebratory civics to work its magic, the festivals must be kept upbeat and festive at all times.

The previous two chapters have explored what *can be done* with positive feelings, focusing on the pursuit of civic goals through a strategy of positive emotional outreach I am calling celebratory civics. In Chapter 3, I showed how emplacing the cultural practices of ethnic minority groups within a familiar civic space can help overcome the distance and distrust that can fester in highly segregated cities. Overcoming the geographic exclusion of minority groups through public events promoted a more inclusive city with more intercultural interactions. Chapter 4 focused more closely on the civic work that positive emotional performances aspire to achieve, demonstrating how expressions of goodwill, pride, and collective celebration can compensate for dominant narratives of suspicion, pity, fear, and derision that attach to various ethnic groups and exclude them from equal social standing. Positive emotions provide scarce opportunities for intercultural conflict to take place and presents an alternative pedagogy to deliberation by directly targeting the negative feelings underlying stereotypes.

These two chapters demonstrate that festival planners and their municipal sponsors are pursuing an understudied form of civic engagement, and present preliminary evidence that such emotional outreach can attract an audience that is unfamiliar with—and potentially hostile to—cultural expressions of racial and ethnic minority groups, and can furthermore spark continued engagement in intercultural activities beyond the festival itself. This cheerful form of civic outreach is seen by participants as offering exciting

potential to achieve the civic integration for immigrants and ethnic minorities promised by multiculturalism, but proven to be so elusive in practice.

However, I have yet to examine how celebratory civics fits within the broader emotional repertoire of civic action, as well as the limitations and trade-offs that may arise on account of employing a celebratory strategy of civic outreach. Doing so is important for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact that sociology tends to either disregard positive emotions as frivolous (Bruce 2013), diagnose them as ideology (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002; Ehrenreich 2009; Debord 2012), or deem them normatively problematic (Ahmed 2010; Anthias 2013).

In acts of persuasion, positive emotions are frequently characterized as manipulative, insincere, and deceptive: they beguile, charm, flatter, cajole, and seduce. For Ehrenreich (2009), positivity is a sinister neoliberal trope; for Ahmed (2010), it disguises the malevolence of conservative institutions; for Bell and Hartmann (2007), it blithely justifies entrenched racial power; for Brown (2008), it is a form of condescension and misrecognition; for Eliasoph, it expeditiously filters out genuine public-spiritedness for the sake of shrinking ambitions to the scale of action (1998) and strokes activists' sense of well-meaning while turning them away from politics (2011). At best, happiness is treated as trivial, lacking the urgency of anger, contention, and protest (Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Gould 2009; Ng and Kidder 2012; Woods et al. 2012; Benski and Langman 2013; Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013; Jasper 2014). It may have a role in sustaining collective identity of a group or movement (Williams 1995; Staggenborg 2001; Polletta 2008; Taylor et al. 2009), but is not seen as useful in pursuing actual movement goals, promoting social change, or in engaging the broader public. After all, if

the study of civic action is classically about how people come together to address common problems (Baiocchi et al. 2014; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014), aren't the kinds of negative emotions that festivals work assiduously to avoid necessary? How can you make change without naming a problem?

This chapter considers the civic partnership between the municipal government of Seattle and 23 different nonprofit organizations, each representing a distinct ethnic community with its own festival vision, in order to create an inclusive, accessible festival atmosphere by emphasizing positive emotions to the explicit exclusion of controversy, conflict, or discomfort. I consider the Festál program in light of increasingly common "hybrid governance systems" that have drawn growing attention in recent years (Chaves et al. 2004; Boyte 2005; Ansell and Gash 2008; Fisher et al. 2015). Such projects coordinate civic efforts by governments and civil society groups to accomplish collective goals. Because this relationship is defined more by cooperation than by conflict, scholars have noted that hybrid governance represents a "less contentious trend" of civic action than other forms of activism in which policy change is the target (Fisher et al. 2015:122). Previous scholarship has demonstrated that civic groups and public offices working together can advance a number of social goods, such as establishing trust between citizens and government (Ansell and Gash 2008), strengthening organizational capacity of nonprofits (Chaves et al. 2004), sparking civic agency among citizens (Boyte 2005), and producing lasting voluntary efforts that are sustained even beyond the expiration of the program (Fisher et al. 2015).

The form and frequency of civic activity among minority groups is especially sensitive to institutional contexts, particularly access to local political decision-makers

and inclusive organizational structures (Bernstein 1997; Bloemraad 2006; Ferrauiolo 2009; Ebert and Okamoto 2013; Hein 2014; Kessler and Bloemraad 2010). Where collective action groups organized around identity enjoy broad institutional support, the "emotional bond to their adopted country" is strengthened (Bloemraad 2006:668) and their civic efforts are more likely to "challenge the dominant culture's perception" of minority groups "by playing on uncontroversial themes" (Bernstein 1997:537). In a study of civic events organized by immigrant groups in 52 metropolitan areas across the US, Ebert and Okamoto (2013) found that outreach efforts by municipalities strengthened immigrant communities and helped direct their civic action toward "noncontentious," integrative efforts.

This growing literature is promising, not only for identifying a positive role for government in partnering with civic groups representing minority populations, but for its indication of how these groups' emotional strategies change when given access to public resources. However, many critics fault the current governmental logic of multiculturalism for depoliticizing minority cultures (Vertovic 1996; Mamdani 2004; Brown 2006). According to this criticism, cultural diversity is taken up as a resource for political and commercial exploitation (Yudice 2003), abstracting cultural practices and representations from the social positions in which they developed (Anthias 2013). The innocuously inclusive language of diversity invokes what Bell and Hartmann call "happy talk" (2007), or a discourse that merely celebrates cosmetic or consumable differences while obscuring critical challenges to achieving social equity for structurally disadvantaged groups. The depoliticization of civic-minded groups can impede the mobilization of activist energy,

helping to reaffirm, naturalize, and extend the reach of power over the very groups that

would resist it (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2010).

As I will discuss in this chapter, the skepticism in this scholarship makes

celebratory civics worthy of careful and critical attention. Findings from this chapter

corroborate some of these fears, as Seattle Center Productions does, in fact, seek to

preempt controversies, promote positive affects, divert political discussions, and

discourage expressions of cultural or ethnic identity that make the wider, whiter

population of Seattle uncomfortable. However, this apolitical—even *anti*political—

presentation of cultural diversity is not pursued solely as a containment strategy of the

state, nor is the participation of ethnic community organizations in the staging of festivals

an indication of their cooptation, complicity, or cowardice. As the following sections

make clear, these nonprofits representing minority communities pursue civic goals

through their cooperation with the city and its strictures, and in many cases enforce the

celebratory standards of conduct over and beyond what is legally mandated as public

policy or required to maintain their tax-exempt privileges as nonprofit organizations.

Rather than understand celebratory public programming as a panacea for an inclusive

multicultural society or a defanging of minority opposition, the evidence in this chapter

suggests that it is more appropriate to conceive of positive emotional outreach as one

would any other form of civic engagement strategy—one that is more useful for

advancing particular objectives rather than others and one that implies trade-offs that

could potentially impede other interests. Creating a celebratory environment that is

inclusive to all potential participants means excluding emotions that create discord,

discomfort, or dissent, however appropriate these expressions appear from a normative

standpoint. But the decision to avoid politics is a political one, reflecting strategic choices by communities to pursue important civic goals, even at the potential expense of raising awareness of political issues.

My argument will proceed in four sections. In the first, I consider the role of Seattle Center in inducting festivals into the ethic of civic engagement that is inclusive of the broader community. Festál employees help translate the expression of culture to the public stage, acting as teachers of outreach to an audience expected to be unfamiliar with the cultures being celebrated. Section two investigates how creating an inclusive environment at the festivals is primarily a strategy of managing emotions within the festival space, justifying the exclusions of political and religious expressions in the name of inclusion. Section three shifts focus to the ways in which the ethnic community organizations staging the festivals adopt and extend these strategies in order to manage conflicts that arise when planning civic events, as well as use the festivals to mend divisions within and between communities. Section four examines how the subject of race, a central aspect to the identity formation of immigrant and ethnic minority communities in the US yet one that is seen as divisive among the majority population, is approached at public celebrations. In the conclusion, I assess the strategy of celebratory civics as a negotiation among competing community goals—in short, in terms of its politics.

5.1 "…And by that very thing it changes" – Teaching Outreach through Entertainment

City administrators of the Festál program see themselves as partners in celebratory civic performances, and describe an orientation to inclusion and outreach as the dominant objective of municipal investment in the festival series. As government

officers inexpert in the cultural traditions of the 23 ethnic communities putting on the

festivals, they envision their role less as curators of cultural diversity than as coordinators

of its message. As the Director of Seattle Center Productions, John Merner, told me:

> We don't tell them what their content should be. We don't enter into that. Here's
> our one thing that we say: You decide what your content should be and what's
> important, and that's got to come out of your community, but you've got to
> present it to the larger community. It can't be a party for you guys. And that's the
> only thing we really insist on. Otherwise you might as well go somewhere else
> and do it.

John's insistence that the festival "can't be a party for you guys" echoes the

sentiment of white ownership of civic space that greeted Yutaka during the first Cherry

Blossom festival in the 1970s—that Seattle Center is a "big living room for *here*, not for

some minority community to have a party" (see Chapter 3). But it also grants

participating ethnic community organizations autonomy in their self-definition on the

public stage (see Chapter 4). Beneath the austerity of John's bargain lies an

organizational commitment by Seattle Center to help translate what is important to the

cultural identity of ethnic communities for a broader audience expected to be unfamiliar

with the traditions celebrated by particular ethnic groups. In other words, they are

teachers of outreach.

On one weekday evening a month throughout the year, representatives from each

of the participating ethnic organizations convene in Seattle Center for a mandatory

meeting to, in the words of Managing Artistic Director Steve Sneed, "acclimate to what

Festál is." These sessions are designed to integrate new participants, keep long-standing

events fresh, and steer the celebration of ethnic culture towards the inclusive mission of

the multicultural civil sphere. Here, culture itself frequently takes a backseat to logistics.

Community organizations deliver performance reviews on recent events, share best

practices, and form breakout groups to strategize improvements to marketing and sponsoring, signage and promotions, food and presentation. The role of city officials at these meetings is to build the organizational capacity of the festival planners and help community groups think about culture as a popular attraction that can excite, entertain, and entice the participation of the greater Seattle community.

These out-group populations[32] are, like the employees of Seattle Center Productions themselves, expected to be unfamiliar with cultural traditions practiced by ethnic minority groups. At the same time, in-group members for whom cultural practices make up the routine stuff of identity are often unaccustomed to viewing their culture from outside, as an object of novelty, curiosity, and potential fun. For this reason, at Festál meetings, Steve likes to stress that each festival should have a "WOW factor," which he describes as "an event or performance that *really* stands out." Often, these WOW factors are ordinary elements of ethnic culture dressed up or exaggerated to create a spectacle that can attract a crowd. Festival organizers with years of experience hosting events with Festál have become skillful marketers of WOW factors. For a time, the Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival was the site where the longest sushi roll in the Guinness Book of World Records was assembled, while the organizer of the Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival was planning on gathering 1000 ukulele players on stage at the same time for his next event.

On the other hand, festivals with less tenure at Seattle Center sometimes struggle to translate ethnic culture on the public stage. Festál meetings are intended to expose community leaders to the experiences and strategies of their peers and to apply the

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[32] I.e., festival participants who do not identify themselves as sharing "personal or familial heritage" with the ethnic group being celebrated at the event. See Chapter 2 for more demographic details.

principles of public entertainment to the particularities of their cultural traditions. In the

runup to their own events, these community organizations work closely with an assigned

Event Coordinator (EC) who helps them to highlight what makes them "unique." As one

EC, JulieAnn, told me of her experience working with the organization that hosts the

Hmong Festival,

> They weren't thinking about exhibits, they weren't thinking about—you know the Hmong community has a really interesting history, how they came to be here is really interesting, and the fact that they're not a country, they're a people, and the fact that they didn't have written language for so long—it was all oral tradition— that's really cool. They do really incredible needlework, you know, they have a bunch of stuff like that. Storytelling art forms and sharing it with people who aren't Hmong is part of why they are part of Festál, right? Well, they didn't have any exhibits at all until [a former employee of Seattle Center Productions] made them an exhibit, right? They didn't have outreach stuff. They didn't have stuff that turned out, they only had stuff that turned in.

The Hmong Festival was able to attract a great deal of interest from within the

community and had, in JulieAnn's estimation, even become "a little bit too big, almost a

festival and a half… Everybody comes, and they stay all day, right? So a family comes,

and they bring food, and they bring all sorts of stuff, and they set themselves at a couple

of dining tables, and they camp out all day" (See Picture 5.1). The size of the event and

the enthusiasm of participants within the community makes the Hmong Festival a

successful celebration of Hmong culture and a positive assertion of Hmong identity in the

heart of Seattle's premier public space. But the lack of activities that could draw in out-

group members and enlist them in cultural interactions endangered the mission of

inclusive, intercultural learning promoted by the Festál series. By extending the presence

of Hmong culture from the public stage to the less structured public of the Armory food

court, "camp[ing] out" at the tables typically reserved for customers of the building's

permanent restaurants, these visitors contravene the intention of the Festál program to engage outsiders—members of Seattle's dominant community—in the fun.

Picture 5.1: Visitors at Hmong Festival "Camp Out" in the Armory Food Court

Photo by the author.

From JulieAnn's perspective, it was not for lack of desire for outreach that led the Hmong Festival to "turn in"; after all, sharing Hmong culture "is part of why they are part of Festál." The problem, instead, was the Hmong's community's apparent lack of awareness about what is interesting to outsiders about their history and culture. To be a successful event required a reassessment of how to recognize and celebrate Hmong identity from an outsider's perspective: "What we're saying is, this is not your private party. You *have* to let other people in, and by that very thing it changes." JulieAnn lists some features of Hmong ethnicity that stand out for her, including needlework and an "oral tradition," but without explicitly translating these cultural aspects into an exhibit, they would be inaccessible to the ordinary visitor to Seattle Center. Until a former EC intervened and produced an exhibit of Hmong culture for the organizers of the Hmong Festival—teaching outreach by presenting cultural identity accessible to outsiders—the

event ceased to meet the organizational mission of civic outreach that binds Festál as a series.

As this example shows, it is not sufficient that culture be made *interesting* to outsiders. Organizers have learned that it must also be *entertaining*, offering the kinds of fun, interactive, and upbeat activities that make festivals into celebratory events capable of sustaining the attention and participation of out-group members. Hence, ECs also encourage festival organizers to be creative and engaging in their cultural presentations, avoiding seriousness in favor of play, and constant stimulation to ward off the boredom of conventional learning. As one Event Coordinator, Jennifer, told me,

> I'm pretty firmly of the opinion that these are celebrations. And I think that if they're not fun, then people won't come. And so I definitely like to have some sort of cultural presentation or educational element but you don't want people to just, you know, be staring at text, because that's not fun. So a lot of the festivals are really good at finding a way to present information as entertainment.

Part of Jennifer's job is to help festival organizers accomplish the feat of making cultural encounters entertaining first, so that they might also be effective as education. However, these interventions also influence which aspects of culture are taken up as worthy of public recognition, omitting some cultural forms that depress the upbeat mood. When the organizers of the Spirit of West Africa festival, Thione and Suzanne, suggested using the conference rooms in the Armory to set up a film screening during the festival, Jennifer was skeptical. Although she recognized that films can be an important part of the cultural and artistic expression of a country or region, prior Festál events had had poor success in sustaining the interest of audience members who had sought out the festival for more lively entertainments (see Picture 5.2). "You don't want an art film," she cautioned, "what visitors want is something they can't get anywhere else." Instead of showing a

documentary or a feature film, she suggested streaming an event visitors may find more exotic, like Senegalese wrestling. The Spirit of West Africa organizational committee ended up scrapping the idea of a film screening altogether.

It is not only employees of Seattle Center Productions that push for a positive and upbeat atmosphere at the events. Festival organizers find for themselves that fun and flashy performances provoke more engagement by their audiences than do serious or pedantic exhibits, and share insights about what sparks participation with their peers at Festál meetings. Thione's innovation of including a fashion show at his festival proved to be a huge success, as festival visitors whooped and cheered on amateur models as they took the stage in batik dresses and kente cloth. The feature quickly spread to other festivals, including the most recent inductee to the Festál program, the Polish Festival Seattle. Whereas the event planners had difficulty attracting an audience to a screening of a film produced by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Picture 5.2), the bright spectacle of the fashion show had visitors crowding the stage to take photos and videos of the traditional Polish clothing on display (see Picture 5.3).

The costumes at the fashion show at Polish Festival Seattle, designed and produced by a local Polish Seattleite, display a range of attire from different eras of Polish culture and across a wide range of geography, from floral dresses of the mountain regions to friars' robes and furs. The show was a big hit with the crowds, especially when it was performed a second time on the outdoor stage, in sight of the beer garden, whose patrons cheered on a man dressed unseasonably in a fur hat and vest as he strutted across the stage. The model leaned into the reaction he provoked in the audience, giving a twirl and opening the vest to reveal his chest. Everyone laughed and whistled. These self-

Picture 5.2: Film Screening at Polish Festival Seattle

Photo by the author.

Picture 5.3: Fashion Show at Polish Festival Seattle

Photo by the author.

conscious performances of bygone ethnic heritage are done in good fun for the benefit of

including an audience surprised by a type of performance not typically seen at other

Polish festivals. The festival organizer, Danuta, singled it out as the performance that

most impressed committee members from the Polish Festival in Portland, whom she had

invited to observe the event: "They loved our fashion show. They want it. So they found

so many elements that they never thought about because they were only about food, beer,

and dancing."

Although these aspects of Polish culture—"food, beer, and dancing"—are clearly

festive activities, they resonated less with an outside audience searching for uniquely

entertaining expressions of cultural identity than did the bright and entertaining novelty

of the unique styles of dress at the fashion show. Where such activities succeeded as

celebratory, they failed in the civic purpose of the events as engines of outreach to the

broader community. As Matt, a Polish American who watched the fashion show from the

beer garden alongside friends and family, told me, "There's the side we show to the

public where we put on the costumes. It's not what we wear every day, it's just that we're

showing these are the greatest hits of Poland. Hopefully you like something and maybe

we can trick you into coming [to the Polish community center]."

As previous chapters have demonstrated, the civic partnership formed between

the city of Seattle and its ethnic community organizations aims to engage a third party,

the dominant Anglo-American community unlikely to encounter minorities in their

normal peregrinations throughout the segregated city (see Chapter 3). Many festival

organizers have, like Matt, determined that civic goals of attracting interest and including

out-groups can be advanced by performing upbeat, participatory acts of goodwill from

the public stage (Chapter 4). But there are also trade-offs to this form of celebratory

civics. Employing cultural celebrations as an inclusive civic tool requires festival

organizers to reconfigure cultural practices so that they are accessible to a target audience

of curious members of out-groups or people casually passing by the event. The team of

city employees working for Seattle Center Production become teachers of outreach,

helping ethnic community leaders to reconceive of their culture in this way, promoting

fun, engaging, and unique experiences that "really stand out" from more challenging

forms of artistic expression or the mundane, everyday practices that constitute much of

culture. But ethnic community leaders, drawn to the Festál program for its promise of

civic outreach inclusive of the broader community, are eager pupils. They attend the

meetings, solicit the advice of their Event Coordinators, swap tactics with peer

organizations, and engage in trial and error over years of events in order to enhance their

pursuit of Festál's particular brand of inclusivity.

By participating in the program, festival planners learn how to attract and engage

a crowd, and pass along to their peer organizations tips about which activities get the best

reactions. By sharing information about "best practices" with other members of the

program—and even spreading the word to festivals in other cities—festival organizers

internalize and pre-empt the efforts of Seattle Center Productions to teach outreach.

Celebratory civics diffuses through such networks, informing both the style and the

audience of public cultural celebrations elsewhere. The enthusiasm with which festival

organizers adopt this approach to civic outreach—and, by implication, this approach to

the public celebration of culture—testifies to the belief among these civic groups that by

sharing broadly agreeable aspects of culture with an unfamiliar but curious audience, a

greater civic understanding can be reached that benefits both sides. But this choice made in the name of inclusion is pursued at the cost of excluding other expressions of cultural identity, such as the routine social interactions of tight-knit communities or the presentation of artforms that may be unintelligible or unstimulating to the uninitiated. It requires consciously tailoring the meaning of cultural celebration into a strategy of civic engagement. "And," in the words of EC JulieAnn, "by that very thing it changes."

5.2 "I keep coming back to that word": Exclusions in the Name of Inclusivity

Including the broadest possible audience proved to be more difficult than simply hosting the event in a recognizable public place and keeping the doors open to all comers; it required informal exclusions that, despite John's protestations that "we don't tell them what their content should be," altered the form and style in which culture is celebrated on the civic stage. John is correct in noting that the staging of such "inward-looking" content is not formally prohibited by Seattle Center Productions and is ultimately agreeable to ethnic community organizations participating in the Festál program. Art films, informal picnics, and even dancing necessitated a prior intimacy with ethnic culture for easy participation, thus effectuating a de facto exclusion of a key demographic: the majority of Seattle's population. In the context of public celebrations of culture, 'inclusion' comes to take on the practical meaning of facilitating out-group access and lowering the denominator to a level comfortable for the casual participation of Anglo-Americans.

However, it is not just through the mandate of entertainment that drive negotiations between Seattle Center Productions and ethnic community organizations regarding lines of inclusion and exclusion. Partnership between the city and civic groups

also requires adherence to formal prohibitions on festival content that complicate the mission of inclusion and diversity at the heart of Festál. Eligibility for municipal funds requires compliance with rules regarding the protection of free speech.[33] JulieAnn's characterization of these stipulations is blunt: "We are invested in being politically neutral. You know? We're government. We don't get to pick sides. We [have] separation of church and state." However, reconciling regulation and celebration becomes a tricky proposition when considering the institutional value Festál places on cultural identity and artistic expression. Seattle Center officials frequently noted difficulties upholding their statutory duties to disallow political and religious content while maintaining their normative commitment to celebrating diversity. Such rules insert questions of limitation and prohibition into a civic program whose guiding principle of inclusion refuses to rule anything out. To navigate through this terrain of trade-offs, Jennifer again sees inclusivity as providing deliverance from making difficult choices:

> We're very clear that we want to be an inclusive place and never an exclusive place, so a lot of our policies that are more formal, like presentation of religious materials, that kind of thing, we try to be open to everything as long as what's being presented does not exclude a group.

Jennifer's difficulty explaining Seattle Center's legal obligations belies her claim that Event Coordinators like herself are "very clear" about what kinds of content are appropriate for performance at the festival series. Her characterization of the criteria determining what crosses the line touches on one of the core paradoxes of inclusion that continues to confound democratic theory (Habermas 1989; Derrida 2000; Mouffe 2000;

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[33] As will be discussed below, the policy structuring the Festál program's prohibition of political and religious content is mirrored by similar prohibitions from federal regulations of 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, which is the mandatory classification for all festival committees. As a formal matter, then, certain kinds of political or religious content are regulated both from the top down and from the bottom up.

Benhabib 2002; Young 2002; Brown 2006). By attaching conditions to the forms of

religious expressions Festál is willing to include at the festivals ("as long as"), Jennifer

describes a formal exclusion in its own right: that which excludes will be excluded. There

is no easy way to square this circle, since this decision is arbitrated by people who are, by

virtue of their authority to decide, already included (Ahmed 2012). As the municipal

administrators of the public programming, it is the employees of Seattle Center

Productions who ultimately must determine and enforce these formal regulations, but this

responsibility is shifted back on the performer who would be excluded for expressions

that are (inherently, it would seem) exclusive. Much like the "politically neutral"

objective described by JulieAnn, Jennifer's rhetoric—though openly sympathetic and

nominally inclusive—shifts the question of appropriate conduct to the appellant,

disappearing the role of the Seattle government in adjudicating *what* is considered

exclusive and thus *who* is worthy of exclusion.

As a legal matter, the prohibitions of political or religious endorsement are rather

straightforward. Regulations governing the tax-exempt status of 501(c)3 nonprofit

organizations—such as the ethnic community groups hosting the festivals—stipulate that

government-sponsored events can neither endorse political parties or candidates, nor

engage in political campaigning. The regulation of religious content relies on

interpretations of the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution by the Supreme Court,

which ruled that "No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any

religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they

may adopt to teach or practice religion."[34] However, such formal legal sources were not

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[34] Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1, 15-16 (1947)

cited by my respondents when describing how Seattle Center Productions, as an

institution of the city government, enforced restrictions on festival content. City officials

resisted drawing a bright line between appropriate and inappropriate conduct, describing

the boundary as "squishy," defined more by "a feel" than by a hard and fast rule. Like all

content at Festál events, the purpose is to be inclusive: upbeat, celebratory, and fun. More

than simply abiding by the letter of the law, then, Seattle Center's objective in reigning in

political and religious content was to keep festivals focused on maintaining an inviting

atmosphere bereft of controversy or of any content to which someone might take offense.

As JulieAnn describes it:

> You don't get to come and preach. And you need to pay attention to what your
> content is. That said, there's a Buddhist ceremony that happens as part of Tết [the
> Vietnamese New Year Festival], but it happens so that everybody can see it. It
> happens in a way where it's almost more artful than worship. You know what I
> mean? You watch people, you know, do the process of lighting the incense and
> doing altar-based ritual, but it's more artform than it is [religious].

The altar JulieAnn is referring to serves as the backdrop to all of the stage

performances that make up the Tết Festival Seattle (See Picture 5.4). Such altars are

common fixtures in Vietnamese homes to mark the coming of spring, when families

adorn them with fruit and flowers as offerings for their deceased ancestors. The opening

ceremony of the festival includes a religious rite during which a Buddhist monk lights

candles and incense that continue to burn throughout the program. However, despite its

religiosity, this practice is not problematic from Seattle Center's perspective because of

its apparent inclusivity: "It happens so that everybody can see it." In this case, the open,

conspicuous position of the altar alongside symbols of secularism such as the American

flag, made it an inoffensive and innocuous expression of culture rather than an aggressive

or off-putting endorsement of religious practice. Presumably, it is the peace, serenity, and

solemnity of this ritual that makes it "more artful than worship" for the majority of

Seattle's population who, like JulieAnn, is not Buddhist.

Picture 5.4: The Stage and Altar at Tết Festival Seattle

Photo by the author

In communicating the policy to festival organizers, Steve, the Managing Artistic

Director in charge of the Festál program, admits that "in most cultures, it's entirely

impossible to separate religion and politics. But if we state [the general policy], then we

work to make sure that it's not over-emphasized." Inevitably, the issue has come up from

time to time over the decades Seattle has been sponsoring the program, and John

Merner's solution to 'include everything, exclude nothing' is cited as helping to resolve

such problems in the past. According to Festál legend, the Arab Fest was born out of a

protest by Seattle's Palestinian community of an Israel at 50 event held at Seattle Center,

and there was a period when the Irish community was holding quasi-parallel festivals

along Catholic and Protestant lines. These issues were resolved over time without having

to exclude a group. However, the controversy at Festál at the time of my fieldwork regarded an applicant for a new festival. The Puget Sound region has a large Indian and Indian-American community that has continued to grow at a rapid pace in recent years, but was not represented in the Festál program at the time of my study. When a group organizing a community-based event celebrating Diwali in the suburb of Redmond expressed interest in moving their festival to Seattle Center, they were quickly offered a trial run to join Festál. When I began studying the program in 2014, the Diwali Festival had just completed the first of its two years of "incubation" (for more on this initiation process, see Chapter 2), which had raised several concerns among the employees of Seattle Center Productions.

Jennifer, the Event Coordinator assigned to work alongside Harry and Latha, the organizers of the Diwali Festival, remembers being surprised when she attended the event. Festál officials were aware that Harry was also the director of the Vedic Cultural Center, a local organization of Hare Krishnas, but had plenty of experience working with festival committees that, like Tết Festival Seattle, wished to incorporate religious practices into their festivals. Jennifer spent months with Harry and Latha to coordinate the logistical minutiae that comes with the program of organizing a large public event, but on the day of the event expressed that she "did not realize how religious the presentation was going to be…When I saw what they were putting up Saturday morning, it was like, 'Oh no no no no no,'" In particular, she objected to paintings depicting the ritual sacrifice of animals and other images representing religious scenes. Although it is not uncommon for festivals to incorporate religious themes into their presentation (see Picture 5.4 above), Jennifer found that the paintings displayed at Diwali were distasteful,

aggressive, and too emotionally dissonant for the festive and inclusive environment desired for Festál events. "Some of the pictures were disturbing and so religious in nature that it was whacking people over the heads when they walked in the building."

> [There were] people walking up to me and saying, "That guy just grabbed me as I was walking in and I'm not interested. I don't like that. I feel like I'm in an airport," which is one of the things that I heard. Which doesn't actually happen anymore, but people still have that in their brains from the '70s. So, nobody in saffron robes, but the *feel* was there, you know? I mean, I hate to play into that stereotype, but it's one that's strong in people's brains, you know?

Harry had spoken with Jennifer, Steve, and the Festál team about incorporating some of the values of his organization into the festival, including a concern for the poor that is preached in his religious beliefs. Seattle Center Productions had even intervened on Harry's behalf in a dispute with some of the restaurants in the Armory food court, which had taken exception to the festival offering free food to visitors. According to Jennifer, she was happy to go to bat for Harry because "that's important to their community, and because it's part of their outreach." The tenet of religious faith that promoted sharing food with the less fortunate was also consistent with the inclusive mission of Festál, and was unlikely to cause a stir among a mixed audience. However, other expressions of the Hare Krishna faith, such as displaying "aggressive" religious imagery or directly engaging visitors to the Armory, changed the emotional charge of the festival atmosphere—the inclusive, positive "feel" of the event the city works so hard to cultivate. In actuality, there were not people in saffron robes coming up to people at the event, but the imagery and emotional tenor of the festival activated these stereotypes in the minds of Jennifer and (supposedly) other guests, such that it "felt like" there were.

The prominent presence of the religious paintings at the Diwali Festival of Light appeared to pass the inclusivity criteria that JulieAnn had cited to explain the

157

appropriateness of displaying an altar at the Tết Festival Seattle: They were displayed in a

place where "everybody can see" them. However, in the case of Diwali, this visibility

heightened the negative associations that are *felt* by people uncomfortable with the

presence of Hare Krishnas in public spaces. It is not religiosity *per* se that violates the

unwritten compact between Seattle Center Productions and participating ethnic

community organizations regarding the cultural presentation of religious practices, but

the emotional mood they create. The calm and quiet of lighting of incense at a religious

ceremony can be euphemized as "more artful than worship" by a non-Buddhist, whereas

the buzz-killing depictions of animal sacrifice make it "disturbing for the public."

When I asked Jennifer about how she determines when religiosity is an acceptable

expression of culture and when it crosses over to a violation of Festál's policy restricting

religious content, she again declined to provide a strict rubric that could be uniformly

applied to all of the ethnic community organizations staging festivals. Rather than

judgments regarding adherence to legal rulings or consistent philosophical principles,

these decisions are made on a case by case basis, according to the emotional atmosphere

such expressions create for the general audience.

> There's a *feel* to it. I mean the Tibetans always have an altar on the stage. That's
> religious. They often have a picture of his Holiness. You know, *clearly*. [Jennifer
> gestures to me, acknowledging the apparent contradiction] But they're not—
> they're inviting people in, they're not capturing them. And that's a real big
> difference, so, and then, unfortunately, festivals like [Diwali] felt like they were
> capturing people.

Jennifer's example of the Tibet Fest is an apt one; Tibet is a territory whose

sovereignty from China is bitterly disputed, and is not recognized as an independent

country by the US government. As a figure of the Tibetan independence movement, the

Dalai Lama is at once a political and a religious figure on a geopolitical scale. However,

within the celebratory context of a festival, he is widely recognized as a figure for peace and a morally righteous person. Exceptions to the rule can be made in such cases, as they fail to provoke a negative reaction or incite a controversy among the audience. The difference between a religious message "inviting people in" and one that is "capturing people" is not a difference that can be explained, but one that can only be *felt*. The inclusive emotions are the positive ones that affirm a celebratory message of festivity and unanimity. Emotions that exclude—and are to be excluded—are those that cause controversy and discomfort. The public space of Seattle Center, sponsored by the government of Seattle, asserts a duty to make such decisions in the name of inclusivity. But the criteria that distinguish what is properly public and what ought to be kept private are not determined by its cultural form, but by its consonance with the prevailing views of its broader audience. Jennifer continues:

> That's one of the challenges when you go from the private venue, or a venue where it's not a co-production, to Seattle Center, and one of the things you trade off is you don't have the freedom to do everything you might have done in a private venue. We're pretty conscious of, I wouldn't say *protecting* the guests, because that's not right. But I guess making people as comfortable as possible? And that, again, would be inclusive, you know? I keep coming back to that word.

Inclusion is the word representatives of Seattle's government keep coming back to when determining what kinds of cultural expression they should exclude from the public stage. To be inclusive is to care for the comfort of all guests, warding off the possibility of emotional dissensus within the festival space. As celebratory events, potentially divisive displays defeat the civic purpose of outreach to a broad audience and must therefore be discouraged, over and above what might be required by law. The policy of Seattle Center productions to prohibit political and religious content is a malleable standard that can be applied to various situations that upset the upbeat mood of public

festivals, and justifies interventions into the very cultural expressions they ostensibly aim to celebrate. But Jennifer's description of submitting to this policy as a "trade-off" for the publicity of civic space is correct. In the next section, I demonstrate how festival organizers broadly endorse such strictures, and seek to turn the mandatory mirth of Festál's policy towards their organizational advantage—even, at times, extending the enforcement of pure positivity beyond the scope of Seattle Center Productions. The trade off of controversy for positive emotions shows that such an exclusion is frequently a strategic one, suggesting that avoiding politics can in some instances be rather politic.

5.3 "Can you offer me something positive?" – Building Communities, Burying Grievances

The date of the Seattle Iranian Festival in 2014 was June 28, the first day of Islam's holy month of Ramadan that year. The double-booking was pure happenstance, an inevitable consequence of a public celebration organized on the same summer weekend each year and a religious holiday that varies according to the lunar calendar. In the lead-up to the festival, I wondered how the holiday would be treated by the committee organizing the event, which I knew to be very wary of the representation of Persians in the American media (see Chapter 4). Ali, Kassra, and others saw participation in Festál as an opportunity to redeem their countrymen from negative associations targeting them as political terrorists and religious extremists (Bail 2012). Would this strategy of self-definition extend to the softening of Islam in the public eye? Would the coincidence of the festival falling on the first night of Ramadan—a holiday devoted to peaceful

reflection, penitence, and concern for the less fortunate—provide the perfect opportunity

for such a redemption?

As it turned out, it wasn't mentioned once at the festival.[35] There was nothing

listed on the program indicating that the festival day was anything out of the ordinary.

Nor was there an announcement from the stage, a booth or exhibit explaining the

holiday's significance, or a masjid reserved for visitors to pray during the event. Instead,

a Persian restaurant was on hand serving food and tea, in spite of the fact that many

Iranians fast throughout daytime hours during Ramadan. When I spoke to Kassra, a

member of the Iranian American Community Alliance (IACA) and participant on the

Advisory Council to the Seattle Iranian Festival, he told me that the omission was

purposeful.

> The intention is to stay away from religion and politics. Not to offend anyone.
>
> *Interviewer:* Who would be offended?
>
> *Kassra:* Iranians! They complain about everything! … You don't want to get involved with religion and politics too much because you're bound to get people just turned off. There's a Ba'hai community, and it's hard to cater to all religions, and there are people who are not religious! Like I, myself, am not religious. Why would you want to promote religion? For me, I wouldn't want to go to an event where they're talking about Islam. A lot of people would really be annoyed and have a negative reaction when it comes to Iran.

When I asked about Ramadan, Kassra repeated the party line from Seattle Center

Productions that Festál events were not to include "religion and politics" in the festival

content. Like the city officials, his concern was less with the statutory obligations

attached to accepting municipal resources than with the feelings of comity and consensus

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[35] As Shams (2017) the suppression of public expressions of religiosity is common among Muslims in America. The visibility of religious signifiers mark these populations as "outsiders" and trigger stereotypes (see also Puwar 2004).

within the festival space that should not be unsettled. However, whereas the team of Festál employees had expressed caution about the comfort of out-groups with expressions of religiosity, Kassra worried that religious sentiment could potentially fracture and divide the Persian community whose culture was being celebrated at the festival. Kassra also had concerns about inclusion—the slogan of IACA is "unity in diversity"—and judged that there was no way to acknowledge the holiday without excluding Iran's religious minorities and non-believers. Public representations of ethnic identity in places like festivals are sometimes criticized for offering simplistic or essentialized portraits of cultures as internally homogeneous (Anthias 2013). The ethical value attached to inclusion also comes with a responsibility of representation. However, the inclusion of all perspectives becomes difficult when such claims are conflicting, threatening the feelings of harmony that ethical inclusivity is said to achieve. Rather than "turn people off", Kassra again chose exclusion of the potentially controversial, disallowing disagreement or discussion of differences that may divide an audience of celebrants.

It is unclear if Seattle Center would have objected had Ramadan figured into the festivities at the Seattle Iranian Festival. As it happened, they didn't have the chance to. The festival organizers made the deliberate choice to eschew controversy, and were able to use the ever-malleable program-wide prohibition on religious content as cover within their community. Visitors to the festival from within Seattle's Persian community voiced similar skepticism that religion could be broached at the event, even through a casual acknowledgement wishing observant families well in their prayers. For example, Neda lamented that non-Muslims in the Iranian American community "are just as dogmatic about *not* being religious as the mullahs are about being religious." Similarly, another

Iranian visitor to the festival, Samira, worried about the effects such messages would have on the community: "I think it's a good choice to keep religion out of it. It's not like our community's that big that we need another reason to wipe part of it out." Rather than work through the impasse, and threaten to fragment the community, the community leaders organizing the festival chose to focus on the positive, noncontroversial aspects of culture in order to build a community solidarity they found to be lacking.

The avoidance of Ramadan folds into the larger emotional mission of the Seattle Iranian Festival, which is to reach out with a message of unity to communities that have, according to Ali Ghambari, the founder of the festival, become divided by a myopic focus on disagreements. In Ali's estimation, such unity can only be achieved by performing consensus, bringing about a unity that does not currently exist. "We could talk about the challenges, but let's talk about what unites us. That's it. That's the message, every time. There is nothing else worth bringing. As long as I'm breathing, that's the way it is." When I asked him why he didn't believe the festival could be used to draw attention to community issues, he was explicit.

> Because we don't want it. It's like if you came to me and say, "It's a challenge because my dad doesn't love me, and I have a backache, and I don't have time for it all." Everybody has something! I don't need to hear that shit. No. You can find someone else that you can go to. Here, you will not find it. Instead, we focus on what unites us and the challenges that *everybody* goes through. Because at the end of the day we're on the same ball, so the differences between us are really, really minimal. Everybody goes through the same bullshit. So that's why we reach you so that you can be inspired to bring up the energy...and form a human connection. We can get there.

Ali's vision of the festival as a celebratory civic event is total, as he insists that the positive energy brought about through the event would enact a performative consensus, putting in place the goodwill and heightened feelings that it displays for the

audience. Ali casts aside negativity, as well as those visitors who would dwell on it

("You can find someone else that you can go to!") so that the mood can stay celebratory,

festive, and energetic. Like Collins (2004) he finds this emotional energy to be infectious,

coursing through the event space from body to body as they are enlisted in the public

practice of celebrating culture. In his characterization, it is not the innocuous, positive

feelings that are trivial, but rather the "challenges", the "same bullshit" that "everybody

goes through." Though experienced by all, dwelling on these challenges is ultimately

divisive, devoid of energy, and useless in uniting people. Instead, it is only through *not*

giving these challenges voice that they can be resolved.

The community leaders who organize festivals find uses for Seattle Center's

imprecise policies regarding controversial content, leaning on the rule to resolve internal

problems and build the community coalitions necessary to put together a large public

event. Such threats to unity are more likely to crop up the wider the umbrella of inclusion

reaches, as Thione, the founder and organizer of the Spirit of West Africa Festival, tells

me. Thione is from Senegal and, as a musician and cultural ambassador for his country,

he is well plugged into the Senegalese community in Seattle. But in planning the festival

at Seattle Center, he wanted to create common cause with other African communities in

the Seattle area, and appealed to Steve to broaden the event to focus on West Africa as a

region. Such an inclusive focus would not only establish a bridge between immigrant

communities and the broader Seattle population, but also strengthen the ties among the

diaspora of different countries who share similar experiences as African immigrants to

the US: "I feel there's a lot of West African nations here, so why not organize West

African culture at the festival, and bring us together so we can really get to know each other and share that positiveness with our friends here in America?"

However, Thione ran into problems when translating his vision for a pan-West African cultural identity to a single festival. Hosting such an inclusive event meant that there were more competing interests to satisfy, more people to feel left out. Aside from the more immediate problems of what and who to include in a representation of West African culture, there were long-simmering tensions external to the event that had to be navigated. "It'd be easy to do just a Senegal thing. But with West Africa, it's different, it's difficult," Thione told me. "There's so much separation in Africa and other places, because all the tribes, you know, even when you go to Senegal, there are some tribes that don't like each other."

Similarly, the decision to limit the celebration to West African cultures upset members of other African immigrant communities, particularly the Ethiopian and Somali communities who are larger in number and longer in tenure in the Seattle area than are any of the West African groups.[36] Thione mentioned marketing the event at local African shops and restaurants as being particularly difficult: storeowners and managers from countries not included geographically in West Africa or represented on the program would deny him the opportunity to pin flyers to their message boards. Thione viewed such conflicts as petty and unnecessarily divisive, proof both of the dire need of a unifying community event and a problem ripe for resolution through an inclusive, celebratory message. Bringing together representatives from different national and cultural groups was difficult,

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[36] In 2016, Thione and Seattle Center Productions agreed to change the Spirit of West Africa festival to the Spirit of Africa.

But man, like I said, music is just the only way that makes it easier! Because everybody's dancing on the floor and you reach out to them, and then they come, because part of it is for everybody to be in one group and to hear each other's music. And then [they] hear that there's not much difference, and where it is different there's a connection there and at the end of the day we're all connected and we're all family, you know? We're not enemies, and so part of the festival is like that: To educate each other, and then to bring all the best of us together.

Thione is not speaking about the universal inclusion promoted in the discourse of multiculturalism or the rather narrower emphasis Seattle Center places on inclusion as the accessibility of the dominant community to the pleasures and delights of ethnic minorities. Rather, he is referring to the divisions among various groups of African immigrants who struggle to find common purpose and engage in civic activities as a united group. Thione's purpose in organizing a broader, regional festival rather than one focused on his country of Senegal is not to have communities come together so that the event can be successful; the causal order is instead flipped. Rather than unite communities *for the festival*, the festival builds solidarity *for the community*. Unity and inclusion are civic goals of celebrating culture, even if it means that some aspect of the culture—those that most divide the people who identify with it—are excluded.

As with the Seattle Iranian Festival, the spirit of the "no politics, no religion" policy of Seattle Center is applied beyond its letter by ethnic community leaders managing conflicts internal to the communities. As Thione says, "Some people will complain…but I tell them, 'I didn't say that. That was Seattle Center's idea.'" When I asked what it was about the relationship between the Spirit of West Africa and the Festál program that allowed him to scapegoat Seattle Center in this way, Thione told me,

No religion no politics. I love it. Because those are the most, from my beliefs, kind of evil things, you know? You believe what you believe, your religion, I respect that, but when you talk about religion, some people are happy, and some

people are not happy, and then when you bring politics, people start arguing again, so I really appreciate that.

The institutional cover provided by the loose legal prohibitions of religious and political content allowed festival organizers like Thione to skirt divisive subjects without blame and to push forward his celebratory agenda. For civic events that aim to produce solidarity by fostering positive affects and spreading emotional energy, the inclusion of controversial aspects of cultural identity would be unwelcoming and counterproductive. Naming the problem would be the cause of problems, whereas diversions could create opportunities for their resolution.

The struggles in achieving a pan-African identity in Seattle reflects the recent history of the arrival of African immigrant groups in Seattle. These communities represent a diverse range of national origin and ethnic heritage and represent groups separated by language, religion, and culture. The civic strategy adopted by Thione reflects these problems, as does his strategic adoption of celebratory civics as a means to resolve them. Other ethnic minority communities participating in the Festál program confront different divisions that make a unified expression of cultural identity difficult. For the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival, this difference is largely generational. The wife-and-husband duo of Melanie and JP Paredes have recently transitioned from a peripheral involvement in the festival to serving as the primary organizers, inheriting the position from a community leader who had run the event for over a decade. They speak of the previous organizer, Auntie Flores—a decoration recognizing her status as a community elder—with a mixture of reverence and fear befitting her outsize presence in Seattle's large community of Filipinos. They credit her as an educator and a visionary who had

aimed to establish a rooted Filipino identity in the US after a tenuous and itinerant

introduction to the country. According to JP,

> When she immigrated here, she thought that, well, for one thing, there were a lot
> of Filipinos, mostly going to Alaska, [to] canneries and all that stuff. And we had
> been a people much like the Jews who were wandering around. She felt that there
> was really a need to educate, as well as entertain, the mainstream about who we
> really are.

In many ways, Auntie Flores was a victim of her own success, as younger

immigrants like the Paredeses arrived to find a large and vibrant community of Filipinos

and Filipino Americans that spanned generations.[37] These younger groups, in particular,

were developing a new identity that mixed in cultural elements from the US that caused

them to connect less with the more traditional cultural performances at Pagdiriwang. One

of the missions Melanie and JP set for themselves in taking over leadership at the festival

was to find a way to include this younger generation of Filipino Americans into a unified

celebration of the community, both as a means of solidifying young people's cultural ties

to the Philippines and in order to recognize the diversity of Filipino culture in the United

States. Venders at the event hawked T-Shirts advertising hybrid identities such as

"Seattle Pinay" and "USA—Born & Raised" alongside an emblem of the eight-rayed sun

of the Philippine flag, and cover bands of high school students played songs by popular

Filipino-American pop musicians Bruno Mars and AJ Rafael.

But the generational divide among Seattle's Filipino community managed to

manifest itself during a performance on Saturday night of the two-day festival. The final

block of stage time for the evening was given over to a group called H.Y.P.E. (Hypin' up

Young Pinoy and Pinay Entertainers). This unit was formed to assemble young artists and

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[37] According to the 2010 US Census, there are more than 60,000 people of Filipino heritage living in
Seattle's King County.

performers from around the Pacific Northwest and give them an opportunity to work collaboratively on a range of artistic projects. As a group of young creative Filipino Americans united by a strong connection to their ethnic identity, they also had ties with activist groups using artistic expression to deliver political messages. These issue-oriented performances were mixed into Filipino-inflected hip hop dances and theatrical plays. These younger and edgier presentations stood in stark contrast to the more staid performances of traditional Philippine *salakot* folk dances that preceded them on the schedule. The incongruence took Melanie completely by surprise:

> It's okay for them to perform, but from time to time we tell them it should be more cultural. We don't care if they do hip hop, but this group showed a drama that Filipinas—female Filipinos—all work abroad as domestic helpers, and they're only attracted to the dollars, and all that stuff. And it's portraying the Filipina women as cynical citizens of the world. Why not show something that the Filipina female is talented, is artistic, you know what I'm saying? Why portray a drama showing that Filipinas are domestic workers and get attracted to the dollars? And that portrayal, too, showed the US as evil. I didn't like that at all.

One of the participants in the H.Y.P.E. program was an activist group called GABRIELA National Alliance of Women, an organization with ties to a left-wing political party in the Philippines. The play that offended Melanie was a dramatization of the life of an unnamed woman as her pursuit for financial security for her family takes her from a life in the Philippines to the United States and finally back again, colliding with the harsh consequences of international labor migration along the way. The short, silent performance pantomimed over a musical soundtrack began with the lead character meeting a young man who would become her husband and father to her child. Then, while struggling to raise enough money to support the new baby, she is approached by a character in a top hat and tails in the stars and stripes of the American flag. This figure beckons her to the United States, and collects what little money she has as a fee for

169

immigration. Once she arrives, our heroine is put to work in an American home, scrubbing floors and doing domestic chores. What money she saves from her wages she places in the balikbayan box—a service for sending remittances back to the Philippines—whose representative pockets the lion's share (see Picture 5.5). After years of labor, she is able to afford to reunite with her daughter in the Philippines, who, now grown, has just given birth to a baby girl of her own. The performance ends with the three generations of women embracing and singing Que Sera Sera. For the curtain call, the whole ensemble comes onto the stage, raising their left fists and shouting in Tagalog, "Struggle on, guilty or free. Women rise up!"

Picture 5.5: Performance by GABRIELA at the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival

Photo by the author

Melanie's interpretation of the performance took issue with the portrayal of Filipinas as victims of global economic processes, lacking in agency to better their lives. To her, the presentation demonstrated unseemly motives for migrating to the US, and unfairly characterized the United States government as dishonest and exploitative.

Instead of representing a positive and aspirational ideal of Filipina womanhood as "talented" and "artistic," the play depicted them as distasteful and "cynical citizens of the world." When some of her friends from the Filipino community came up to her in outrage, Melanie suggested they follow through on their threat to write a letter to Seattle Center in complaint. After the weekend, in her post-mortem meeting with Paula, the Event Coordinator for the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival, Melanie made her complaint formal. Not having seen the event and unsure what line was crossed, Paula demurred. As she told me

> If [GABRIELA] got a play going and if that was the content, they had something to say. And they presented it in an artistic way. It wasn't somebody standing up there saying you should vote this way or you should vote that way. It was somebody up there talking about the injustice that happens to people in the Filipino community, or whatever it was—I wasn't listening to it, I can't tell you what it was—but whatever it was [that] disturbed Melanie. And Melanie said this is a festival about music and culture, this is not a festival about politics.

Paula fancies herself a fierce enforcer of Festál's community standards (she once nearly pulled the plug on the main stage sound system when she didn't like a performance's religious overtones), but in this case saw no reason to intervene in the festival content on behalf of Seattle Center Productions. The performance was, in Paula's estimation, on the safe, "artistic" side rather than the aggressive, "political" side of the divide. As it stopped short from explicitly advocating a political candidate or policy action, Paula is likely correct that the play did not violate the letter of the law relevant to restricting political content, but the varied enforcement of these regulations left Melanie dismayed. One possible explanation for the inconsistency is Seattle Center's professed interest to, in Jennifer's words, make out-group members "as comfortable as possible." As the parties allegedly offended by the performance were Filipino "insiders" better

equipped to judge what is and what is not appropriate within the community, Seattle Center saw little reason to intervene. According to Melanie, Paula reportedly told her "It's okay, it's up to you guys to deal with it."

Seattle Center's implicit endorsement of the performance by GABRIELA demonstrates an institutional division of labor in the avoidance of controversies and maintenance of upbeat, participatory messages at festivals. When members of the dominant community complained of the religious presentations at the Diwali Festival of Lights, the Festál team interjected on behalf of including all members of the audience. However, in the case of in-group controversies whose particular contours Seattle Center representatives may be less apt to appreciate, they rely on the judgment of leaders within the community. Concerning the performance of the plights of Filipina American immigrants, it was not only Melanie and her friends who took exception. As Mika, a first generation Filipino attending the festival, told me: "If they want to portray that, then yes, it happens. But there are a lot of things that happen in this world. And it's sad that it can happen,…but if in the end you get to stay here compared to staying there, it's a no-brainer. You're so good, you're here. "

From Mika's perspective, GABRIELA's portrayal was not untrue or even unfair, it was ungrateful. To him, the women who performed the play were focusing on the wrong things, drawing attention to mistreatment instead of their good fortune. What's more, by merely depicting such struggles, they succeeded only in killing the celebratory mood of the festival without offering any kind of solution that could make it all better. "I always try to see the positive aspect of everything, instead of focusing on the negative,"

172

Mika told me. "Sure, focus on the negative, but just make sure that—what do you want to do? Can you offer something positive?"

Mika, like the organizers of the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival, wishes to keep the festivals looking up, focusing on the positive, artistic aspects of culture that leave little room for drawing attention to issues faced by the community. For others, however, excising the negative from the public stage provides a one-sided and unrealistic depiction of a community without problems, and, furthermore, misuses a rare opportunity to engage Filipinos in Seattle on questions of fundamental importance to the community. Lori, one of the performers in the play, expressed disappointment but not surprise that the presentation had caused such tumult:

> I think like a lot of communities, you don't want to stir it up, you don't want to bring out things that are negative, and not to say things like, "Ah, immigration! People are having a hard time immigrating here, in case you didn't know!" But I think people when they showcase [culture] they are more wary. Like, you want to say, "There's domestic violence! Let's help out!" [or] things like that, but maybe there's a section of the Filipino community or of other communities that [thinks that] makes us look bad.

The GABRIELA episode demonstrates one of the central dilemmas of using positive emotions as a tool for civic engagement, where the case of building a strong community and performing a celebratory consensus distracts from or even impedes other civic goals important to immigrant and ethnic minority communities in the US. As Lori says, "sometimes you get caught up in, 'We're going to organize for the Filipino community' without questioning why this is so important for our community." Frequently, festival organizers are able to use Seattle Center's policy on political and religious content to sidestep conflicts internal to ethnic communities, whether caused by differences in religious expression or disagreement over cultural representations.

However, the paradoxes inherent to a rhetoric of inclusion that recognizes no inherent limits means that Seattle Center is capricious in how they enforce content prohibitions. The final section of this chapter covers an exclusion that is more consistent, but no less problematic.

5.4 "You can do a lot being safe" – Tiptoeing around Race

If celebratory civics is an inclusion-oriented strategy of civic engagement that aims to dispel stereotypes and achieve civic integration by sharing the positive aspects of ethnic culture with the dominant population, is there any room to address explicitly the persistent problems that divide us? Does the "happy talk" of the diversity discourse contain the vocabulary to name racism, or to explore its operations in interpersonal relations and social institutions? The obfuscation of race behind a "happy" focus on the benign, accessible aspects of culture remains one of the most potent criticisms of multiculturalism (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Ahmed 2010, 2012; Anthias 2013) and a major source of its ambivalence as a moral project to recognize and achieve social justice for minorities (Hartmann 2015).

In my experiences with Festál, not in countless hours of attending Festál meetings, scope sessions, presentations on program goals and "best practices"—neither in internal organizational documents nor public promotional materials—was race taken up as a topic. When asked if this was an intentional decision for the program, the Artistic Director, Steve, who is African American, indicated that it was:

> It is, actually. Even me, personally, I choose not to say 'race' because race is sort of a new construct, you see, and when you're talking about culture and ethnic groups, that's really historic, that goes further back. Race is a new construct that we apply to false meaning. It surfaces in color as opposed to what we're talking

about here, so we're very vocal about ethnicity. If you get into race, then you're talking about fair housing and race relations, right, and that's more on that side. When you talk about ethnicity and culture, you're talking about history, ethnic roots.

In Steve's explanation, introducing the topic of race elicits political urgency and draws attention to issues of distributive justice, prejudice, and other weighty topics expected to divide audiences or bring down the mood. Culture and ethnicity, on the other hand, can promote uncontroversial themes in which the audience can joyfully participate together. The celebratory civic mission of Festál envisions such a happy world, where culture is separable from race—a world that may not be real, but that the festival series itself hopes to help bring about. But a central condition for fulfilling this multicultural promise is the avoidance of topics that burst this optimistic bubble and deflate the feelings of goodwill promoted at the festival. It stems from the emotional belief that to acknowledge unhappiness is to cause unhappiness (Ahmed 2010) and that naming racism is seen as an obstruction to racial progress (Bonilla-Silva 2009). As JulieAnn, the Event Coordinator who was previously discussed in the context of the "inward-looking" Hmong Festival, puts it, "Occasionally we talk about race, but mostly it's about culture…. I think our mission is to open doors and open minds and to do it in a way that makes you curious and excited, and is non-confrontational." Where race divides, culture unites.

Although race didn't surface in planning meetings or promotional materials, from time to time it did crop up at the festivals themselves in unexpected ways, both on the stage and behind the scenes. Its appearance was most explicit at the Festival for Black Arts, Festival Sundiata. Whereas most Festál events celebrate the culture of recent immigrants to the United States, Festival Sundiata is organized in recognition of African American culture. Among its celebratory stage shows and participatory workshops, it

also features an annual exhibit called American History that includes images and artefacts

detailing the human degradations done in the name of anti-black racism in the United

States, from slavery to segregation to the age of mass incarceration. This display, aligned

on a series of tables in the middle of the festival space, has no stage performance aspect,

lecture, or explanation to accompany it, allowing the objects and pictures to tell their own

emotional story (see Picture 5.6).

Picture 5.6: Display at the American History Exhibit at Festival Sundiata Presents Black Arts Festival

Photo by the author

The exhibit leaves an impression emotionally incongruous with the celebratory

atmosphere elsewhere at the festival, which the Festál administrators admit is an

unavoidable anomaly: "Because to me," Steve reasons, "in this country, when you talk

about race, you're talking about black and white… with the black community, that's where I think it is the deepest you can get with" discussing race at Festál.

Another Event Coordinator, Paula, is normally proud of her reputation as a militant enforcer of Seattle Center's prohibitions of controversial subject matter. However, she is similarly vocal about granting an exception for Festival Sundiata, given the long history of explicitly racialized relations between whites and African Americans:

> In a lot of ways I feel like that content is not for the African American community, it's for everybody else that walks by. And I'm a fairly knowledgeable person, and I went through that and, you know, there were pieces there that I think about at night. And I still think about them! I mean, they're disturbing! There's disturbing pieces and disturbing content there, and I thought, "Well I don't know if that's appropriate, but on the other hand, these things happened!"

Paula describes the scenes in the American History exhibit as emotionally "disturbing," so much so that they keep her awake at night. That they would have this effect on her, a "fairly knowledgeable person," is a testament to their emotional potency.

At other times, festivals bring up racism in unexpected ways, which can be disruptive and scandalizing breaches of decorum. Steve recalls the story of one year when, at the Cherry Blossom Festival, a student group from the University of Washington set up an informational booth dedicated to providing visitors with information about mixed-race Japanese and Japanese-Americans, sometimes included in the Hawaiian mixed-race category of Hapa. As Steve told me

> I'll never forget, we're sitting on the stage and we have all the dignitaries, and the mayor, and the director of Seattle Center. And the queen—the Japanese queen that year—she gets up and she says the words "white privilege" <laughs>. And it was part of the speech! She was going, "We've got Hapa, we've got the Hapa booth this year and we're going to talk about mixed ethnicities and white privilege." And the jury went, "Woah!" She was perfectly comfortable, right, she was 19 [or] 20, and this is what she studies at school. So you just have to be on edge.

The employees at Seattle Center Productions saw race as a politically potent quandary for Festál's organizational mission of inclusion. On the one hand, race talk is divisive, uncomfortable, and upsetting to the inclusive mood fostered by the festival program. The events are spaces for celebrations of culture, in which dignitaries like the mayor of Seattle can come to affirm the unifying message of respect for diversity. On the other hand, race is an unavoidably central topic that directly informs the development of ethnic identity among the communities of minority groups participating in Festál. As a central part of American history, race is neither a religious nor an expressly political topic that can easily be made subject to Seattle Center's policy prohibiting such forms of expression. With the Cherry Blossom Festival and Festival Sundiata, a compromise was reached: Race can have a place at the margins of a celebration, in a booth providing information to those who seek it out. But when it takes the stage and assumes the form of a negative charge *against* a group, rather than a positive *offer* for people to take up if they choose, it causes an emotional discord, a politicization of race that can be discouraged. In the case of the Cherry Blossom queen, the audience was asked something—to consider the presence and meaning of white privilege—and the "perfectly calm" emotional demeanor of the speaker nevertheless had the power to shock, and to put her audience "on edge."

More often than in rare moments like these, race is more noticeable by its absence, left off the festival agenda so as to promote the civic mission of inclusion. Thione, the founder and director of the Spirit of West Africa festival, explains that the greatest difficulty he has as an organizer is getting all of the members of the Seattle community interested in claiming membership to the event to agree on its civic purpose.

In the previous section, we learned of Thione's difficulties in uniting immigrant communities from among the various African countries represented in the Seattle area. But another difficulty, he says, is how to include Seattle's African American population, which, like most American blacks, traces its lineage to the West African slave trade. This shared connection, in Thione's eyes, complicates his efforts to focus on the musical and dance performances, which he sees as central to the festival's objectives:

> We don't want to talk too much about slavery, because when you talk about slavery … some people don't want to hear about that. And then part of the festival is about, like I said, the positive side, so we don't want to make people uncomfortable. But we want to invite the diaspora to come and celebrate. When you bring up slavery, some African Americans can be mad at Africans, you know, sometimes for no reason—they think we sold them out, you know? I think African Americans can be mad at white people because they think that they're the ones who brought them here for slavery, and did what they do to them. But with the music, the dance, the marketplace, you see white people, black people going to the same marketplace, going to the same food place, dancing together at the work shop, all at the festival, and that togetherness is something that we need as human beings.

The celebratory act of coming together as several races describes the multicultural promise that celebratory civics hopes to enact. But the desire for inclusivity threatens to leave out those unprepared to cheer in its name. This ambivalence in the American discourses on multiculturalism (Hartmann 2015) also structures the civic engagement practices of individuals and groups, providing a positive emotional repertoire with which to try and reach out across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. Simone, an African American who came to the Spirit of West Africa Festival to "learn a little bit more about my African heritage," was reminded of this from her own days as a college activist. She had been a member of her school's International Club, in which she was encouraged by many of the same promises and confronted by a lot of the same challenges when

organizing cultural events for the wider, whiter student body. Her conclusions are hard-earned, if characteristically ambivalent:

> I am of the opinion as well that any exposure is better than none, but with that exposure it can be broadened to making little-known facts [known], even if you're not going to get into the controversies, colonialism, or things like that. You can do a lot being safe. You can do a lot being safe in a safe place.

Festál promises its participating community organizations, its diverse populations, and its visiting tourists a vision of a multicultural safe space, meeting on the common ground of a shared commitment to engaging across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines. Its fulfillment of that promise, as with multiculturalism as a "moral project" (Kivisto 2012:4), is a work of progress, and its course is not without problems. But the imperfect partnership in civic outreach formed by the city of Seattle and its ethnic community organizations add a roster of public cultural performances to a segregated and inattentive civil sphere that has in many ways failed to live up to its reputation or its promise. In order to do so, the dominant Anglo-American community in Seattle also needs to be included in the act of civic outreach. Now, says Simone, "the burden of responsibility on the audience members is to look deeply, as well, and I'd like to think that people would try to think that way."

5.5 "...Nothing but Laughter": Conclusion

Eliasoph and Lichterman (2010:483) provide a description of how civic action is made political that illuminates a central paradox of using the expression of positive emotions as a tool for social change. They write that, "by 'politicizing' we mean action, collective or individual, that makes issues or identities into topics of public deliberation

or contestation. Depoliticizing means making once-salient issues or identities inaccessible to deliberation or contestation."

From Chapters 3 and 4, it should be clear that the public festivals that make up the Festál series do not meet these criteria for politicized civic action. Chapter 3 showed how celebratory civics is a strategy of engagement aimed at establishing common ground in a rapidly diversifying, but stubbornly segregated city. It argues that common ground is not *found*, but rather is *made*; it is made literally by prioritizing the publicity of Seattle Center to the intimacy of a community center or ethnic neighborhood. But it is also made metaphorically, mobilizing positive, affirming emotions of goodwill and celebration that preclude the politicizing practice of contention. Similarly, Chapter 4 demonstrated how the festivals make issues and identities inaccessible to deliberation; festival organizers representing immigrant and ethnic minority communities have determined that opportunities for open discussion on issues related to prejudice and stereotype to be both unavailable and ineffective in producing change. As opposed to the classic, deliberative model of civic discourse, they promote an alternative pedagogy of *learning through feeling*, performing positive representations of ethnic culture in order to replace negative sentiment with positive experiences.

This chapter shows that, despite failing to satisfy Eliasoph and Lichterman's (2010) definition of 'the political', the decision to pursue a celebratory civic agenda is very much a political one. Concerns that hybrid governance systems (Chaves et al. 2004; Boyte 2005; Ansell and Gash 2008; Fisher et al. 2015) might depoliticize identities by limiting discourse to the easily affirmed virtues of inclusion (Vertovic 1996; Mamdani 2004; Brown 2006) overstate the coerciveness of the state in determining the civic

strategies pursued by immigrant and ethnic minority groups. Partnership with the city of Seattle for the purpose of hosting public celebrations does not subsume or co-opt civic groups into a malicious and monological state ideology; rather, "in hybrid governance systems, political conflict plays a nuanced role" (Fisher et al. 2015:122). "We're government" is merely the shorthand answer for Festál's prohibition of political or religious speech; it reflects a purposeful decision to avoid the production of negative feelings among the audience, which would directly contravene the attempt to produce changes in private attitudes through public exposure to the positive, non-threatening, and civic aspects of ethnic minority groups. This underlying understanding—shared by both Seattle Center and participating communities—holds that minimizing controversy makes for better events, and the better the event, the greater the chance that members of out-groups engage in other intercultural opportunities elsewhere in the city, which in turn will lead to broadened civic acceptance and an increase in the visibility and viability of minority ethnic populations and the non-normative cultural practices that mark them as different from the mainstream.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Culture as a Civic Practice

From a regard to the welfare of our fellow-creatures, we endeavour to pacify their animosities, and unite them by the ties of affection. In the pursuit of this amiable intention, we may hope, in some instances, to disarm the angry passions of jealousy and envy; we may hope to instil into the breasts of private men sentiments of candour toward their fellow creatures, and a disposition to humanity and justice.

—Adam Ferguson[38]

Affect precedes decision, rather than the other way round…[I]n modern democracies, mastery of the means of affective capture is essential for making political gain.

—Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift[39]

In 1767, the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher and historian Adam Ferguson published *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. His book was an attempt to challenge the prevailing conviction in Anglophone philosophy that humankind's nature is fundamentally anti-social, examining how societies of different types and across eras have been sustained by sympathy and "fellow-feeling." This solidary feeling, he argued, was separable from the motives that dominated activity in the market or in politics. Ferguson was an incurable romantic; "It should seem," he wrote, "to be the happiness of man to make his social dispositions the ruling spring of his occupations; to state himself as the member of a community, for whose general good his heart may glow with an

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[38] Ferguson (1767/1995:29). All anachronistic spellings and punctuation *sic*.
[39] Amin and Thrift (2013:158).

ardent zeal, to the suppression of those personal cares which are the foundation of painful anxieties, fear, jealousy, and envy" (Ferguson 1767/1995:56).

Some 250 years later, Ferguson's words ring rather quaint. A growing body of sociological research has shown that our civil sphere is increasingly in disrepair. The positive feelings of sympathy and mutual identification necessary to sustaining civil solidarity are rapidly giving way to widespread social distrust (Kreiss 2017; Flores, forthcoming), fear (Bail 2012; Braunstein 2017; Shams 2017), and resentment (Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016; Polletta and Callahan 2017)—especially directed by dominant groups towards immigrants and minorities. These findings corroborate the pessimism in studies of civic engagement, which have linked increasing demographic diversity with lower levels of social trust and declining participation in civic life (Putnam 2007; Uslaner 2011; Rothwell 2012; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). These trends have been shown to be mutually reinforcing, producing a vicious cycle of a disintegrating civil sphere. Feelings of antipathy among social groups become etched into the physical geography of American cities (Gotham 2003; Enos 2017) as privileged white communities self-sort into isolated enclaves (Crowder and South 2008; Crowder, Hall, and Tolnay 2011; Hall and Crowder 2014) where residents are even less likely to engage with immigrants and ethnic minorities in everyday life (Enos and Celaya, forthcoming) and all that much more inclined to draw upon media narratives when forming opinions of minority groups (Bail 2012; Polletta and Callahan 2017).

Amidst these demographic and socio-spatial transformations to the civil sphere, Americans are finding it harder and harder to "climb the empathy wall" (Hochschild 2016). As the emotional barrier Hochschild describes threatens to become a material

presence along the Southern border, the question of how to expand the symbolic boundary of civil solidarity has taken on increased urgency. Some scholars who position themselves across the political spectrum have cautioned that a normative emphasis on the value of ethnic diversity is incompatible with the notion of a broad-based social solidarity (Hollinger 2000; Wood 2003; Foner and Alba 2006; Michaels 2016; Lilla 2017). In a much-cited article, Putnam (2007:161) has argued that only by "reducing [the] social salience" of ethnic identities can American society "reap the benefits of immigration." Rather than diversifying the civil sphere, Putnam advocates that new immigrants and ethnic minorities in the United States and other Western democracies should adopt a "post-ethnic" identity (Ibid:169, n39; Hollinger 2000).

This dissertation has argued against Putnam's proposal, showing that the public celebration of ethnic identity *can serve as the basis* for civic engagement, facilitate intercultural encounters in the segregated city, and lead to future—and deeper—inter-group interactions down the line. I demonstrate how ethnic community organizations, sponsored by the city of Seattle, pursue a strategy of civic outreach that employs positive emotions to engage a distant and disengaged audience who may be otherwise unlikely to interact with members of ethnic minority groups. By gathering together in the name of culture, members of diverse communities can forge a common experience across group differences, sharing and generating feelings of goodwill. It is the hope of the participants that the embodied, experiential engagement in cultural practices will supplant negative associations of minority groups made salient through common prejudice and dominant media narratives. Through their publicity on the civic stage, ethnic and immigrant groups stake a claim to the consecrated spaces of the city, asserting their presence among the

public and making the broader population more familiar with diverse expressions of cultural identity.

I have explored this understudied strategy of celebratory civics through the intentions of its participants and offered evidence to support their claims. I have argued that this mode of civic outreach aims to achieve a particular form of social change: an expansion of the symbolic boundaries to civic integration to include a wider array of diverse identities. Celebratory civics pursues a transformation to the dominant forms of prejudice that impede the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities as full, recognizable members of the civil sphere. As these prejudices are embedded in private attitudes and expressed in routine discriminatory actions that demarcate the boundaries of civic belonging, festival organizers see little opportunity for remedy through legal channels or sound public policy (Doan et al. 2014; Doan et al. 2015). They, instead, target the emotional bases of the prejudices they encounter, couching their civic appeal in emotionally uplifting expressions of positivity and cheer and avoiding direct discussions over disagreements. They have elected not to name the problem that they wish to solve.

As it involves choices among opposed proposals, compromises on competing interests, and debates over irreconcilable principles, the realm of politics has traditionally been defined by contention (Tarrow 1994, McAdam et al 2001; Tilly 2008; Eliasoph and Lichterman 2010). The deliberative principles of civil society are designed to weigh these trade-offs in a rational manner in order to produce an outcome that reflects the democratic will. To protect the sanctity of the idea from the character of the speaker, emotions have been sidelined from the idealized practice of politics in favor of a process of proposition-based reasoning. In an "ideal speech situation," deliberation involves the

broad inclusion of participants and the provision of reasons in support of their propositions (Habermas 1984, 1987, 1989; Cohen and Arato 1992). As empirical studies have shown, the greater the popular involvement and the citation of evidence, the more people are willing to adopt new ideas and accept their proponents (Schneiderhan and Khan 2008; Schneiderhan et al. 2014).

Under the right conditions, deliberation clearly yields dividends. But studies have consistently shown that this mode of doing politics is at odds with how people—not just "ordinary people," but even highly sophisticated political thinkers (Martin and Desmond 2010)—form political judgments (Haidt 2012; Norton 2017; Flores, forthcoming). Neurologically, reasoning "uses two complementary paths" (Damasio 2003:149), only one of which aligns with the deliberative, bottom-up approach to decision-making. The other path is less governable by the principles of reason and inclusion, and is instead activated automatically in response to emotional stimuli registered corporeally before the rational brain can intervene (Damasio 1994, 2003; Haidt 2001, 2012; Dimaggio 2002; Massey 2002; Vaisey 2009; Cerulo 2010; Martin 2010; Lizardo et al. 2016). These "somatic markers" (Damasio 2003:148) are expressed in bodily sensations and emotions—rising blood pressure and anger, increased energy and joy—that temporally precede (and thus are primed to influence) rational cognition. As Douglass Massey (2002:21) said at his 2001 presidential address to the American Sociological Association, "the emotional brain is in a better position to influence the rational brain than vice versa."

Emotions are therefore vital components of any real communicative process, regardless of normative and procedural efforts to tip the scales towards rational deliberation. Empirical studies show that public discussions about issues related to

identity are especially rare in civil society (Eliasoph 1998), and often are emotionally

fraught when they occur (Walsh 2008). People render political judgments through their

personal experiences (Cramer and Toff 2017) and seek actively to protect the beliefs—

even socially undesirable beliefs—attributed to their social group (Kahan et al. 2007;

Kahan 2013). Members of dominant groups who tend to socialize with people more or

less like themselves (Bonilla-Silva 2009), and who thus rely on mediated representations

for their understandings of minority groups (Bail 2012), are more likely to have their own

identity tied to symbolic judgements that become all the more difficult to dislodge.

"Conscience is a poor judge of what occurs in the depths of one's being," Durkheim

(1893/1984:331) memorably said, "because it does not penetrate that far."

Festival organizers understand quite well how emotions condition the everyday

social judgments that lead members of dominant groups to determine who is "similar"

and who is "different" (Schachter 2016). They describe a wide range of negative

emotions that attenuate their acceptance within the civil sphere, from the suspicion and

distrust felt against the Japanese community to the fear and anger expressed towards

Iranians, from the pity and despair associated with West Africans to the mockery- and

derision-steeped attitudes towards Polish Americans (see Chapter 4). They understand

that these attitudes do not change through patient explanation or a rational talking

through of differences. Social psychologists and sociologists of culture and cognition

back their intuitions with evidence: one need not endorse a stereotype for it to take hold

of a person while interacting with a stigmatized group. Automatic "implicit" attitudes can

be activated regardless of what a person rationally "knows" to be true (Gawronski and

Bodenhausen 2006). Such feelings are, quite literally, habit-forming, as they are lodged

in neural connections triggered automatically by emotional stimuli even after they have been consciously abandoned (Simi et al. 2017).

Participants in the Festál program may or may not be aware of these findings, but they intuit something important about moral reasoning. Their reticence to give voice to social problems faced by their communities is not simply a strategy of engagement, attempting to enlist a fickle public eager for entertainment and novel experiences (though it is also that, as I show in Chapter 3). Their exclusive focus on the upbeat, the inclusive, and the festive is also a strategy of *persuasion*—an attempt at the transvaluation of ethnic boundaries through changing the emotional evaluations dominant groups make towards immigrants and ethnic minorities (Chapter 4). Festival organizers may not be engaging in politics in the conventional sense, where grievances are named aloud and reasoned through to resolution, but, to adapt a phrase, they aim to conduct politics by *other* means. Their decision to eschew deliberation is a deliberate one; their choice to avoid politics is, actually, rather politic (Chapter 5).

6.1 Criticism, Skepticism, Futures

My research has limitations. One study, in one city, cannot be conclusive. I would like to conclude this dissertation by elaborating the findings of this dissertation in response to the objections of two imaginary interlocutors, a critic and a skeptic. I come by these positions honestly, as each has motivated my investigation of the Festál program and, at times, caused me to struggle along the path my respondents led me. The questions these interlocutors raise can only be partially answered at present; a fuller response would require more empirical research and further theoretical consideration. I hope that in

elaborating celebratory civics as a strategy of civic outreach that employs, and targets, positive emotions, this dissertation will have given this task a start.

I will begin by engaging the critic. Many scholars have noted the perverse popular emphasis on the purely positive aspects of cultural diversity at the expense of the adverse social consequences of endemic prejudices. As a "presumptively positive buzzword" (Berrey 2015:42), invoking diversity can channel civic-minded conversations away from the fraught realities of racism and discrimination to "happy talk" that lacks the vocabulary to address structural inequalities that disproportionately affect immigrant and minority communities (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Burke 2011). Likewise, the affirmative discourse of multiculturalism positions the migrant as a recipient of goodwill and tolerance, for which dissent is interpreted as ingratitude (Derrida 2000; Ahmed 2004). Positivity is not only a blithe misrecognition of difference, but a compulsory performance by minority groups that requires constant self-censorship and emotional labor to assuage the social position of dominant groups (Chow 2002). Is the strategy pursued by festival organizers a case of misplaced intentions, or, worse, of an ideology detrimental to the emancipation of minority groups? Is celebratory civics merely "happy talk" put in civic action?

The answer suggested by my findings is, as many sociologists have said about the discourses of diversity and multiculturalism, ambivalent (Bygnes 2012; Kivisto 2012; Anthias 2013; Hartmann 2015). This condition can be explained in part by the interlocking ways in which social power is expressed; it is neither purely material nor purely symbolic (Collins 2002). As Schachter (2016:985) has shown, "structural mobility does not inherently transform into symbolic acceptance from white society." Minority

communities that have gained success in the economic or political spheres—as have many in Seattle—can continue to experience palpable symbolic barriers to their full integration in the civil sphere (Doan et al. 2014; Doan et al. 2015). Celebratory civics cannot replace demands for social justice, but neither is it meant to be. The representatives from the immigrant and ethnic communities who have chosen to participate in the Festál program have identified these inter-group dynamics, which are neither completely separate from nor wholly subservient to the social structure, as the targets of their civic action.

It is certainly true that the efforts of the ethnic communities in this style of civic outreach are asymmetric, as civic action so often is. But so is the social change that they seek. Rather than alter, sublimate, or privatize the cultural bases for their ethnic identities—the path of Putnam (2007)—they use these practices as the basis for their integration in an expanded, multicultural civil sphere. Casting ethnic culture in a positive light and putting in the effort to make it accessible to an outside audience, they seek to assimilate the mainstream audience into an understanding of the civil sphere that would include them as members. Such a change requires not a transformation of the practice of identity, but of the value associations attached to it by dominant groups. They aim not to change the direction of the weather vane, but to change the wind (Chapter 4).

To this end, ethnic community organizations participating in the Festál program see popular discourses of diversity and multiculturalism as providing a useful, if problematic idiom in which to engage the broader public when the reality of segregated cities and cultural homophily provides little opportunity for the spontaneous, in-depth, and genuine interaction expected from American civic ideals. To city planners and

participating minority groups, it is a familiar and felicitous resource to attract and to win

over a dominant culture unfamiliar with or hostile to cultural differences. Diversity may

be "the least disruptive form of inclusion" (Berrey 2015:47), but, in the estimation of

groups organizing civic outreach in its name, it may also be the most ready at hand and

effective at easing the cultural hostilities minorities face in everyday life in diverse,

growing cities.

Beneath their celebratory surface, however, cultural festivals require discipline

and sacrifice among their participants, frequently privileging accessibility over

authenticity and emphasizing unity in a manner that denies or marginalizes legitimate

differences within and between groups. By mission mandate, celebratory civics brooks no

dissent and admits no controversy, leaving structural sources of inequality unmentioned.

And yet, for many marginalized ethnic groups, annual cultural festivals represent the

clearest and, in some cases, only opportunity to command the public stage and engage the

dominant population on something resembling their own terms. Festival organizers adopt

the strategy of celebratory civics with an assessment of the obstacles to civic integration

that they face, and of the methods most likely to mollify them—even, at times, in ways

that neglect long-standing and controversial differences both within their community, and

across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines. But if the "happiness duty" (Ahmed 2010)

obscures the negative and damaging aspects of multiculturalism, it can also produce

concrete gains for civic groups trying to create a local culture more hospitable to their

presence within it.

It is clear that festival organizers have lofty ideals and ambitious goals. In their

pursuit, participants in the Festál program make a serious trade-off, minimizing subjects

of legitimate conflict in favor of positive emotional appeals to social groups in a structural position of power. Very little is asked of this audience, and much is offered. Given such a dynamic, it comes as little surprise that free public festivals featuring music, costumes, and ethnic food are effective at drawing a crowd. But why would celebrations have a civic purpose beyond themselves? Why should we believe that the strategy of celebratory civics is effective at producing the social outcomes desired by its practitioners? A skeptic would be reasonable to ask.

Although there is now a broad consensus among neuroscientists (Damasio 1994, 2003), evolutionary biologists (Tomasello 1999); social psychologists (Haidt 2001, 2012; Fazio and Olson 2003; Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006; Kahneman 2011; Staats et al. 2015), and sociologists of culture (Dimaggio 2002; Ignatow 2009a, 2009b; Vaisey 2009; Cerulo 2010; Martin 2010; Martin and Desmond 2010; Shepherd 2011; Lizardo et al. 2016; Lizardo 2017; Simi et al. 2017) that human cognition occurs through dual processes of slow, deliberate, propositional reasoning and fast, automatic, and associative reasoning, there is much still to be learned about how the latter, deeper-seated, emotional forms of associative reasoning change. These questions are only beginning to be explored within sociology, for, as Lizardo and colleagues (2016:298) have said, "rule-based symbolic thinking is the *sine qua non* of cultural sociological research and theorizing, insofar as it is a useful heuristic (and, in the case of formal rules such as laws, an empirical reality) for understanding how actors deliberate, come to decisions, [and] make sense of everyday life." Given what *is* known of such processes, and what the results of my study of the attitudes of festival visitors indicate, I hope to take an initial step into

exploring how emotional cognitive processes might respond to the outreach strategy of celebratory civics.

Feelings are pragmatic, linked to the process of "solving the world" through engaged experience in a social environment, including the problem of cooperation. Emotions are trained in the crucible of encounters, as the body "learns" to distinguish the kinds of people with whom it has had cooperative successes, and with whom it has not (Damasio 1994). The good news is that because "the accrual of somatically marked stimuli ceases only when life ceases…[it] is appropriate to describe that accrual as a process of continuous learning" (Ibid.:179). Social psychologists have shown that negative emotional associations are "malleable" given recurring patterns of positive encounters (Rudman et al. 2001; Blair 2002; Craig et al. 2014; Kubato and Ito 2014). The more worrisome news is that such encounters must be sustained in order to take neurological root; a single afternoon at a festival, much less a cursory glance at a stage show while passing through Seattle Center, is unlikely to have any lasting impact on the emotional reactions triggered automatically in future encounters.

I have shown that participants in the Festál program promote a civic pedagogy I call *learning through feeling*, in which the shared, embodied participation in positivity, celebration, and goodwill forms an experiential foundation that can be drawn upon in future encounters among diverse ethnic groups (see Chapter 4). It is very likely that these lessons will have to be learned again and again in order for them to be internalized as positive dispositions towards ethnic minority groups. The analysis of my survey results presented in this dissertation indicates a glimmer of hope that continued participation in cultural festivals can yield positive changes in the behavior of ethnic out-groups.

Although the survey instrument did not measure personal attitudes towards particular

ethnic groups outright, it did ask respondents about their participation in a host of other

civic activities involving intercultural interactions. The results are encouraging,

demonstrating that the attendance of cultural festivals are not isolated incidents, or mere

instances of dominant groups casually reaping the consumerist benefits of "boutique

multiculturalism" (Fish 1997). The more cultural festivals a member of an ethnic out-

group attends, the more likely she is to participate in a number of other cultural activities,

including activities that require a more intellectually and politically engaged form of

interaction, such as visiting an ethnic museum or community center, reading an ethnic

newspaper or magazine, or participating in ethnic community advocacy (See Table 3.3).

The association as proven is correlative; it cannot be concluded that festival

visitation *caused* the uptick in cultural engagement during other times of the year.

However, these results do indicate that attending a cultural festival should not be

perceived as simply a one-off; cultural festivals can be part of a suite of other

intercultural civic activities, part of sustaining a community of members who participate

together in a vibrant, multicultural civil sphere. Cultural festivals are important events

that not only consecrate a community, but also help to constitute it. What we celebrate is

an important expression of who we are (Etzioni and Bloom 2004).

Interviews with out-group respondents corroborate the findings from the survey.

Visitors to the festival describe a number of emotional barriers to participation in

intercultural activities, from misplaced fears about the presumed safety of ethnic

neighborhoods, to unfamiliarity with cultural practices of minorities and a lack of access

to engage them. The social topography of the segregated city is active here, as distance

leads to diffidence among members of dominant communities who identify areas of the city as ethnic property—"turf"—causing them to feel intimidated to seek out engagement with minority communities. Cultural festivals held in a downtown public park do not only offer the opportunity to satisfy a dilettante's curiosity of how others live, but also provide a point of entry into the ethnic communities that contribute to Seattle's multicultural civil sphere. The testimonials of interview participants reveal that cultural festivals are venues for making new friends, pursuing new hobbies, and learning more about the diversity of cultural identities.

In this regard, the prominent public location of the Festál series is important to its civic mission. No city as segregated and white-dominant as Seattle is likely to have "common ground" free from the symbolic weight and regulatory function of dominating cultural norms. It is true that Seattle Center is at a greater distance to the spaces of the city populated by minority groups (see Figure 3.4), but program participants see this fact as an asset rather than a liability. Nearly one-fifth of all festival visitors happened upon the event by chance while on Seattle Center's campus for another reason (see Figure 3.2). These visitors differ from other out-group members in important ways. Not only are they, by definition, less likely to have sought out a festival celebrating an ethnic minority culture, they are also less likely to engage in other forms of intercultural civic activity (see Table 3.2). Staging the cultural festival in a place of civic importance supplies immigrant and ethnic minority communities with a vital resource—publicity—with which they can attract and engage an audience of outsiders, potentially enlisting them in a virtuous cycle of exposure and engagement to reverse the vicious cycle of segregation and declining social trust.

If the outward expressions of ethnic cultural difference that take place at public cultural festivals seem mundane and small-bore, this quotidian scale belies their essential civic importance. These expressions of identity are central to the everyday meaning-making systems of cultural groups, and are therefore fundamental to the symbolic constitution of the civil sphere. Cultural practices by racial and ethnic minorities maintain the power to unsettle the mainstream public precisely because they violate the naturalized behavioral expectations that govern conduct in shared spaces (Puwar 2004). Understanding the embodied aspect of diversity that is made visible through public practice also helps to explain why an American population increasingly willing to acknowledge diversity as a shared political commitment (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Edgell and Tranby 2010) remains fearful of manifestations of cultural diversity in public—of the specter of "taco trucks on every corner." Festivals achieve public visibility by engaging civil society in a manner designed to minimize threat. But they also aim to achieve viability for the more routine, everyday practices of culture that define their sense of attachment to the public. At a time when culture has become a means for civic exclusion, culture itself becomes a vital civic practice.

Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	Cherry Blossom	Spirit of WA	Philippine Festival	Iranian Festival	Polish Festival	Total
In-Group	36.4%	21.4%	60.0%	51.4%	53.5%	43.6%
Out-Group	63.6%	78.6%	40.0%	48.6%	46.5%	56.4%
Race/Ethnicity (In-Group)						
White	22.1%	24.0%	9.8%	57.4%	90.0%	37.1%
Black	1.1%	64.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.5%
Asian	51.6%	8.0%	72.8%	0.0%	6.7%	37.4%
Hispanic	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.7%	0.6%
Mixed Race	23.2%	0.0%	8.7%	3.7%	1.7%	10.1%
Other	2.1%	4.0%	6.5%	38.9%	0.0%	9.2%
Gender (In-Group)						
Male	45.5%	44.0%	35.5%	47.4%	50.0%	43.8%
Female	49.5%	44.0%	59.1%	42.1%	50.0%	50.6%
Missing values	5.1%	12.0%	5.4%	10.5%	0.0%	5.7%
Education (In-Group)						
High School	5.2%	4.2%	8.0%	11.1%	4.8%	6.8%
Some University	12.5%	33.3%	21.6%	7.4%	17.7%	16.7%
University	51.0%	41.7%	40.9%	27.8%	45.2%	42.6%
Graduate School	31.3%	20.8%	29.6%	53.7%	32.3%	34.0%
Race/Ethnicity (Out-Group)						
White	58.9%	65.9%	50.0%	78.3%	67.4%	62.3%
Black	5.5%	10.6%	11.7%	2.2%	2.0%	6.7%
Asian	21.5%	9.4%	25.0%	8.7%	14.3%	17.1%
Hispanic	4.3%	7.1%	5.0%	4.4%	8.2%	5.5%
Mixed Race	4.3%	5.9%	3.33%	4.4%	8.2%	5.0%
Other	5.5%	1.2%	5.0%	2.2%	0.0%	3.5%
Gender (Out-Group)						
Male	42.2%	28.3%	45.2%	29.6%	37.0%	37.5%
Female	54.9%	66.3%	48.4%	53.4%	55.6%	56.3%
Missing values	2.9%	5.4%	6.5%	16.7%	7.4%	6.2%
Education (Out-Group)						
High School	6.0%	3.4%	9.8%	4.3%	7.7%	6.0%
Some University	27.4%	23.6%	13.1%	21.3%	17.3%	22.5%
University	33.3%	34.8%	37.7%	38.3%	38.5%	35.5%
Graduate School	33.3%	38.2%	39.3%	36.2%	36.5%	36.0%

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Seattle Center

Declaration of Subjects' Rights and Request of Oral Consent:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study exploring participation in public cultural programming in Seattle. As I mentioned, this interview is part of my research project at the Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland. I am interested in how various city and community groups participate in the production of cultural festivals. This project is conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Dana Fisher. There are no direct benefits to participants. However, possible benefits include a contribution to research on public cultural programming and community activities. Your participation is voluntary and you can terminate your participation at any time. As a participant, you are not required to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you are welcome not to answer a question or choose to end the interview. Interviews are designed to last approximately one hour, but may exceed or fail to reach that time period according to your availability and interest in continuing.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal these identities. Only the principal and student investigator will have access to the participants' names. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the researcher, Zach Richer, by phone (206-334-6244) or email (zricher@umd.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Maryland, by email (irb@umd.edu) or telephone (301-405-0678). This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Your participation in this project indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read the consent form or have had it read to you; you have been provided an information sheet to keep for your records; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Do you agree to participate [If yes, continue. If no, stop.]

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes, and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will be available only to my supervisor and me, and your identity will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any report. If your words are included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Question Set A:
Tell me about how you got involved with Festal?

Follow-up questions:

      1. What attracted you to the festival series?

      2. Had you had experience working on cultural projects before?

Question Set B:
How did Festal come about?

Follow-up questions:

      1. Who is the audience for these festivals?

      2. How are the festivals chosen? Does Seattle Center recruit?

      3. Some festivals are organized by nationality, others by region, and still others by language or U.S. state. What are the requirements for becoming a culture?

      4. Many festivals are held to coincide with religious holidays. How does religion factor into festivals? Is this problematic?

Question Set C:
Seattle Center is both publicly and privately owned. What is Festal's mandate from the city?

Follow-up questions:

      1. How much does Seattle Center look to other cities when planning festivals?

Question Set D:
Describe for me a successful festival.

Follow-up questions:

      1. How does Seattle Center measure success? (# of participants, $ earned, fulfilled org. commitments, etc.?)

      2. Have these benchmarks changed over the years?

Question Set E:
What kind of outreach do you provide to the Seattle community?

Follow-up questions:

1. How much feedback do you get from visitors and participants?

2. In what ways has Festal changed in response to this feedback?

Question Set F:
Describe the relationship Seattle Center has with community organizations.

Follow-up questions:

1. How are the different aspects of festival planning distributed among Seattle Center and participating organizations?

Question Set G:
Seattle Center stipulates that all participating organizations be registered as 501c3 non-profits. Why?

Follow-up questions:

1. Why is it important to Seattle Center that these festivals not be political?

2. Given that politics is off-limits at festivals, do you think that the festivals in themselves serve a political purpose? Or perhaps have a political consequence?

3. How has the Seattle population responded to the city's public and financial commitment to cultural diversity?

4. Many communities in Seattle face unique issues, both in their countries of origin and in Seattle. Do any of these issues show up in festival content?

Question Set H:
Seattle Center's festival series uses the term 'cultural IQ' in many of its promotional materials. Can you explain to me what you mean by that?

Follow-up questions:

       1. Why is it important to cultivate one's cultural IQ?

       2. What are the ways in which people can raise their cultural IQ?

Question Set I:
In Festal materials, the word 'culture' is used very frequently, with some reference to ethnicity. However, I have not come across the word race. Is that intentional?

Follow-up questions:

       1. How does race figure into Seattle Center's cultural programming?

       2. How do different festivals approach the issue of race?

       3. What is Seattle Center's position on proposed festival content as it relates to race?

Question Set J:
Cultural festivals sometimes have drawn criticism for mistreating culture as a commercial good. What do you think of this view?

Follow-up questions:

       1. Do festivals have a duty to represent ethnic practices authentically?

       2. Do cultural celebrations have a duty to provide educational or instructional content for visitors?

       3. Does Seattle Center require such content?

       4. How do festival visitors respond to content that is educational or instructional?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Community Non-Profit Organizations

Declaration of Subjects' Rights and Request of Oral Consent:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study exploring participation in public cultural programming in Seattle. As I mentioned, this interview is part of my research project at the Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland. I am interested in how various city and community groups participate in the production of cultural festivals. This project is conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Dana Fisher. There are no direct benefits to participants. However, possible benefits include a contribution to research on public cultural programming and community activities. Your participation is voluntary and you can terminate your participation at any time. As a participant, you are not required to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you are welcome not to answer a question or choose to end the interview. Interviews are designed to last approximately one hour, but may exceed or fail to reach that time period according to your availability and interest in continuing.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal these identities. Only the principal and student investigator will have access to the participants' names. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the researcher, Zach Richer, by phone (206-334-6244) or email (zricher@umd.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Maryland, by email (irb@umd.edu) or telephone (301-405-0678). This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Your participation in this project indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read the consent form or have had it read to you; you have been provided an information sheet to keep for your records; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Do you agree to participate [If yes, continue. If no, stop.]

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes, and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will be available only to my supervisor and me, and your identity will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any report. If your words are included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Question Set A:
Tell me about the history of the [Festival Name][40]

Follow-up Questions:

1. When was the first year the festival was held?

2. Who was involved in organizing the first festival?

3. What were the principle reasons behind organizing a festival at that time?

4. How has the festival changed since its inception?

Question Set B:
How would you describe the goals of the Cherry Blossom Festival?

Follow-up Questions:

1. What are the ways you evaluate success?

2. In what ways do you promote the festival?

3. How would you describe the target audience for the Cherry Blossom Festival?

4. Do you solicit or receive feedback from festival visitors?

5. Some festivals promote community cohesion among the group being represented, while others aim to reach out to the broader population. Still others are aimed at fostering local and neighborhood businesses. Would you describe the Cherry Blossom Festival's mission in any of these terms?

Question Set C:
Tell me about the Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival Committee

Follow-up Questions:

1. Who makes up the committee's membership (e.g., private citizens, community advocates, business leaders, neighborhood groups, Japanese government representatives)?

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[40] For the sake of readability, this protocol will take the Cherry Blossom Festival as its example. The protocol will be slightly modified for each organization to reflect the various festivals and the communities they represent.

2. Aside from the contributions from Seattle Center, who are some of the Cherry Blossom Festival's sponsors and supporters (e.g. neighborhood groups, business associations, foreign governments, non-profit groups, advocacy networks, etc.)?

3. If supported by an organization or group that represents an ethnic group, what other forms of cultural activities, community advocacy, or events do they engage in?

4. Is the committee involved in planning or organizing any other events throughout the year?

Question Set D:
Tell me about Seattle's Japanese and Japanese-American population.

Follow-up Questions:

1. How large is Seattle's community of Japanese and Japanese-Americans?

2. How would you describe the relationship between the Planning Committee and the broader Japanese and Japanese-American community?

3. Is the festival popular among Seattle's Japanese and Japanese-Americans?

4. Has there been any controversy within the community regarding the festival or its content?

5. Are there any other events throughout the year that bring this community together?

6. In many cities, cultural festivals are held in neighborhoods highly populated by members of the ethnic group being celebrated, but all Festal festivals are held at Seattle Center. Why did the Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival Committee decide to hold its event in a central public space?

7. Were there other locations that you considered before choosing Seattle Center?

8. Do you think the choice of location would make a difference in the festival?

9. Do you think that the Cherry Blossom Festival has made a difference in the daily lives of the Japanese and Japanese-American communities living in Seattle?

Question Set E:
Tell me about what a visitor can expect to see and do at the Cherry Blossom Festival

1. What forms of activities are important for the Committee to represent at the festival?

2. How did you come to select these activities and performances in particular?

3. What kinds of activities have proven to be popular among the audience?

4. Have there been any activities in years past that you have decided not to repeat in later years?

5. Seattle Center stipulates that festivals cannot include religious or political content. Have these guidelines affected how you design festival activities and content?

6. In some respects, it seems difficult to decouple culture from religion. How do you determine how to comply with Seattle Center's policies?

7. As is the case with many national cultures, Japan and the United States have a long and at times acrimonious political history. Are aspects of the relationship between the two countries ever touched upon in festival content?

8. Why do you decide (or not decide) to address political controversies at the festival?

9. Has the audience ever responded negatively to festival content?

10. Has the audience ever responded negatively to the festival's lack of content on one or another aspect of Japanese culture they feel should have been addressed?

Question Set F:
Japanese culture is itself very diverse with respect to regional and generational differences. How do you select which aspects of culture to represent at the Cherry Blossom Festival?

Follow-up Questions:

1. Does the festival have activities related to minority cultures in Japan?

2. There are also differences in how Japanese culture has been practiced over its history to more contemporary forms of culture. Does the Cherry Blossom Festival focus mainly on cultural traditions or Japanese culture today?

3. There are also no doubt many differences between Japanese culture in Japan and that of Japanese-Americans living in the United States. Are there events or exhibits displaying Japanese-American culture?

4. Sometimes ethnic minority communities enjoy different experiences and face different challenges than other Seattle residents. Does the festival focus on any of these differences?

Appendix D: Survey Recruitment Script

"Hello, my name is Zach Richer, I'm a researcher at the University of Maryland. I'm doing a study of the people who came out to the festival today. Would you please participate in a brief anonymous survey? It will take less than ten minutes. We will not collect any identifying information, unless you would agree to be interviewed as a part of this research project. Are you over the age of 18? [If the respondent says no, then they will not be surveyed.]"

Appendix E: Survey Instrument

FESTIVAL STUDY, Zach Richer, Co-Principal Investigator (zricher@umd.edu) - University of Maryland

This **TWO-PAGE** survey is completely **ANONYMOUS** and should take less than **TEN MINUTES.** Participation is **VOLUNTARY**. You may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may decline to answer any question for any reason.

1) **Please specify your home ZIP code:**

_____

2) **How did you hear about this Festival? (please circle all that apply)**
   A. Flyers or Posters;
   B. Newsletter of an organization/group, please name it: _____
   C. Family/ Friends;
   D. School/ Work;
   E. People from an organization/group, please name it: _____
   F. Web Site, please name it:

   _____
   G. E-mail/ Mailinglist, please name it :
   _____
   H. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), please name it:

   _____
   I. Chanced upon it while at Seattle Center
   J. Other, please name it:
   _____

2a) If you circled more than one answer for #2, which was the ONE most important channel through which you heard about this event?

_____

3) **With whom did you come? (please circle)**
   A. Alone;
   B. Partner/Family;
   C. Friends/Neighbors;
   D. Colleagues/Co-Students;
   E. With Members of Organization, please name it:
   _____

4) **How many public festivals (of any kind) have you attended in the past year?**
   _____ This is the only festival I have attended
   _____ Between 2 and 4 festivals
   _____ Between 5 and 7 festivals
   _____ Between 8 and 10 festivals
   _____ More than 10 festivals

4a) Of those events, how many have been in celebration of culture or ethnicity?
   _____ All   Other (how many?): _____

5) Why did you choose to attend the Spirit of West Africa Festival (circle all that apply)?
   A. Try something new
   B. Speak or practice a West African language
   C. Learn about West African culture
   D. Eat West African food
   E. Celebrate cultural diversity
   F. Engage in family-friendly activities
   G. I am a participant/performer in an activity
   H. I came across the festival by chance
   I. Other, please name it:_____

5a) If you circled more than one answer for #5, which was the ONE most important reason that you attended this festival?

_____

6) What is your personal connection to West African culture (check all that apply)?
   ____ Personal or familial heritage
   ____ I have traveled to West Africa for vacation
   ____ I have business connections in West Africa
   ____ I observe a West African religion
   ____ I work/volunteer with a West African organization
   ____ I enjoy West African food
   ____ I enjoy West African art, movies, and/or literature
   ____ I studied abroad in West African
   ____ I learned about it at school
   ____ None of these
   ____ Other, please name it:_____

7) In your opinion, what is the primary benefit of this cultural festival (please check ONE)?
   ____ Brings the West African community together
   ____ Exposes Seattle population to West African culture
   ____ Draws attention to issues faced by the West African community in Seattle
   ____ Provides change of pace from everyday activities
   ____ Showcases the diversity of Seattle's population
   ____ Offers family-friendly social activities
   ____ There is no primary benefit to cultural festivals
   ____ Other, please name it:_____

8) In the future, this festival should add more (check all that apply):

____ Eating opportunities
____ Shopping opportunities
____ Education opportunities or workshops
____ Stage entertainment
____ Information about Seattle West African population
____ Children's activities
____ Other, please name it: _____
____ None of these

9) In your opinion, does the Spirit of West Africa Festival accurately represent West African culture?

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree
_____ Neither agree nor disagree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly disagree
_____ Don't know

10) Are you a member of any community organizations or advocacy groups for issues of race or ethnicity?

_____ No   Yes, please name it/them:
_____
_____

11) In the past year, have you participated in any of the following activities associated with race or ethnic groups (check all that apply)?

____ Watched an ethnic movie or TV program
____ Attended an ethnic play or concert
____ Dined at an ethnic restaurant
____ Visited an ethnic museum or community center
____ Participated in ethnic community advocacy
____ Traveled outside of the U.S.
____ Hosted a guest and/or student from abroad
____ Visited a website oriented towards an ethnic group
____ Read an ethnic newspaper or magazine
____ Participated in an online forum on ethnicity
____ Taken a course related to ethnic language/culture
____ Other, please specify:_____

12) What is your gender? _____

13) What is your age (as of your last birthday)?

_____

14) What is your race?

_____

15) What is your ethnicity?

_____

16) Below are political views that people might hold, arranged from extreme Liberal/Left to extreme Conservative/Right. Where would you place yourself on this scale? Please check ONE:

____ Extremely Liberal/ Left
____ Liberal
____ Slightly Liberal
____ Moderate, middle of the road
____ Slightly Conservative
____ Conservative
____ Extremely Conservative/Right
____ None of these

17) In what sector are you employed (select one):

_____ Government or Public Sector
_____ Private sector
_____ NGO or non-profit
_____ Self-employed
_____ Student
_____ Retired
_____ Other

18) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

_____ Some High School
_____ High School
_____ Some University
_____ University
_____ Graduate or Professional School

19) Are you willing to participate in a follow up interview?

____ NO
____ YES

Appendix F: Interview Protocol for Festival Visitors

Declaration of Subjects' Rights and Request of Oral Consent:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study exploring participation in public cultural programming in Seattle. As I mentioned, this interview is part of my research project at the Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland. I am interested in how and why people come to participate in cultural festivals at Seattle Center, as well as other ways the engage in cultural activities. This project is conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Dana Fisher. There are no direct benefits to participants. However, possible benefits include a contribution to research on public cultural programming and community activities. Your participation is voluntary and you can terminate your participation at any time. As a participant, you are not required to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you are welcome not to answer a question or choose to end the interview. Interviews are designed to last approximately one hour, but may exceed or fail to reach that time period according to your availability and interest in continuing.

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal these identities. Only the principal and student investigator will have access to the participants' names. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the researcher, Zach Richer, by phone (206-334-6244) or email (zricher@umd.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Maryland, by email (irb@umd.edu) or telephone (301-405-0678). This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Your participation in this project indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read the consent form or have had it read to you; you have been provided an information sheet to keep for your records; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Do you agree to participate [If yes, continue. If no, stop.]

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes, and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will be available only to my supervisor and me, and your identity will be kept confidential. Your identity will not

be revealed in any report. If your words are included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Question Set A:
Tell me about how you came to attend the Cherry Blossom Festival.

Follow-up questions:

1. What kinds of activities did you expect to see at the festival?

2. Which activities did you participate in while at the festival?

3. How about activities that you skipped over?

4. Were there any activities that you wished had been there, but weren't?

5. Had you been to the Cherry Blossom Festival before this year?

6. How many times?

7. Overall, what did you think of your time at the Cherry Blossom Festival?

8. Would you say that you learned anything new about Japanese culture from attending the Cherry Blossom Festival?

9. What did you learn?

10. In your opinion, was there an overall message at this festival?

11. Who was the audience for this festival?

Question Set B:
Tell me about your connection to Japanese culture.

Follow-up questions:

1. Do you try to maintain this connection to Japanese culture in any particular way?

2. Do you do any other activities related to Japanese culture or the Japanese community in Seattle?

3. What kinds of opportunities exist to engage with Japanese culture in Seattle?

Question Set C:
Tell me about other cultural activities you engage in.

Follow-up questions:

1. Are you a member of any formal organizations related to culture or ethnicity?

2. I'm not from Seattle. Are there many opportunities to engage in cultural activities?

3. Would you describe Seattle as a diverse city?

4. Have you been to any of the other festivals hosted by Seattle Center?

5. Which ones?

6. Do you plan on attending any additional festivals this year?

7. Which ones?

8. Many cities host cultural festivals in neighborhoods highly populated by members of the ethnic group being represented, whereas Seattle hosts all of its festivals in a central location. Would festival location matter to you in deciding whether or not to attend the festival?

9. Do you think the festival would be different if it were not held at Seattle Center? How so?

10. Festivals are sometimes criticized for simplifying culture, or for turning it into a museum object or a product for consumption. What do you think of these objections?

11. Do you believe that festivals play an important role in Seattle?

Appendix G: Seattle Center Recruitment E-mail Script

Dear [Prospective Subject Name],

My name is Zach Richer and I am a Seattle resident currently pursuing a PhD in Sociology at the University of Maryland. For my dissertation research, I plan on exploring intercultural encounters at urban festivals. Seattle's commitment to providing a wide range of free cultural festivals sets Festál apart from festival series in many other cities, making it an ideal location to conduct my study. Throughout much of Festál's 2014 schedule, I will engage with selected festivals in many different ways--from the manners in which organizations reach out to Seattle's diverse population to the experiences of festival visitors themselves. My objective is to understand the role of cultural festivals in how Seattle residents learn about and through diversity.

As a key figure in the organization of Festál, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to interview you about your role in the staging of these events. If you have any questions about the project, or wish to schedule a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,
Zach Richer
PhD Candidate
Department of Sociology
University of Maryland
zricher@umd.edu
206-334-6244

Appendix H: Community Organization Recruitment E-mail Script

Dear [Prospective Subject Name],

My name is Zach Richer and I am a Seattle resident currently pursuing a PhD in Sociology at the University of Maryland. For my dissertation research, I am exploring intercultural encounters at Seattle Center's cultural festival series, Festál. Throughout Festál's 2014 schedule, I will engage with selected festivals in many different ways--from the manners in which organizations reach out to Seattle's diverse population to the experiences of festival visitors themselves. My objective is to understand the role of cultural festivals in how Seattle residents learn about and through diversity.

[Festival name] is a key event in Festál's yearly programming, and an important occasion for engagement with the [ethnic community name] community in Seattle. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to interview you about your role in the staging of these events. If you have any questions about the project, or wish to schedule a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,
Zach Richer
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