University of South Florida
Scholar Commons

Graduate Theses and Dissertations | Graduate School

March 2021

Consumerism and Pride: The Fate of Paris' Marais "Gayborhood"

Christina M. Csensich
University of South Florida

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd

Part of the European History Commons, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons

Scholar Commons Citation

Csensich, Christina M., "Consumerism and Pride: The Fate of Paris' Marais "Gayborhood"" (2021). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations.*
https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/8756

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Consumerism and Pride: The Fate of Paris' Marais "Gayborhood"

by

Christina M. Csensich

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Darcie S. Fontaine, Ph.D.
Brian Connolly, Ph.D.
David K. Johnson, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
March 15, 2021

Keywords: LGBT, LGBT history, queer, queer history, France, gentrification

Copyright © 2021, Christina M. Csensich

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Merlin cry closet for helping me realize that my dreams are worth pursuing, and if I'm going to cry, it had better be over something I love.

Acknowledgements

I am incredibly grateful to Dr. Darcie Fontaine for her guidance and mentorship throughout this entire program. You have made me feel so welcomed and valued at USF, encouraged me and uplifted me throughout every step of this process, and didn't let me quit even when I wanted to. I am so thankful for your kindness and humor. I am truly blessed to have you as my mentor.

I would also like to thank Dr. Brian Connolly for believing in me and encouraging me to give up my old day job and fully commit to grad school. Thank you for reading crazy articles and books with me, and making me feel like my "unusual" academic interests were valid and had a place.

This work would have been entirely impossible without Dr. David K. Johnson and his assistance in tracking down many of my sources. Merci mille fois for inspiring my research in queer history and helping me find my way in this field.

Lastly, I owe so much to Dr. Giovanna Benadusi for her fierce dedication to the craft of writing. Thank you for helping me fall in love with writing again. Without your eagle's eye for editing and your constant question, "But what is your argument?" my papers would probably be unreadable. Your kindness and love are an inspiration and I am so grateful to you for making me feel at home here.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Introduction 1
A Note on Word Choice 7

Chapter One: The Makings of a Queer French Identity 10

Chapter Two: Queer Community and Consumerism in the Marais 19
The 1950s to the 1970s 20
Gentrification and Les Mots à La Bouche 22
Shifts in the 1980s 26
Le Gai Pied 28
Conclusion 32

Chapter Three: Representations of Pride in Advertising 35
Analysis of Consumer Responses 38
Advertisements for Pride-Themed Events 41
Advertisements for Non-Pride-Themed Products 47
Conclusion 52

Conclusion 55

Bibliography 57

Abstract

In the 1980s the Marais neighborhood in Paris, France, became a haven for queer people, specifically gay, white men, filled with queer-owned and queer-centric businesses. By the year 2020, however, these businesses had been priced out by name-brand international corporations. In the 1990s, French television commercials and programs would not speak the word ‘homosexual,’ even when a character was openly queer. By the 2010s, companies regularly featured queer people and gay pride imagery and slogans in their advertising. The queer community in Paris has a unique relationship with the consumer economy, one that ties aspects of queer identity directly to consumption and leisure. The result of this relationship has been increased visibility of queer people in media, but less business directly owned or controlled by queer people themselves. Conversely, this has resulted in a fracturing of the community along class lines – those who have purchasing power and those who do not. In this thesis, I explore how this relationship came to be and the impact it has had on the queer community, focusing on the Marais neighborhood’s demographic shifts and the changes in queer representation in commercial advertising.

Introduction

In the early 1980s, activists in Paris, France led the country's burgeoning gay pride movement through the self-conscious creation of spaces where they could be themselves and interact with other like-minded individuals. Same-sex behavior had long been relegated to informal meeting places and covert liaisons in Paris' public parks and boulevards, but the *libération homosexuelle* (gay liberation) movement had worked since the 1960s to bring the community into the light. Individuals such as Jean-Pierre Meyer-Guiton saw an opportunity to help create this sense of community through the establishment of queer-centric businesses. In 1983, Meyer-Guiton opened Les Mots à La Bouche, a bookstore focusing exclusively on LGBT writers and content, in the Marais neighborhood of Paris. Prior to opening his own store, Meyer-Guiton had searched for materials that represented his identity, but became frustrated over the fact that while hundreds of relevant books and magazines existed, but there was no dedicated space for queer people to shop for literature. This is what pushed him to create such a space. [1] Thanks to Meyer-Guiton and other business owners, the Marais became the center of gay life in Paris in the early 1980s.

In parallel to the development of the Marais as a queer neighborhood in Paris, over the past forty years, gay pride in France has evolved from a lowercase "concept" to

[1] "Les Mots à la bouche: temple des sexualités, de Proust à Nina Bouraoui," *L'Humanité*, August 8, 2017, https://www.humanite.fr/les-mots-la-bouche-temple-des-sexualites-de-proust-nina-bouraoui-639977.

a capital-P "movement," becoming increasingly commercialized in mainstream media. The larger global Pride movement emerged out of the United States in the late 1960s following the widely-reported Stonewall Inn Riots in the summer of 1969, and began to take hold of France in the early 1980s. The development of the Marais into a "gayborhood," a modern colloquial term for a predominantly gay neighborhood, represents another facet of the pride movement – the role of consumerism in legitimizing queer identities into society at large.[2] As Amin Ghaziani argues, one of the defining characteristics of a gayborhood is the presence of "commercial spaces: gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community centers that appeal to residents and non-residents alike."[3]

The connection between queer people and consumerism is not necessarily new, as same-sex behavior has been associated with prostitution since at least the nineteenth century.[4] Equating same-sex desire with the exchanging of money for sex has thus always situated queerness within the economic realm, particularly with the emergence of the bourgeois leisure culture of the late nineteenth century that

---

[2] Feargus O'Sullivan, "The 'gaytrification' effect: why gay neighbourhoods are being priced out," *The Guardian*, January 13, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jan/13/end-of-gaytrification-cities-lgbt-communities-gentrification-gay-villages.

[3] Ghaziani describes gayborhoods as also having clearly identifiable geographic boundaries, residences interspersed with businesses, and a culture that is dominated by its queer members. These gayborhoods provide an "incomparable sense of safety" for queer people, and create a "sense of roots" – the basis of community. Amin Ghaziani, *There Goes The Gayborhood?* Princeton: Princeton University Press (2014): 2-3.

[4] Andrew Israel Ross discusses this in his article, "Sex in the Archives," when analyzing the significance of nineteenth-century police records that group homosexual acts with prostitution. Ross argues that because the past as is truly was is unknowable, the historian must put aside the compulsion to separate homosexuality from prostitution. This desire to separate the two is based on modern understandings of sexuality and sexual practice that cannot be accurately applied to the nineteenth-century, and thus the police records about homosexuality must be analyzed within the light of prostitution and sexual trade. Andrew Israel Ross, "Sex in the Archives: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris," *French Historical Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017): 267-290.

established new urban possibilities for queer people to navigate public spaces in cities such as Paris. With Baron Haussmann and Napoleon III's revitalization scheme for the grands boulevards of Paris in the 1850s to 1870s came the development of public parks, urinals, alleys, and other such spaces where queer people could encounter one another. Additionally, with the emergence of the *flâneur* as a respectable individual with enough financial comfort and leisure time to peruse the city and its novelties, individuals were out in public more than ever before without raising suspicion.[5] The ideal of the *flâneur* may have subsumed the identity of those who sought same-sex encounters by rendering their presence in public as perfectly acceptable.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Pride as a global movement has become thoroughly associated with consumption and capitalism as well. Pride parades are sponsored by corporations, which benefit from their association with the movement by presenting themselves as politically progressive, while also ingratiating themselves to the queer community as potential customers. By incorporating queer identities into their marketing and advertising schemes, corporations have both signaled their political alignment with the queer community, appealing to certain demographics they may wish to capture, and have also served to bring queer people into greater visibility in mainstream society and helped to normalize their representation. Although this has undoubtedly helped with greater acceptance and visibility of queerness, queer people themselves are not reaping the financial rewards of this acceptance and visibility.

---

[5] Andrew Israel Ross, *Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century* Paris (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019), 126.

While earlier generations of queer business owners, such as Meyer-Guiton, were able to succeed on the basis of their association with the queer community, private businesses have been effectively pushed out of the market by larger corporations who have co-opted queerness for their own profit without having any direct link to the community itself. This is especially evident in the Marais, which has suffered from an influx of global corporations moving into the neighborhood and driving rent prices up. Despite its iconic role in shaping the Marais into a veritable gayborhood, in early 2020 Les Mots à La Bouche was forced to relinquish its long-time home on the rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie due to a four-fold rent increase. Crowd-funding efforts were not enough to save the shop, and in March 2020, it relocated to the eleventh arrondissement, two kilometers north of the Marais.[6]

Despite France's relative success in the integration of queer identities into media and advertising, as well as the current relative social acceptance of the queer community, the queer group at large remains marginalized in a political context. Debates continue into the year 2020 about the suitability for same-sex couples to adopt children, and homophobia remains a dangerous threat.[7] As individuals, queer business owners in Paris are not reaping the financial profits of the mainstream Pride movement, and the phenomena of huge corporations adopting these narratives into their

---

[6] Annabelle Martella, "La librairie Les Mots à la bouche victime de l'embourgeoisement du Marais," *Libération*, November 19, 2019, https://next.liberation.fr/livres/2019/11/19/la-librairie-les-mots-a-la-bouche-victime-de-l-embourgeoisement-du-marais_1764339.

[7] "France's 40-point plan to tackle LGBT discrimination," The Local, October 14, 2020, https://www.thelocal.fr/20201014/frances-40-point-plan-to-tackle-lgbt-discrimination; "PLAN NATIONAL D'ACTIONS POUR L'ÉGALITÉ DES DROITS, CONTRE LA HAINE ET LES DISCRIMINATIONS ANTI-LGBT+ 2020-2023," Ministère chargé de l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, de la Diversité et de l'Égalité des chances, Paris, France, 2020, https://www.egalite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/dossiers/lutte-contre-les-discriminations/plan-national-dactions-pour-legalite-des-droits-contre-la-haine-et-les-discriminations-anti-lgbt-2020-2023.

advertising has given the false illusion that queer people have been accepted and assimilated into the dominant heteronormative society, while in fact these changes remain surface-level at best.

The development of urban queerness in Paris is also inherently tied to the development of leisure culture. Just as Haussmannization led to the development of a bourgeois *flâneur* culture in which public life was intended for leisurely consumption, the language of queerness in Paris is also steeped in concepts of leisure, and consequently, wealth. Thus, the fact that the small business owners in the Marais have been priced out by larger luxury brands is perhaps not a surprise at all, if the very core of queer identity in Paris is tied to consumption.

Numerous scholars have examined the role of nineteenth-century public life on the development of queer life in Paris, while others have studied the impact of decreasing censorship laws on the development of the gay pornography industry in the late twentieth century.[8] However, there is little historical work analyzing the unique modern relationship between French gay identity and consumerism. In this thesis, I discuss two specific phenomena in the Paris queer community – first, the gentrification and commercialization of the Marais from a neighborhood formerly filled with queer

[8] Andrew Israel Ross's *Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* discusses the impact of the city's changing urban culture in allowing queer people new social and romantic opportunities, as well as the legal entanglement of homosexuality with prostitution as a public health issue that must be regulated. Similarly, William A. Peniston's *Pederasts and Others* compares data from nineteenth-century Parisian police records to analyze where queer people lived in relation to where they were arrested for same-sex behaviors, and what these locations reveal about their activities. Dan Callwood analyzes the French pornography industry in his article "Anxiety and Desire in France's Gay Pornographic Film Boom, 1974-1983," and the relationship between gay liberation and a commercial industry. Andrew Israel Ross, *Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press (2019); William A. Peniston, *Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth Century Paris,* New York: Harrington Park Press (2004); Dan Callwood, "Anxiety and Desire in France's Gay Pornographic Film Boom, 1974-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 1 (2017).

businesses to one filled with fewer independently-owned businesses and more upscale, name-brand stores; and second, the incorporation of queer imagery and language into corporate advertising and media, including the sponsorship of Pride events. Through this analysis, I seek to uncover the role of consumerism in shaping queer identity, and its impact on queer community-building efforts.

Chapter 1 will focus on the development of queer identity in France. This development has unfolded differently than in other western countries, such as the United States, due to France's particular culture of universalism and secularism, which tends to reject so-called identity politics. In this chapter I will show the arguments for the development of a specifically French queer community, and how that community evolved prior to the formation of a geographic community in the 1980s. These arguments are presented as a historiography of recent scholarly works on this topic in order to showcase the variety of opinions on these contributing factors.

Chapter 2 will focus specifically on the Marais beginning in the 1980s, and the development of a queer business center in this neighborhood. In this chapter I will incorporate advertisements and articles from popular gay magazines of the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Le Gai Pied*, in order to understand what was important to this community at this time. The 1980s mark a particular shift in the queer community from one focused on activism to one more focused on consumption. I argue that full participation in leisure culture and the economy is a sign of the queer community's victories in terms of social and legal acceptance, rather than a symbol of greater apathy toward social issues.

Chapter 3 will focus on the early 2000s in Paris and the emergence of queer-centric imagery in advertisements and media. My analysis of these sources falls broadly into two categories: corporate sponsorship for Pride-themed events or products, and corporate marketing that includes queer themes but advertises a product or service that is not inherently queer-centric. Through this analysis, I hope to demonstrate what greater corporate representation of queer people means for the queer community itself. The co-opting of queer imagery by corporations can be seen as a cynical business decision aimed at the goal of increasing profits by targeting a demographic perceived as wealthy, but the question remains whether this has had a positive impact on acceptance for queer people in society more generally by normalizing their presence. This chapter will also analyze consumer responses to seeing queer imagery in advertising, and how power over queer representation has shifted from the community itself to corporate control.

A Note on Word Choices

The word queer has a complicated history in France.[9] In the American usage, this word encompasses any non-heteronormative sexual identity, while in France the word queer did not have a direct translation when introduced in the 1990s. Instead this

[9] My understanding of these terms in the French context is deeply indebted to the work of Bruno Perreau in *Queer Theory: The French Response*, in which he analyzes the complicated history of gender and queer theory in France. Citing the transference of these ideas among scholars in the United States and France as one of many reasons why the French have been resistant to the use of the term queer, Perreau argues that semantic debates like this are demonstrative of a larger French fear of adopting American ideologies, and specifically American LGBT ideologies, which may cause of the so-called spread of homosexuality in France.

word was intentionally chosen in French media for its ambiguity, and for the way it kept LGBT people closeted by not specifically commenting on their sexual identity. In the early 2000s, a French activist group called *Les Tordu(e)s* reclaimed the term queer to refer to the group's diversity of sexual identities. This group challenged the existing gay Pride movement in Paris, arguing that the more well-known activist organizations had failed to adequately address issues that they saw as deeply important to the movement, such as gender equality, transgender rights, and immigrants' rights. *Les Tordu(e)s* also loudly decried the consumerist nature of Parisian Pride events and the community as a whole, and the word queer took on a specifically anti-capitalist meaning when used by this group.[10]

In light of this more recent usage of the term, and the criticisms of capitalism's relationship with LGBT culture in Paris that are the subject of this project, queer will be used throughout this paper when describing a group of individuals with mixed or unknown sexual identities. While LGBT is a less controversial term in France, by nature of it being an acronym there is no way for this word to fully encompass all the different sexual identities which exist among the individuals discussed here, and in the broader global community, and it is my goal to use language that is as inclusive as possible. While acknowledging that I am writing from an American perspective and my relationship with the word queer is colored through this experience, I have chosen to use the word queer throughout this paper to avoid making assumptions about the sexual identities of historical actors when these identities are not publicly known. Many of the individuals under analysis do identify as homosexual, one who is sexually or

[10] Perreau, *Queer Theory*, 103, 108.

romantically attracted to people of the same gender, but just as many either do not give a name to their attraction or it is unknowable to us in the present day. Similarly, many modern terms such as gay or transgender may not have been in use during the periods under study here, and it would be inappropriate to ascribe these terms to individuals who did not identify as such.

Acknowledging that the term queer is also a modern term rather than historical, it is used here in an attempt to encompass a variety of sexualities and gender identities that are not strictly heteronormative, without ascribing particular parameters on how these identities are represented. Queer may also be used to describe a group of people who represent a variety of different sexual identities, such as when referring to the participants of a Pride parade that include gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, and many other groups. Where appropriate, specific terms will be used to describe specific groups within the queer community, or historical terms used by the actors involved, such as gay, homophile, or pederast.

Chapter 1: The Makings of a Queer French Identity

The study of queer history is still a relatively new intervention to the field of history, dating back to the mid-1990s and expanding significantly through the early 2000s. Specifically in the study of queer history in France, historians have concerned themselves with one core argument in particular– is French queerness a strictly French phenomena, or is it an importation of other, predominantly American, forms of self-expression? The French gay liberation movement was undeniably influenced by the Stonewall riots in New York City in 1969 and the subsequent American Pride movement, but it is inaccurate to claim that the French movement is simply borrowed from its American counterparts.

Several characteristics of French social and political culture created a specifically French struggle for gay rights that is rooted in French republican ideals of universalism and secularism. This culture has made the fight for so-called identity politics more challenging in a society that espouses a universalizing equality. French queer life is unique to its own time, place, and even people who identify within this community, while still being shaped by the particular concerns, values, and ideologies of a non-queer general French society. While this movement may coincide with the larger global Pride movement beginning in the late 1960s, it is a fight that has been waged by French individuals for whom their French identity is as deeply engrained as their queer identity. Though there are overlapping goals and obstacles across Pride movements in the

West, the fight remains not one of finding acceptance in a global world, but of finding acceptance in one's own home country and community.

Recognized as one of the first books to study modern French queer life, Frédéric Martel's *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France Since 1968* is concerned primarily with the institutions of queer life in modern France, such as activism organizations, queer publications, and the community that developed out of the AIDS crisis in the late twentieth century.[11] According to Martel, the history of the queer community in France is one that was united until the AIDS crisis, and then suffered severe fragmentation and factionalization. Only recently has there been a resurgence in the development of a unified sense of community. Thus, he claims that *The Pink and the Black* tells two separate but intertwined narratives: "the homosexual revolution and the AIDS revolution," for these two events cannot be separated for Martel.[12]

Martel begins his book with the story of Guy Hocquenghem, a young queer man in Paris who published in 1972 a bold newspaper editorial announcing his queerness to the world; he is now credited with starting the "Revolution of Homosexuals" in France.[13] While the Stonewall Inn riots of 1969 in New York City are considered to be the beginning of homosexual liberation in general, this movement took a few years before it gradually took hold in France, with Hocquenghem at the forefront.

Another voice that figured prominently in the early movement was that of *Arcadie*, a magazine and social organization for homosexual men founded in 1954.

---

[11] Frédéric Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France Since 1968*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 4.
[12] Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 6.
[13] Martel, *The Pink and the Black,* 13.

Julian Jackson's 2009 monograph *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics, and Morality in France From the Liberation to AIDS* tells the history of this organization, which remained influential politically and socially in the queer community of Paris for thirty years. *Arcadie's* significance has diminished since the 1980s, and Jackson attempts to reclaim its importance to queer history through archival research and interviews. Although modern queer organizations have viewed *Arcadie* has "conservative, conformist, and closeted," one must remember the time and context that this magazine was publishing content under; Jackson argues that the group's contributions kept queer voices visible and relevant during modern periods of repression.

Jackson proposes a history of queer life in France that is deeply influenced by French Republican ideals. Jackson compares French discomfort with defining queer life to its discomfort in regulating religion, and draws the recent debates in French politics about Islam and its practitioners' public demonstrations, such as the wearing of a head scarf, in comparison to the similar discomfort with specifying queer rights in the law, as both are considered to be private actions that do not belong in the public sphere.[14]

Jackson cites Frédéric Martel's *The Pink and the Black* as the first book on modern French queer life, but takes strong issue with Martel's arguments, in particular his criticisms of the queer community's slow reaction to the AIDS crisis.[15] Jackson is in particular interested in the 1950s and 1960s as an era as-yet untouched by AIDS, which he argues marks the beginning of an entirely different world for queer people in France,

---

[14] Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics, and Morality in France From the Liberation to AIDS,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 4-5.
[15] Jackson, *Living in Arcadia,* 5.

and around the world.[16] Jackson argues that the AIDS crisis also welcomed the "Americanization" of queer life in France.[17] For Jackson, the AIDS epidemic fundamentally changed the French queer community from one that was distinctly French, to one that emulated the American community, marking an important shift in the culture's goals and attitudes.

Enda McCaffrey's 2005 work *The Gay Republic: Sexuality, Citizenship, and Subversion in France* is concerned primarily with the concept of citizenship, and the relationship between the Republic of France and its gay and lesbian citizens in particular, arguing that because the rights of homosexuals in France had to be specifically delineated, whereas the rights of heteronormative individuals are not, this has created a unique and paternalistic oversight into queer life. While other scholars have asserted that French queer identity has been a reaction to or derivative from queer identity in the United States, McCaffrey rejects this idea in favor of analyzing French queer identity as a uniquely French development, born out of the specific conditions of French Republicanism.[18] McCaffrey also argues that because for the French, public life is dictated by law, while private life is believed to remain the private business of the individuals involved, "rights to freedom of expression… are confined to the private space, but are not applicable in the public space," making a full and true integration of queer life into society at large challenging and perhaps antithetical to republicanism.[19]

---

[16] Jackson, *Living in Arcadia,* 242.
[17] Jackson, *Living in Arcadia,* 243.
[18] Enda McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic: Sexuality, Citizenship, and Subversion in France*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 1.
[19] McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic,* 3.

Central to McCaffrey's arguments is the 1999 legislation known as the PaCS, or *Pacte civil de solidarité*, which granted legal rights to cohabitating couples based on mutual contract, rights which had previously only been available to legally married couples. This legislation impacted both same-sex and opposite-sex couples, but brought same-sex relationships to the forefront of national political discourse in a new way.[20] McCaffrey argues that under French ideals of republicanism and universalism, queer people are "victims of the universality of the law and of its homogenising and egalitarian effects."[21] Thus this presents one of the key arguments within the queer community itself -- whether to argue for a "*politique de la différence*," which advocates for clearly articulated rights for queer individuals under the law, versus universalism, in which queer people are not specifically delineated under the law, but are in this manner equal to heterosexual couples whose rights are not specifically enumerated either.[22]

Denis M. Provencher's 2007 work, *Queer French: Globalization, Language, and Sexual Citizenship in France* successfully synthesizes both sides of the argument as to the "Frenchness" of the French gay rights movement. This book puts ideas of French homosexuality in conversation with American ideas of homosexuality in the context of late twentieth century globalization led by the United States. Provencher analyzes the language used to construct queer identity to argue that French experiences of homosexuality are uniquely French due to their particular linguistic differences from the way other cultures have shaped their queer identities. Like Martel, Provencher credits the development of queer publications in the late twentieth century as being pivotal to

[20] McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic,* 6-7.
[21] McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic,* 93.
[22] McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic,* 91-2.

the development of a queer identity in France.[23] In the later sections of the book, Provencher constructs an oral history of queer life in Paris by interviewing forty queer men and women and analyzing their stories in relationship to his understanding of the American queer experience.[24] Provencher argues that based on these anecdotes and a variety of scholarship on the subject, that the French experience of "coming out" is more an expression of personal freedom in an effort to live authentically, rather than an expression of loneliness and isolation as in many American coming out experiences.[25]

One of the most significant recent works on the specifically French conceptualization of queer culture or identity is Bruno Perreau's *Queer Theory: The French Response*. This book analyzes the introduction of queer theory from American universities into French philosophical thought, and how this theory was received negatively overall. Perreau argues that this was based on misunderstandings or misconceptions of what queer theory aimed to do. Perreau points to the reciprocal nature of French and American academic thought, and how American concepts of queer theory were influenced by French philosophy and largely created or supported by French expatriates working in the United States. In turn, French scholars incorporated American queer theory into their own discourse in a way that made sense within French cultural norms. For Perreau, these concepts of queer theory and gender theory are crucial to the development of a queer community in France, and the challenges to establishing a sort of unified group identity. This also presents a more nuanced

---

[23] Denis M. Provencher, *Queer French: Globalization, Language, and Sexual Citizenship in France*. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 54.
[24] Provencher, *Queer French,* 86.
[25] Provencher, *Queer French,* 89-90.

understanding of the relationship between American Pride movements and French Pride movements. For Perreau, one is not derivative of the other, but rather are in conversation with one another.

Given that recent political controversies over the place of so-called private life in public space have turned, in large part and most visibly on the place of Islam in France, Mehammed Amadeus Mack's *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture,* is of critical importance, bringing debates over Islam and queer identity together.[26] Examining gay culture within the predominantly Muslim *banlieue* communities in Paris, Mack finds that queer people are able to navigate a community that is often hostile to their identity in creative ways that do not restrict them to lives of total invisibility, as other scholars have suggested. This is in keeping with the arguments made in this thesis that a geographic sense of community is important to the development of a sense of queer identity. However, *Sexagon* demonstrates that there is not one homogenous queer community in Paris, or anywhere for that matter. As will be discussed in later chapters, the Marais gay community in Paris is a predominantly white community. Due to racial and sexual tension in a postcolonial France, the gay community has often sexualized Arab men and boys in ways that do not welcome them into the fold of the particular Marais community. It must be recognized that in the formation of a group identity, other identities are excluded – in this case, Arabic men are not included in the Marais' conception of a queer community.

[26] Mehammed Amadeus Mack, *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

Similarly, Todd Shepard's *Sex, France, and Arab Men: 1962-1979* makes several important points about the intersections between sexuality, race, and postcolonialism in France.[27] Shepard discusses the often problematic ways in which homosexual men in France have sought to align their struggles for acceptance with the struggles faced by people of color and particularly those from North Africa following the Algerian War in the early 1960s, as well as the ways the gay rights movement has co-opted these challenges into their own discourse. A particularly alarming example is the analysis of sexual relationships between white French men and Algerian men in the late 1970s, in which Hocquenghem, discussed above, points out that "our Arab friends fuck us and never the reverse," as a "form of revenge… against the Western colonizer."[28] The particular gay community in the Marais discussed in this thesis is predominantly white, and by virtue of who is excluded from this community, either as a result of their race or economic status, highlights the complicated intersectionality of queer issues in France.

Nearly all the works discussed above cite the use of journalism and print media as a driving force in the development of a uniquely French queer identity in the twentieth century. For most scholars, this begins with the publication-turned-activist organization, *Arcadie*.[29] Founded in the 1950s, this magazine eventually boasted over 30,000 subscribers. *Arcadie* helped to normalize queer lifestyles by portraying queer people in new ways – specifically in ways that were not eroticized or pornographic.[30] *Arcadie* was exceptional for its linguistic choices, referring to queer people as simply "people" with no

[27] Todd Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men: 1962-1979,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).
[28] Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men*, 92.
[29] For clarity, when referring to the magazine, *Arcadie* appears in italics. When not italicized, it is the organization itself being referenced.
[30] Martel, *The Pink and the Black,* 58.

further descriptors needed.[31] Some scholars, such as Provencher, however, consider these publications to be a distinctly American tradition that was adopted by the French in the years following the Stonewall Riots, rather than a tradition that grew organically out of France.[32] Provencher argues that through print culture, a sort of universal queer identity began to form, rather than one that is specific to each nation or culture in which it is based. This is not a positive development for Provencher, who describes the importation of American queer identity as an "assault on French gay culture."[33]

In the following chapters, I too will turn to printed media, as well as television media, in order to capture glimpses of queer life in Paris from the 1980s to the present day. Sources such as queer-centric magazines *Arcadie*, and later, *Gai Pied*, show what mattered to queer people of their time – the issues, ideas, and hopes that inspired them. These sources also show aspects of queer material culture, from the styles shown in photographs to the products included in the advertisements section. Lastly these sources show historians where queer people were going – which bars, nightclubs, movie theatres, and events were both hip and welcoming – which assists in crafting the story of the Marais as a queer neighborhood. Contrary to Provencher, I propose that print media and eventually television media in France served to create a unified French queer community. While it may share aspects of American culture, these publications and their content were written by and for French queer people, and are informed by the Republican ideals, the legal parameters, and the social attitudes of their culture.

---

[31] Martel, *The Pink and the Black,* 58.
[32] Provencher, *Queer French,* 31-2.
[33] Provencher, *Queer French,* 33.

Chapter 2: Queer Community and Consumerism in the Marais

The gay rights organization Arcadie, along with its eponymous magazine, was founded in Paris in 1954, and it was the first of its kind in France. *Arcadie* called for the presentation of gay people as cultured, refined, and sophisticated in style and in manner, to show the world that they were respectable. By 1983, the Marais neighborhood in Paris' third arrondissement, bordering the right bank of the Seine river that cuts through the heart of the city, had become a hotspot for gay men to congregate, shop, and party. The community of men that frequented the Marais developed a specific fashion sense and set of social activities that defined them. The neighborhood retained corners of its Jewish and immigrant past, and its beautiful *hotels particuliers* mansions, but the gay scene brought new life to the area, and new economic prosperity with it.

In this chapter, the Marais will serve as a case study to examine how the gay community shifted from a policy of assimilation to one of self-determination during the three decades from *Arcadie's* founding to the Marais' heyday as a center of queer business and social life in the 1980s. In this chapter I will incorporate advertisements and articles from popular gay magazines of the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Le Gai Pied*, in order to understand what was important to this community at this time. The 1980s mark a particular shift in the queer community from one focused on activism to one more focused on consumption. I argue that full participation in leisure culture and the economy is a sign of the queer community's victories in terms of social and legal

acceptance, rather than a symbol of greater apathy toward social issues. This period also marks a time when the image of the Parisian gay man was one crafted and maintained by the community itself. This identity, in terms of shared style and social activities, was not defined by an attempt to blend in with heteronormative society as in earlier generations, nor defined by external forces such as corporate advertising, as in later decades.

The 1950s to 1970s

The years following World War II were pivotal in the development of the gay rights movement in France. Individuals such as André Baudry and Roger Peyrefitte formed one of the earliest activist groups for homosexual men, called *Arcadie*, and founded an eponymously named magazine promoting acceptance and visibility for queer people.[34] The early "homosexual liberation" movement, as it was then called, was formulated by and for male homosexuals, who were predominantly white and middle-class. This remained the case throughout the twentieth century, as the Marais catered to a mostly white, gay, male, middle-class clientele. The fact that this demographic mostly resembled the larger heteronormative French society allowed the movement to gain marginal acceptance, but did little for lesbians, queer people of color, or poor individuals. *Arcadie* promoted a sense of gay identity that was rooted in assimilation –

[34] Frédéric Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France Since 1968*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999): 56.

not appearing as different from heterosexual people and presenting gay men as respectable citizens.[35]

In the 1960s and 1970s, Paris became the center of multiple large-scale protests, many led by young people, who pushed back against policies and norms from the older generation.[36] The riots in May 1968 in particular drastically altered French culture, as both students and workers' unions violently clashed with police in their demands for a more progressive government. These riots united economic interests alongside cultural interests, signaling the importance of the economy to shifting public opinion and the necessity of one's being able to fully participate in the French economy in order to fully exercise their citizenship.

This youth-focused protest culture affected the queer community as well, as younger gay men increasingly rejected the influence of *Arcadie* and other older activist groups, perceiving them as old-fashioned and conservative. While *Arcadie* advocated for assimilation of queer people into heteronormative society, the new generation desired acceptance and freedom to live proudly without hiding their identities.[37] The two major gay rights groups of this period, the *Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire* (FHAR) and the *Groupes de libération homosexuelle* (GLH) rejected assimilation in favor of radical political action to change societal and legal attitudes toward queer people. The 1970s saw an explosion in the pornography industry, in both publication and in cinema, marking the entry of queer business into the mainstream economy. The

[35] Scott Gunther, "Building a More Stately Closet: French Gay Movements since the Early 1980s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 3 (2004): 327.
[36] Gunther, "Building a More Stately Closet," 326.
[37] Martel, *The Pink and the Black,* 366.

relaxation of censorship laws in 1974 allowed the production and distribution of pornographic materials to expand, showing that there was indeed a market for such materials and that the queer community possessed significant economic power.[38] During this time there was not yet a clearly defined geographic community for queer people, but the network of activist publications, porn magazines, and queer cinema formed a community connected by shared consumer habits. Cinemas such as La Marotte and Le Dragon catered exclusively to a male homosexual clientele, and even engaged in cross-cultural networking by importing American porn films.[39]

Gentrification and Les Mots à La Bouche

By emerging into the economy as business owners and producers, the stage was set for the Marais to become a haven for gay businesses in the 1980s. The relative decline of the Marais neighborhood following the Second World War left a space that was affordable and centrally located for business owners to begin considering opening up shop. The Marais has a long history of Jewish business owners, which still remains deeply connected to the Marais. They have, however, come to share the neighborhood with the queer community as well as other immigrant groups. It is worth noting that the effects of gentrification that have impacted the queer community in the Marais, which will be discussed in more depth below, have impacted the neighborhood's Jewish

[38] Dan Callwood, "Anxiety and Desire in France's Gay Pornographic Film Boom, 1974-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 1 (2017): 27.
[39] Callwood, "Anxiety and Desire," 37-8.

community equally, with many business owners being priced out of their rented spaces.[40]

Les Mots à La Bouche was one such queer business that opened its doors in the Marais in 1983, the result of its founder's own frustration at not being able to easily find queer-centric publications. Even more significant about the opening of this bookstore was that it offered more than purely pornographic or erotic content, challenging the perception that queer people only consumed pornographic or erotic content, as suggested by the porn boom over the previous decade. The store's success indicates that queer people had the financial freedom to spend their money on books, magazines, and other forms of entertainment, and that they were interested in purchasing a wider variety of material. There was now a market for queer-centric materials and businesses that welcomed queer people, but did not pin them into exclusively sexually-charged content.

The success of Les Mots à La Bouche and other such establishments over the following decade demonstrated the possibility of queer-centric businesses that were not inherently sexual, as well as the possibility for queer people to own their own businesses and fully participate in the French economy in their own right. The financial viability of queer businesses helped revitalize the Marais in the early 1980s as other establishments moved into the neighborhood, and even non-queer-oriented businesses became more accepting of queer people's presence when they realized the economic

[40] Lisa Klug, "As Parisian Jews leave traditional quarters, a new funky demographic coalesces," *The Times of Israel*, October 24, 2016, https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-parisian-jews-leave-traditional-quarters-a-new-funky-demographic-coalesces/; "The History of the Jewish Community in Paris," *Explore France*, June 11, 2013, https://us.france.fr/en/paris/article/history-jewish-community-paris.

power of this demographic. One of FHAR and GLH's early criticisms of the explosion of the gay porn industry was that it allowed queer people to participate in society only insofar as they were partaking in the consumer economy – in other words, that a largely heteronormative consumer industry could profit off of them.[41] It is thus all the more important that the Marais saw a boost in queer-owned businesses, where gay consumers' money went directly into supporting members of their own community.

In the nineteenth century, Napoleon III embarked on an ambitious rehabilitation project to clear the city of crowded, unhealthy working-class streets, and introduce the wide boulevards and public parks that the city is now known for, as well as commercial entertainments such as theatres and traveling shows.[42] This allowed people interested in same-sex encounters to more easily find one another and engage in public life through participation in consumer and leisure pursuits. A century later, Paris' Marais neighborhood became a dedicated shopping and cultural district for queer people by the 1980s, indicating a full incorporation of consumerism into queer identity.

The changes to the Marais during the twentieth century were not necessarily an intentional, strategic gentrification of the neighborhood, but the area nonetheless prospered with the influx of visitors who came to the area and spent their money at shops, bars, and clubs, and the aesthetic of the neighborhood changed as more queer-centric businesses moved into the area. The process of neighborhood improvement as a result of the presence of a queer community has been referred to as "gaytrification."[43]

---

[41] Callwood, "Anxiety and," 29.
[42] Colin Jones, *Paris: The Biography of a City* (London: Penguin, 2004), 333, 337.
[43] Feargus O'Sullivan, "The 'gaytrification' effect: why gay neighbourhoods are being priced out," *The Guardian*, January 13, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jan/13/end-of-gaytrification-cities-lgbt-communities-gentrification-gay-villages.

This nickname acknowledges the fact that, particularly in the Marais, the majority of these patrons are relatively wealthy and eager to engage in leisure culture, and thus their presence brings with it a revitalization of the neighborhood both aesthetically and economically. As indicated by the types of products and establishments being advertised in magazines such as *Le Gai Pied*, throughout the 1980s the market for queer-centric businesses expanded significantly, suggesting a customer base that was willing and able to spend their money.

The city of Paris has always been in flux, under constant construction and reconstruction as its population and their needs change too. Gentrification can be described as "an urban change that is socially situated and which is driven by certain affluent social categories," with effects that are "not just historical and geographical, but also social and political."[44] Gentrification often has a negative connotation, implying the shouldering out of individuals from areas they have traditionally called home in favor of newer businesses. This is indeed the case in Paris' Marais neighborhood, as independently-owned businesses struggle to compete against the high rent prices that larger corporations are offering to their landlords. This competition is coming primarily from large chain brands carrying name-brand and luxury products, which hope to capitalize on the high tourist presence in the Marais. This is a far cry from the neighborhood's historical identity as a haven for queer people, as well as a strongly immigrant and Jewish community.[45]

---

[44] Anne Clerval, as paraphrased in Colin Giraud, translated by Oliver Waine, "Gentrification in Paris: the elite versus the people?," *Metropolitics*, December 20, 2013, https://metropolitiques.eu/Paris-gentrifie-les-elites-contre.html.

[45] According to Robert Anchel, Jewish people have inhabited the Marais since at least the twelfth century, although there have been gaps in this occupation due to various expulsions of Jews from the city and other demographic shifts. Although the Jewish inhabitants of the twenty-first century are not direct

The scales in the Marais tipped away from the favor of independent business owners at the start of the twenty-first century, however, as the Marais became increasingly popular not only for citizens of Paris but for tourists as well. Large corporations, including Doc Marten's shoes and Princesse Tam Tam lingerie, realized the opportunity to capitalize on the presence of tourists by opening stores in the area, catering to the high-end tastes of the tourist demographic.[46] The problem with the presence of these name-brand stores, however, is that because they are large corporations, they have the financial power to dictate the cost of rents in the neighborhood. The space previously occupied by Les Mots à La Bouche was rented to Doc Marten's for a price four times higher than the previous occupants paid. Independent businesses simply cannot compete at this scale for the preciously limited amount of real estate in the Marais.

Shifts in the 1980s

Magazines *Le Gai Pied* and *Masques* emerged in the early 1980s, coinciding with the final demise of allegedly out-dated *Arcadie* in 1982. *Arcadie* failed not because queer publications were no longer popular, but rather because they were no longer in touch with the interests and concerns of young queer people in the 1980s. These individuals were not politically engaged the way that their predecessors were, in part,

descendants of the earlier Jewish community in the Marais, there is nonetheless a tradition of Jewish presence in this neighborhood. Robert Anchel, "The Early History of the Jewish Quarters in Paris," *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (1940): 60.

[46] Liz Alderman, "'It's money that makes the laws': How gentrification is upending streets across Paris," The Independent, January 31, 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/paris-marais-district-gentrification-designer-store-takeover-a9306791.html.

Scott Gunther argues, due to a feeling that all the major political victories had been won by this time.[47] The victory of the Socialist government in 1981 led to two crucial pieces of legislation that, for many queer people in Paris, resolved most of their concerns: the passage of anti-discrimination legislature in 1985, which prohibited discrimination based on sexual identity (phrased more broadly as "lifestyle"), and the *Pacte civil de solidarité* in 1999, which made civil unions for same-sex couples legal.[48] Instead, the new publications focused more on lifestyle – fashion, music, and culture. André Baudry, former leader of Arcadie, criticized *Le Gai Pied* for its inclusion of "excessive advertising," and described the younger generation of queer people as "frivolous, superficial, and shallow individuals."[49]

While the gay community of the 1980s was undoubtedly interested in appearances and so-called shallow pursuits, rather than criticizing this as a weakness or lack of character, this was the natural extension of the growing relationship between the queer community and consumerism. The Marais came to be known for a distinctive style held by those who frequented the neighborhood, and a sense of conformity was shared amongst these individuals.[50] Conformity carries a negative connotation, but in this instance, it represents a melding of the assimilationist views of the post-Second World War generation with the radical attitude of the 1970s. The clear look of gay men who frequented the Marais was a way of announcing their membership in this community and identifying and associating other individuals who were part of it as well.

---

[47] Gunther, "Building a More Stately Closet," 337.
[48] Gunther, 340, 342.
[49] André Baudry as quoted in Gai Pied, reproduced by Scott Gunther, "Building a More Stately Closet," 335.
[50] Gunther, 333.

The fact that the Marais style was one predicated on wealth (one's ability to purchase the right clothes or go out to bars and clubs) demonstrates the deep ties that the Marais' gay community had to the consumption of leisure and luxury goods. While presenting a distinctive style that identified them as a member of the gay community, the Marais regulars of the 1980s and beyond no longer attempted to blend in with heteronormative society, echoing the generation before. However, their mostly conservative, well-groomed appearance, and the middle- or upper-class standing it took to achieve it, aligned more with the respectability goals of the Arcadie generation. Using consumer habits as a way of both standing out and blending in was a key aspect of the Marais' gay community at the end of the twentieth century.

Le Gai Pied

Before the emergence of public cinemas, porn magazines and other such publications were a way to "connect and find one another," in a community that did not yet have a geographic home.[51] Queer publications also helped foster a sense of community among gay men in Paris by establishing a specific style of dress and appearance. Studies on queer consumer behavior have shown that clothing serves as a "marker and non-verbal means of communication" to indicate one's membership of the

[51] David K. Johnson argues that in the United States during the twentieth-century, physique magazines and other sexually-driven publications allowed for a sort of pen-pal community for gay men seeking one another. This argument has not been studied in depth about French pornography and gay publications, but I argue that the concept of community through shared reading habits is applicable to the Parisian queer community. David K. Johnson, *Buying Gay: How Physique Entrepreneurs Sparked a Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019): 233.

[gay] culture and distance themselves from mainstream culture."[52] Visual markers such as shared fashion styles create "acceptance and social integration" into a particular group.[53] In the years prior to the development of the Marais and other spaces with a specifically queer identity, these visual markers helped to establish a sense of community among Paris' gay men, and magazines such as *Le Gai Pied* shared these styles and markers more widely.

In the summer of 1982, newly formed magazine *Le Gai Pied* released a special summer guide to gay life in Paris. This issue included news articles relevant to the community, such as an article about the previous year's "*Marche National des Homosexuels et des Lesbiennes*," the first such parade in the city. The article states, "If Paris was not built in a day, the field of our desires has profoundly evolved in just a few years," and announces that 1982's pride march will mark an even bigger celebration, ending with the optimistic question, "Paris: a gay metropole?"[54] This hope for the future of a gay Paris is borne out throughout the summer guide, which features a comprehensive listing of the best restaurants, bars, porn cinemas, saunas, and other social spaces for gay men to patronize, organized by neighborhoods throughout the city.

Places such as the Club Vidéo Gay are endorsed by the magazine for their discretion, noting that one can provide a pseudonym when checking in, suggesting that

---

[52] Kerstin Braun, Thomas Cleff, and Nadine Walter, "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy: Is lesbian consumers' fashion shopping behaviour similar to gay's? A comparative study of lesbian fashion consumption behaviour in Germany," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 19, no. 4 (2015): 447.
[53] Braun, Cleff, and Walter, "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy," 448.
[54] Translation is my own. Original text: "Si Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour, le champ de nos désirs y a profondément évolué en quelques années… Paris: une metropole *gay*?" Claude Lejeune, "Si Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour…," *Gai Pied Guide de Paris* (1982), 7.

the possibility of privacy and protection is important to the magazine's readers and letting them know which establishments are trustworthy in this regard.[55] This issue features a list of recommended health clinics and doctors, as well as a classifieds section of recommended repair shops and artisans, ranging from mechanics to plumbers to hair stylists. These tradesmen are referred to mostly by their first name, such as Claude and Daniel the electricians, or Alain the plumber.[56] The inclusion of these lists is important not only because they inform the public of tradesmen and specialists who will likely be safe to hire, but also because they form a network of queer-owned businesses being supported by queer customers.

Of the fourteen paid advertisements in this issue of *Le Gai Pied*, all of them promote businesses tied to consumerism – bookstores, video shops, sex shops, saunas, and bars. A few observations can be made about the image of gay men portrayed within these advertisements and the photos included in the magazine articles. The men featured are all white, except for one dark-skinned man on rollerskates, and the men featured are mostly, though not exclusively, young. A variety of styles are represented, from a more scruffy, leather-clad man with a beard, to clean-shaven, cherubic young men, but all the men featured are slender and muscular. A clear example of the style being put forth is seen in an advertisement for King Sauna. The ad pronounces that admissions costs fifty francs, unless the customer is under age twenty-five – then their admission is only thirty francs.[57] The advertisement features a cartoon of a nearly-nude young man with defined muscles, a clean face, and styled hair. While

[55] *Gai Pied Guide de Paris* (1982), 29.
[56] *Gai Pied Guide de Paris* (1982), 34.
[57] *Gai Pied Guide de Paris* (1982), 11.

that image features a cartoon, this ideal is reflected by real people in advertisements for International Estetic Men clothing store, and in editorial photos promoting pools and parks throughout the city.[58]

By the July 13, 1984 issue of *Le Gai Pied*, the scope of content the magazine reported on expanded greatly, including articles about trends in the Italian gay community (camping was the hot trend that summer), news reports of a clash between police and sauna customers in Argentina, and a multi-page spread about queer life in Hungary and challenges queer people faced against their government.[59] The focus was not strictly Paris-centric, but seemed to situate Parisian gay culture amongst a larger global gay community with which it shared interests and hobbies, as well as a shared struggle for safety and legal recognition.

The advertising section also expanded, with thirty-seven advertisements included in this issue, when it was not much longer than the 1982 special edition. All of the advertisements included still promoted some sort of leisure or hospitality industry product or service, and now included many ads for businesses that arranged *"rencontres,"* or meet-ups. These ads are plain and discreet, not necessarily suggesting anything sexual in nature, but for the choice of words in one ad: "*Réseau homo excitant: une rencontre, 15h -23h*."[60] The word "*excitant*" in French means arousing or stimulating, not simply "exciting" as its English cognate would suggest. The ad translates to, "Arousing homo network: a meeting, 3:00pm-11:00pm," which takes on a

[58] *Gai Pied Guide de Paris* (1982), 34, 15, 35, respectively.
[59] *Le Gai Pied*, July 13, 1984, 5-6, 23-31.
[60] *Le Gai Pied*, July 13, 1984, 9.

decidedly more suggestive tone than the otherwise non-descript black and white ad implies.[61]

The appearance of the men featured in advertisements and articles in the 1984 issue continue *Le Gai Pied*'s promotion of a predominantly white, young, physically attractive clientele. One photo displayed amidst an otherwise unremarkable list of housing classifieds features a nude, tanned, muscular man flexing his arms to display his muscles and prominent veins in his arms. Another photo enjoys a full-page spread, featuring a lithe young man standing shirtless and barefoot in a field, holding a length of rope, his toned abs the focal point.[62]

The year 1984 was also the year that the HIV/AIDS crisis came to the forefront of French society and politics. In a September 1984 issue of *Le Gai Pied* Claude Lejeune, president of the l'Association des médecins gay (Association of Gay Doctors) and contributor to the magazine, declared the existence of AIDS to the magazine's readers. The magazine even included a complimentary condom in one of its November issues.[63] By the end of 1986, the impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis was apparent throughout *Le Gai Pied*. Although the December 19, 1986, issue does not contain any articles explicitly discussing AIDS, there are new types of advertisements featured than before. This issue contains an ad for condoms, advertising the multiple textures and colors available, mixed in amongst the usual ads for saunas, "rencontres," and nightclubs.[64]

---

[61] Translation is my own.
[62] *Le Gai Pied*, July 13, 1984, 45, 57, respectively.
[63] Martel, *The Pink and the Black,* 368-9.
[64] *Le Gai Pied*, December 19, 1986, 50.

Conclusion

Economic forces have long shaped the queer community in Paris, even before it was possible to identify any sort of unified community. The post-Second World War publishing industry allowed queer people to come together through activist organizations and magazines, which led to a boom in the pornography industry that further promoted the interests and tastes of queer individuals. By the 1980s, consumerism was nearly a prerequisite for participation in the Marais gay scene. Bookstores such as Les Mots à La Bouche and nightclubs such as Le Village were accessible to people from all over the greater Paris area, thanks to the extension of the *Réseau Express Régional* (RER) train system which connected Paris to its suburbs more easily. Anyone who had the capital to spend their money at such establishments and to dress in the popular fashions of the community could do so. In the 1990s, for example, the Paris-based queer magazine *Têtu* encouraged a culture of queerness based on performative consumption of luxury products.[65]

The development of a consumer-focused queer community that centered around consumption and economic participation allowed for its growth, but also attracted the attention of shrewd corporations who sought to share in the popularity of the Marais and its regulars' willingness to spend. While the nudging out of independent businesses in favor of corporations was not the inevitable outcome, one can see the appeal of a neighborhood with an already well-established clientele who have money and the desire to spend it. Large corporations have more legal and economic power to shift the tides of

[65] Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 345.

the area in their favor, for example, by dictating astronomical rent increases that independent businesses, no matter how successful, simply cannot compete with.

In the next chapter, I will discuss another way in which corporations interacted with the Parisian gay community: by incorporating queer imagery into national advertising schemes. Just as the Marais was previously filled with businesses operated by queer people for queer customers, only to be priced out by corporations a few decades later, queer representation in advertising experienced a similar shift. Magazines like *Le Gai Pied*, discussed above, were published by queer people for a queer audience. There was a level of self-awareness in the way that these publishers chose to depict themselves and their community for each other. In the 2010s, however, corporations began to include homosexual individuals in their advertisements, depicting them in ways that were no longer dictated by queer people themselves. Through these economic power shifts, the Parisian gay community's possibility for self-determination – in the ownership and patronship of businesses, to the representation in media – has shifted into the hands of the corporate world.

Chapter 3: Representations of Pride in Advertising

In this chapter, I will analyze the emergence of queer-centric imagery in advertisements and media in France in the early 2000s. Through this analysis, I hope to better understand what greater corporate representation of queer people means for the queer community itself. The co-opting of queer imagery by corporations can be seen as a cynical business decision aimed at the goal of increasing profits by targeting a demographic perceived as wealthy, a sort of virtue signaling that the company is progressive and inclusive. Alternatively, this inclusion of queer imagery can be seen as representative of greater acceptance of queer people into French society more broadly. In 2021, French society is still in a sort of reckoning phase with the full integration of queer people into public life in a way that is truly public – seen by other people who are not necessarily queer themselves, rather than insulated like the queer community of the late twentieth century discussed in Chapter 2. The inclusion of queer people into French advertising seems to have had a positive impact on acceptance of queer people by normalizing their presence, but in doing so has shifted the power to self-consciously create their own image from the queer community itself to the broader trends of the advertising world.

The Marais community of the 1980s and 1990s was relatively closed, creating an image of itself that both fostered a sense of connection and served to keep out those who did not conform to it. Although parts of this identity were shaped by external

contexts and societal pressures, other parts were nonetheless shaped by its own members. When corporations in the 2010s and beyond began to shape the public image of queer people and control how they are presented to society as a whole, this placed the control over presentations of queer identity in the corporations' hands rather than queer people's own hands. In the previous chapter, I analyzed representations of the gay male Marais community in Paris in the 1980s and 1990s, and how this group crafted a clear identity for themselves through shared styles, activities, and public spaces. In this chapter, I will move into the twenty-first century to examine how corporations have interpreted the gay male identity and represented it in advertisements.

For this analysis, I have selected print and television advertisements from France with two main criteria: 1) it is an advertisement for a Pride-themed event, such as a Pride parade, or 2) it is a general advertisement (not for a Pride event) that contains queer-centric imagery or language. These advertisements were distributed roughly from 2010 to 2020 in France, building upon the consumerism-oriented gay community that developed in the 1980s and 1990s. These sources support my larger argument about queer self-determination in Paris by demonstrating the way that French corporations have co-opted queer imagery and language in order to align themselves with the Pride movement. Through my analysis of these sources I hope to gain an understanding of what motivates corporations to use such imagery, and how this imagery is perceived both by queer individuals and heteronormative individuals.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the culture of gay men in Paris became symbolic of wealth and leisure, beginning in the 1970s through the depictions of gay men in queer

magazines, and solidifying in the 1980s with the emergence of a queer-centric commercial district in Paris' Marais neighborhood. The Marais as a neighborhood became synonymous with a specific lifestyle that included frequenting nightclubs and bars, as well as maintaining one's appearance in current and trendy styles, all of which required the liquid capital to spend on these pursuits. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, corporations built upon the financial success of an insular queer business community by incorporating images of queer people or symbols of the queer community into their own marketing schemes. The relationship between queerness and consumerism in the 1980s and 1990s was relatively autonomous, in that businesses or publications catering to a queer market were in fact owned or operated by queer people themselves. These were products by queer people for queer people, and depictions of queer people determined by queer people. By the 2010s, however, the market for queer products was no longer so self-contained.

The following analysis of queer imagery in French advertisements reveals much about the way corporations view their relationship with queer culture. The language of inclusivity takes an almost paternalistic tone, offering acceptance and protection to people who choose their products and services over those of other companies, or by aligning their corporate image with non-profits offering HIV/AIDS resources. French corporations have positioned themselves as something that queer people need in order to thrive and prosper within society. The underlying statement seems to be, "*That* company may not welcome you but *our* company does," beckoning a queer community that is dependent on economic participation for a sense of shared or mutual identity.

Analysis of Consumer Responses

Several research studies have been conducted on consumer responses to seeing LGBT people represented in advertising. None of these have focused strictly on the French response, but rather focus on consumers from the United States, Germany, or a mix of European and North American countries. While acknowledging that there are many differentiating factors between French consumers and other Western consumers, the findings of these studies will serve as the basis for my understanding of how both heterosexual people and homosexual people respond to these advertisements. These studies demonstrate consumer reactions in terms of the consumer's likelihood of purchasing the advertised product or service as a result of the advertisement they viewed. These studies also demonstrate the decision-making process that corporations go through when deciding what type of individuals to represent in their advertisements, and why they may or may not choose to include queer imagery.

The first and most influential of these studies is Martin Eisend and Erik Hermann's 2019 study, "Consumer Responses to Homosexual Imagery in Advertising: A Meta-Analysis," in which the authors synthesized the conclusions of over 8,000 different academic works on this subject.[66] They discovered that overall, heterosexual consumers tended to have a neutral or positive response to homosexual imagery, and homosexual consumers tended to have a positive response to homosexual imagery. Heterosexual consumers preferred to see subtle or implied instances of homosexuality,

[66] Martin Eisend and Erik Hermann, "Consumer Responses to Homosexual Imagery in Advertising: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Advertising* 48, no. 4, 2019.

while homosexual consumers preferred to see more explicit statements. Many corporations have been hesitant to include more diverse imagery in their advertising, for fear of alienating certain segments of their market, but Eisend and Hermann suggested that corporations would actually see a positive response if they included more diverse imagery, and offered suggestions on how to do so effectively.[67] In the context of this chapter, this study suggests that corporations do have a vested financial interest in incorporating queer imagery into their advertisements. This inclusion is not solely based on philanthropic or idealistic interests of the company, but is rather a data-driven response to capture a significant demographic.

Kerstin Braun, Thomas Cleff, and Nadine Walter's 2015 study, "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy: Is lesbian consumers' fashion shopping behaviour similar to gay's? A comparative study of lesbian fashion consumption behaviour in Germany," provides key insights into the advertising industry's perceptions of queer people. In particular they dissect the stereotype of gay men as being affluent and interested in spending their money on leisure or luxury pursuits. Referring to the "affluence myth," that gay men earn more than heterosexual men, that has pervaded advertising culture since the 1990s, this study finds that homosexual men tend to actually earn less than their heterosexual counterparts, but express a greater "willing[ness] to spend money than non-gays on premium products such as travel, phone, books, music, film and theatre, beverages, and clothes."[68] As discussed in Chapter 2, personal style played an important role in the development of a cohesive identity for gay men in the Marais in the

[67] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 396.
[68] Braun, Cleff, and Walter, "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy," 448.

1980s onward. Braun, Cleff, and Walter argue that it is this effort to fit in with a certain community and signify their belonging that influences gay men's buying habits, rather than a more cynical assumption that they are inherently shallow or image-obsessed.[69] This is an important way of understanding why queer people spend (or don't) the way they do, and for critiquing the ways corporations have attempted to appeal to them.

Lastly, Gillian W. Oakenfull's 2013 study, "What Matters: Factors Influencing Gay Consumers' Evaluations of 'Gay-Friendly' Corporate Activities," focuses predominantly on the consumer habits of lesbian women, but still provides some helpful insights. Oakenfull found similar results to the previously mentioned studies in terms of the impact of queer imagery in advertisements on homosexual consumers.[70] However, Oakenfull also found that homosexual consumers were concerned with the internal culture of the corporations they patronized, such as whether the company offered benefits to domestic partners or participated in "social visibility" efforts for the LGBT community.[71] This conclusion is in line with many of the criticisms launched by queer people against corporations that promote queer identity in their advertising, but have different standards within their internal corporate culture, as discussed later in this chapter.

---

[69] Braun, Cleff, and Walter, "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy," 449.
[70] Gillian W. Oakenfull, "What Matters: Factors Influencing Gay Consumers' Evaluations of 'Gay-Friendly' Corporate Activities," *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 32 (2013): 80.
[71] Oakenfull, "Factors Influencing Gay Consumers," 82-3.

Advertisements for Pride-Themed Events

La Marche des Fiertés is the premier queer event in France and arguably sets the tone for queer culture throughout the nation. Held every summer in Paris officially since 1981, although other events were held previously, this event attracts over half a million attendees and is sponsored by over ninety organizations (both for- and non-profit).[72] With the sheer amount of participation and influence that this event has, large corporations have sought to align themselves with this movement, acting as corporate sponsors for the event and subsequently having their logos and products displayed throughout the parade. While the event organizers state that the *Marche des Fiertés* is strictly operated by volunteers and is "non-lucrative," it is necessary for the event to take on corporate sponsorship to support the large amount of infrastructure, advertising, and safety measures inherent in a project of this scope .[73] Forward-thinking corporations would want to align themselves with a movement perceived as progressive, and which may benefit their long-term financial success if they are able to capture profits from the queer community. It is also no surprise that the types of corporations aligning themselves openly with the queer community in France are those associated with leisure and hospitality, as French queer identity has been associated with these concepts since the 1980s.[74]

[72] "La Marche des Fiertés de Paris," Inter-LGBT, 2021, http://www.inter-lgbt.org/marche-des-fiertes/.
[73] "La Marche des Fiertés de Paris," Inter-LGBT.
[74] Eisend and Hermann's 2019 analysis of consumer reactions to homosexual imagery in advertising corroborates the perception that gay men in particular are viewed in Western cultures as having "lavish and hedonistic lifestyles and consumption behaviors," based on their review of over 8,000 academic studies. Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 395.

Corporate sponsorship is readily apparent in the fliers promoting the Marche and in photos taken at the event since 2018. The fliers list all the corporate sponsors of each event to varying degrees of prominence. Primary placement is given to the logos of managing organizations such as Inter-LGBT, which has been the official organizer of the Marche since 1999.[75] Alongside their logo are those of the official city of Paris and the Ile-de-France region, as well as HIV/AIDS support groups and other activist organizations, including *Association Solidarité Sida, Equipe Nationale d'Intervention en Prévention et Santé*, and the International Life Saving Federation, to name a few. The influence of private corporations is present nonetheless, with logos of major companies such as AirFrance airlines and MasterCard credit card company interspersed among those of the non-profit organizations.

Pride events such as *La Marche des Fiertés* are organized through a coalition of non-profit organizations and operated by volunteers. The events themselves do not charge admission or collect a profit. They are reliant upon the donations from corporate sponsors to help provide the materials necessary for an event that garners up to 600,000 participants annually. There is a mutual dependency between Pride events and corporate sponsorship, but the power is not equal between the two parties. Corporations count on the promotion their products receive through their sponsorship of these events, and are likely to recoup the money they donated quite easily and turn a profit. Pride events, on the other hand, are unable to function effectively without these donations, making them dependent on the support of private corporations. There is not an equal balance of power between the two sides.

[75] "La Marche des Fiertés de Paris," Inter-LGBT.

Airline company AirFrance was one of the corporate sponsors for the 2018 *Marche des Fiertés*, and provided branded photo frames for parade attendees to pose with. This is a fun activity for parade-goers to participate in, but also serves as promotion for the company as well. Every person who snaps a photo with the AirFrance frame and then shares it to their social media, for example, has just provided advertising for AirFrance at no additional cost to the company itself. Furthermore, it serves as positive public relations for the company by demonstrating their support of the queer rights cause and their alignment with a progressive movement. This creates a perception of the company that may work in their favor, causing consumers to choose AirFrance over competitors due to their shared values or a feeling that one's identity would be welcomed and safe with this company. Eisend and Hermann found that homosexual audiences responded favorably to advertisements which portrayed homosexual subjects, as well as a sense that greater representation of similar identities reflected increased "societal support and… appreciation."[76]

The proximity of these different types of logos on the Marche event fliers is a subtle, but nonetheless clear, signifier. It suggests to the viewer that the city of Paris and indeed the larger region surrounding the capital support this event, and so do these corporations. Ergo, these corporations are on the same side as the government, implying a sort of correctness and officialness to these corporations. Similarly, the placement of corporate logos near those of activist organizations implies that these companies also sponsor or assist those organizations. For example, the placement of the AirFrance logo alongside the ACT UP-Paris logo implies that AirFrance is affiliated

[76] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 383.

with the organization, an activist group that has worked since 1989 to bring awareness to the HIV/AIDS crisis and promote safer sex practices, as well as taking up other political causes on behalf of the LGBT community,[77] when in fact there may be no correlation at all.

The side-by-side appearance of brands with non-profits promotes a positive impression of these companies to both homosexual and heterosexual consumers. Beginning in the late 2010s heterosexual audiences also tended to view such advertisements more favorably. While previous analysis had feared that heterosexual audiences would react negatively to queer imagery in advertising, more recently heterosexual audiences have had either a neutral response or a positive response to these advertisements, resulting in greater "persuasion" by the advertisement (likelihood to purchase the product or service).[78] This may be attributed to the shifting cultural norms that have allowed greater acceptance of queer people in mainstream society, as well as a heteronormative "appreciation of diversity in advertising imagery."[79]

There is also a class element to this type of promotion. If AirFrance is to be perceived as the unofficial queer airline, there is a certain status associated with those who are able to fly with them. AirFrance is a major airline that may be more expensive than other air travel options, such as a budget airline, but its positive connection with the queer community may make many people willing to spend extra money to support a company whose views and priorities align with their own. According to one study of consumer buying habits, eighty percent of homosexual individuals stated that they were

[77] McCaffrey, *The Gay Republic*, 120.
[78] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 394.
[79] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 395.

more likely to purchase a product based on whether the company was “gay-friendly” or not.[80] Patronizing a brand that is gay-friendly versus one that is not may have an impact on how an individual is perceived by their peers; as Braun, Cleff, and Walter note, homosexual individuals tend to use their buying powers to support or boycott brands based on the brand’s gay-friendliness. Patronizing an anti-gay brand can mark an individual as anti-gay or as not fitting in with the queer community, for which, the authors note, “markers” such as brand loyalty is extremely important in forming a sense of belonging.[81] However, this type of conformity may not be accessible to all individuals, given the costs involved. An individual may not be able to purchase tickets from AirFrance due to their cost, and instead patronize another brand that is not perceived as gay-friendly; this should not be a reflection on the individual’s loyalty or sense of belonging, but rather as a personal economic decision.

AirFrance’s sponsorship of the *Marche* also draws attention to the sometimes contradictory nature of corporate endorsements. AirFrance drew criticism from an organization called *Gouines Contre Les Déportations* (Dykes Against Deportations) at the 2019 *Marche* due to the airline’s connection with the deportation of immigrants from France and its perceived association with anti-immigration legislature. This group of lesbian women protested AirFrance’s sponsorship of the event by climbing atop the company’s parade float and delivering a speech against their involvement in this issue. According to a manifesto by these protestors, AirFrance has “created a progressive image for themselves enveloped in a rainbow flag, whilst actively participating in the

[80] Braun, Cleff, and Walter, “Rich, Lavish, and Trendy,” 448.
[81] Braun, Cleff, and Walter, “Rich, Lavish, and Trendy,” 449.

deportation of migrants to their deaths."[82] It is difficult to take seriously the efforts of a corporation promoting equality and tolerance in one respect, while they are simultaneously work against the rights of another group of people. In recent years, the Paris Pride parade has aligned itself more vocally on the side of racial and immigrant justice, even drawing parade organizers Inter-LGBT under criticism for their continued allowance of sponsorship from companies with policies in opposition to those of the movement.[83]

The official flyer advertising the 2019 *Marche des Fiertés* itself also bears the logos of its corporate sponsors. While most of the logos displayed on the poster (Figure 2) are those of pro-LGBT charities and support services, such as the HIV and AIDS awareness group Association *Solidarité Sida*, there are also corporations such as MasterCard which receive top billing. MasterCard is one of the largest providers of credit and debit cards in the world, and so sponsorship by a credit card company again reinforces the idea that queerness is associated with consumerism and luxury. Whether one has extra money readily available on their debit card to spend as they wish, or whether they choose to charge their purchases on a credit card for future payment, this is a subtle encouragement for Pride parade-goers to part with their money. Similar to the issues raised by AirFrance's promotion at the *Marche des Fiertés*, MasterCard is not

---

[82] Translation is my own. Original text: "'Chaque jour, l'État français déporte de force celles et ceux qui n'ont pas les bons papiers ou le bon visa", dénonçaient-elles dans un communiqué. Selon elles, Air France vient "se refaire une image progressiste en s'enveloppant d'un drapeau arc-en-ciel" alors que l'entreprise "participe activement à la déportation des migrant.e.s vers la mort.'" As quoted by Esther Degbe, "À la Gay Pride 2019 de Paris, des manifestantes bloquent le char d'Air France en soutien aux migrants," Huffington Post June 29, 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/entry/a-la-gay-pride-2019-de-paris-des-manifestants-bloquent-le-char-dair-france-en-soutien-aux-migrants_fr_5d1784c4e4b082e55369fafd.

[83] Arno Pedram, "At Pride march in Paris, activists demand racial justice too," Washington Post, July 4, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/at-pride-march-in-paris-activists-demand-racial-justice-too/2020/07/04/88f419a6-bdeb-11ea-97c1-6cf116ffe26c_story.html.

a brand that may be available to all queer people due to challenges in obtaining a bank account or being approved for credit. Even more broadly, the implication that one must have extra money for personal spending reinforces the idea that to be gay in France is to be wealthy.

Advertisements for Non-Pride-Themed Products

The second category of advertisements under analysis are those by private corporations that incorporate pride-themed imagery, but which are not advertising a specifically queer product or event. It is difficult not to take a cynical viewpoint toward these sources, as it seems that there is little motivation behind these marketing decisions other than the desire for corporations to seem progressive and earn the business of queer people and people who support progressive movements. Disneyland Paris and McDonald's are two corporations who have presented television commercials in France containing queer messaging.[84]

For at least a decade, non-queer corporations – that is, corporations that are not explicitly directed toward a queer market – have included queer imagery in their advertisements. McDonald's presented a television commercial in France in 2010 that featured a young man sitting in a booth at the restaurant while speaking on his cell phone and looking at his class photo from his all-male school. To the person on the phone, he states that he is looking at him in the photo and that he misses him, implying

[84] In this section, I am not looking at advertisements that simply contain a same-sex couple without commenting on them. I am looking specifically at advertisements that contain some sort of pro-gay rights slogan.

that they are in a romantic relationship with one another. The boy's father comes to the table as he ends the phone call, and his father makes a few comments about how his son would get all the girls in his school, if only the school wasn't boys only. The commercial ends with the slogan, "*Venez comme vous êtes*," or, "Come as you are."

There are conflicting messages in this brief advertisement. Upon initial viewing, this commercial seems to offer a sympathetic welcome to individuals regardless of their sexuality, implying that McDonald's is a safe space free from judgment. The father's ignorance about his son's sexuality, and apparent relationship with his classmate, complicates this message, however, particularly given that the son simply smiles and does not correct his father's assumptions. Can the son truly come as he is, if he is unable to be his true self with his father? The commercial, upon further analysis, seems to be saying that McDonald's is welcoming to all individuals as long as they remain closeted or do not cause a spectacle with their sexuality – an echo of the Arcadie movement's goals fifty years prior that queer people should assimilate and not draw attention to themselves.

This bizarre contradiction seems to support the more cynical interpretation of the corporate inclusion of queer imagery – that a company may use queer people in its marketing to appear inclusive, while actually doing little to truly support the cause. Rather than showing an empowering message of this young man using McDonald's as a comforting, familiar place that he enjoys with his father where he could feel secure to come out about his sexuality, they have chosen to use this young man as more of a prop. This suggests an entirely different interaction between queer people and

consumer space, by showing McDonald's as a place where one can blend in with their heteronormative surroundings by choosing to eat there.

Following the release of this commercial, several American gay rights groups spoke out against it, accusing McDonald's of hypocrisy for engaging in openly homophobic actions in the United States while trying to appear supportive in France. Justin Nelson, president of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, spoke out against McDonald's for distancing themselves from the gay community in the United States by pulling their sponsorship of his organization and others, at the same time as including queer individuals and slogans in their campaigns abroad.[85] While McDonald's does not appear to have ever publicly sponsored any queer organizations or events in France, their international impact on this community tarnishes this commercial and what it may have sought to do, although the intended message of this commercial remains ambiguous.[86]

This controversy points to the fraught nature of corporate sponsorship for the queer community, as these decisions to include certain imagery or to support certain organizations are not made in a vacuum. Eisend and Hermann demonstrate that "implicit" homosexual imagery in advertising, such as the McDonald's commercial, tends to resonate better with a mixed audience of both hetero- and homosexual consumers. Research has shown that the more "explicit" (in terms of the obviousness of the characters' queerness) the queer imagery is, the more likely heterosexual viewers are

[85] Alice Gomstyn, "Gay Group: Don't Trust McDonald's Commercial," *ABC News*, June 21, 2010, https://abcnews.go.com/Business/mcdonalds-commercial-france-prompts-charges-hypocrisy-us-gay/story?id=10975302.
[86] At the time of this writing, there do not appear to be any published responses to this commercial in France.

to respond negatively to the brand or product being advertised.[87] While more implicit imagery may be more successful in capturing the support of heterosexual audiences, however, there is research that suggests that the closeted nature of such imagery is disenfranchising to queer audiences.[88] The question for corporations, then, is how to capture the support of queer audiences without alienating heterosexual audiences, and vice versa.

Disneyland Paris hosted its own Pride Day event in 2019, the first event of its kind officially sanctioned by the Disney Parks corporation, although unofficial "gay days" have taken place at the parks since the 1990s.[89] Although the 2020 event was cancelled due to Covid-19 quarantine restrictions in France, Disneyland Paris still gave a nod to its queer fanbase in a summer 2020 television commercial announcing the park's limited reopening following the lockdown. This commercial featured a chorus of male voices singing the classic Disney song, "Someday My Prince Will Come," traditionally performed by a female vocalist.[90] The original heteronormative version of this song, a woman singing about finding her (male) prince, is subverted by the male voices, implying the male singers' desire to find a same-sex partner.

While the commercial does not overtly reference the cancelled pride event, the timing of its release coincided with what would have been the event date, suggesting that this commercial was a conscious call to Disneyland Paris' queer customers to still

---

[87] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 384.
[88] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 384.
[89] Olivia Petter, "Disneyland Paris to Host First-Ever LGBT+ Event," *The Independent*, February 7, 2019. https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/disneyland-paris-lgbt-pride-event-magical-june-2019-a8767206.html
[90] Florian Ques, "Une version gay de « Un jour mon prince viendra » pour la réouverture de Disneyland Paris," *Têtu Magazine,* June 29, 2020. https://tetu.com/2020/06/29/disneyland-paris-pub-gay-friendly-reouverture/

purchase tickets to the park to visit despite the event's cancellation. With the leisure and hospitality industry suffering from loss of revenue as a result of Covid-19 closures, it is no surprise that Disneyland Paris would seek to reclaim some of profits lost by not hosting the pride event by reaching out to its queer consumer base.

The commercial ends with the slogan, "*La magie n'existe pas sans vous*," or, "The magic doesn't exist without you." This suggests that Disneyland views its queer guests as a valued part of their business, and acknowledges the disappointment of having to cancel that year's pride event. The tone and messaging of this commercial stands in contrast to that of the McDonald's commercial. While the Disneyland ad does not overtly show two men kissing, for example, or state in so many words that there are male voices singing about finding a male prince, it still implies a sense of welcome and inclusion for the queer community. As Eisend and Hermann discuss, this sort of "implicit" queer imagery is a safe approach for brands to take, as it has been shown not to alienate heterosexual viewers. However, their study shows that surprisingly this approach can have a negative impact on homosexual viewers, who may feel that implied queerness, versus explicit displays of queerness, does not accurately or fully represent their identity and instead takes them for granted.[91] The Disneyland Paris commercial does not subtly encourage its queer subjects to remain closeted or to be pretend to be anyone they are not, as in the McDonald's commercial, but it nonetheless avoids a direct representation of queer identity. The use of the term "magic" in the commercial suggests a feeling of respect for queer people, that their presence brings something unique and precious to Disneyland's culture, and French culture more

[91] Eisend and Hermann, "Consumer Responses," 384.

broadly, but this is still an approach that serves to sustain heterosexual comfort rather than a true sense of solidarity with queer French people.

Conclusion

I propose that aligning one's corporate brand with gay rights is seen as less risky in France for two reasons. First, France's strict sense of secularism makes French culture less dominated by religious objections to homosexuality. This kind of religious overreach into the corporate world is not common in France, although there have been cases such as the *Manif Pour Tous* movement in the 1990s which sought to bar same-sex marriages on religious grounds.[92] Second, the choice to include pro-gay rights imagery is a matter of race and class. Queer people in France are perceived to be wealthier, middle- and upper-class, and white, with significant spending money and a desire to partake in leisure culture.

Financial freedom and the possibility of corporate profit are the common component of all the advertisements discussed above. One must be in a stable financial situation to possess a high-end credit card, purchase flights and take vacation time, and buy theme park tickets. The association with these luxury items and queerness suggests that to be queer is also to be wealthy, which helps to explain the problem of the Marais neighborhood's corporate takeover in the previous chapter. Where the streets are lined with designer stores and rent prices are doubling and tripling regularly, many queer people in Paris are unable to afford to live in the "gayborhood," let alone

[92] Bruno Perreau, *Queer Theory*, 37.

retain their businesses and shopfronts in this area. These issues will surely be heightened even more following the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, as many businesses are forced to close as a result of lack of customers during the quarantines and lockdowns, and as many individuals suffer from financial insecurity from this issue as well. How, then, can one be queer in Paris if one is unable to participate in these displays of performance queer leisure?

The paternalistic adoption of queer imagery into the powerful French corporate language seems to offer a sense of protection to queer people. By incorporating queerness into the diverse commercial world, from fast food to credit cards to fashion, these corporations are taking the stance that queerness is acceptable and even welcomed. If state-sanctioned legal support for queer people hasn't been powerful enough to fully integrate them into French society, perhaps the persuasive power of dollar signs will be more successful, as companies can see the financial impact of incorporating more diverse imagery into their marketing campaigns and by reaching out to a wider audience of potential consumers to invite them to partake of their products. Paternalistic protection does not have to signify meaningless pandering, and just because a company stands to gain from this inclusion does not mean that it is inherently a cynical and selfish move on their part.

The question of whether corporate usage of queer imagery in advertising has had a positive or negative effect on Paris' queer community does not have a clear answer. Based on the findings of the consumer behavior studies presented above, corporations do benefit economically from incorporating more diverse representations into their advertising schemes, and this diversity resonates with individuals of all sexual

identities. This has undoubtedly contributed to greater acceptance and awareness of queer people overall in French society. However, the images of queer people being perpetuated into mainstream society are no longer controlled by the individuals themselves. In the 1980s and 1990s, the stereotype of the affluent, attractive gay male in the Marais was one that gay magazines and advertisers actively promoted. In the 2000s, those stereotypes are being upheld by corporations that are not a part of the gay community. This does not necessarily allow for the continued evolution of Parisian queer people's sense of identity, as shifts in style or in important causes may not be reflected in heteronormative advertising. The image of the Parisian gay man is frozen in time through corporate advertising, particularly if the reality of gay self-identity shifts in ways that are less palatable or marketable to a broad audience.

Conclusion

Since at least the 1980s, the Paris gay community has been associated with consumerism in some form or another. From the queer business owners of the Marais in the 1980s, to the queer magazine industry with its dozens of advertisements of queer businesses in each issue, to the formation of a group identity based on shared styles and activities, participation in the French economy has been a defining feature of queer life in Paris, particularly for gay men. This has had positive benefits in terms of successes for queer business owners and the community-building through shared geographic space, but has also resulted in the 2010s with several shifts in the balance of control over queer space and image.

The popularity of the Marais as a gay destination attracted the attention of major businesses who opened storefronts in the neighborhood, paying higher rent prices than independent business owners could afford, and resulting in the replacement of many small businesses by name brands. By 2020, long-time Marais fixtures such as Les Mots à La Bouche bookstore could no longer afford to remain in the neighborhood. The Marais has become “gaytrified,” made popular through the efforts of the gay community but then gentrified beyond their continued enjoyment of the area.

Similarly, corporations that now incorporate queer imagery into their advertising in France have enjoyed positive responses from both homosexual and heterosexual customers. However, queer people are no longer entirely in control of how they are

portrayed in advertising as they were in the late twentieth century when they advertised queer businesses among other queer people. The insulated Marais community was perhaps not sustainable, nor desirable, forever, but it did allow for a certain self-determination amongst Parisian gay men.

The greater incorporation of queer people into mainstream advertising and media seems to have been positive overall for French perceptions of queer people in general, but corporations have come under criticism for promoting a sense of equality in their commercials while making decisions behind closed doors that counter these efforts. With the control over representations of queer people in advertising no longer in the hands of queer people themselves, corporations are perpetuating a stereotype of queer people, especially gay men, as shallow and self-absorbed, continuing earlier associations between gay men and consumerism. While gay men may themselves have perpetuated this image in the twentieth century through magazines and advertising, it is one thing to depict oneself in this way. It is quite another for the corporate advertising world to depict people in this way when their image is out of their own control. This does not allow adequate room for shifting interests and priorities for the queer community to be represented appropriately in advertising.

Bibliography

Published Primary Sources

Alderman, Liz. "'It's money that makes the laws': How gentrification is upending streets across Paris." *The Independent*, January 31, 2020. https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/paris-marais-district-gentrification-designer-store-takeover-a9306791.html.

Degbe, Esther. "À la Gay Pride 2019 de Paris, des manifestantes bloquent le char d'Air France en soutien aux migrants." *Huffington Post*, June 29, 2019. https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/entry/a-la-gay-pride-2019-de-paris-des-manifestants-bloquent-le-char-dair-france-en-soutien-aux-migrants_fr_5d1784c4e4b082e55369fafd.

Gomstyn, Alice. "Gay Group: Don't Trust McDonald's Commercial." *ABC News*, June 21, 2010. https://abcnews.go.com/Business/mcdonalds-commercial-france-prompts-charges-hypocrisy-us-gay/story?id=10975302.

Klug, Lisa. "As Parisian Jews leave traditional quarters, a new funky demographic coalesces." *The Times of Israel*, October 24, 2016. https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-parisian-jews-leave-traditional-quarters-a-new-funky-demographic-coalesces/.

Martella, Annabelle. "La librairie Les Mots à la bouche victime de l'embourgeoisement du Marais." *Libération*, November 19, 2019. https://next.liberation.fr/livres/2019/11/19/la-librairie-les-mots-a-la-bouche-victime-de-l-embourgeoisement-du-marais_1764339.

O'Sullivan, Feargus. "The 'gaytrification' effect: why gay neighbourhoods are being priced out." *The Guardian*, January 13, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jan/13/end-of-gaytrification-cities-lgbt-communities-gentrification-gay-villages.

Pedram, Arno. "At Pride march in Paris, activists demand racial justice too." *Washington Post*, July 4, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/at-pride-march-in-paris-activists-demand-racial-justice-too/2020/07/04/88f419a6-bdeb-11ea-97c1-6cf116ffe26c_story.html.

Petter, Olivia. "Disneyland Paris to Host First-Ever LGBT+ Event." *The Independent,* February 7, 2019. https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/disneyland-paris-lgbt-pride-event-magical-june-2019-a8767206.html.

Ques, Florian. “Une version gay de « Un jour mon prince viendra » pour la réouverture de Disneyland Paris.” *Têtu Magazine*, June 29, 2020. https://tetu.com/2020/06/29/disneyland-paris-pub-gay-friendly-reouverture/.

“France’s 40-point plan to tackle LGBT discrimination.” *The Local*, October 14, 2020. https://www.thelocal.fr/20201014/frances-40-point-plan-to-tackle-lgbt-discrimination.

“La Marche des Fiertés de Paris.” Inter-LGBT, 2021. http://www.inter-lgbt.org/marche-des-fiertes/.

“Les Mots à la bouche: temple des sexualités, de Proust à Nina Bouraoui.” *L’Humanité*, August 8, 2017. https://www.humanite.fr/les-mots-la-bouche-temple-des-sexualites-de-proust-nina-bouraoui-639977.

“Plan National d’Actions Pour L’Égalité des Droits, Contre La Haine et Les Discriminations Anti-LGBT+ 2020-2023.” Ministère chargé de l’Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, de la Diversité et de l’Égalité des chances. Paris, France, 2020. https://www.egalite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/dossiers/lutte-contre-les-discriminations/plan-national-dactions-pour-legalite-des-droits-contre-la-haine-et-les-discriminations-anti-lgbt-2020-2023.

“The History of the Jewish Community in Paris.” *Explore France*, June 11, 2013. https://us.france.fr/en/paris/article/history-jewish-community-paris.

Periodicals

Le Gai Pied Guide de Paris, Summer 1982.

Le Gai Pied, July 13, 1984.

Le Gai Pied, December 19, 1986.

Advertisements

“Le magie n’existe pas sans vous.” Disneyland Paris. France, 2020. Television advertisement.

“Marche des Fiertés.” LGBT+ de Paris Île-de-France. France, 2019. Printed advertisement.

"Venez comme vous êtes." McDonald's. France, 2010. Television advertisement.

Secondary Sources

Anchel, Robert. "The Early History of the Jewish Quarters in Paris." *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (1940): 45-60.

Braun, Kerstin, Thomas Cleff, and Nadine Walter. "Rich, Lavish, and Trendy: Is lesbian consumers' fashion shopping behaviour similar to gay's? A comparative study of lesbian fashion consumption behaviour in Germany." *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 19, no. 4 (2015): 445-466.

Callwood, Dan. "Anxiety and Desire in France's Gay Pornographic Film Boom, 1974-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 1 (2017): 26-52.

Eisend, Martin and Erik Hermann. "Consumer Responses to Homosexual Imagery in Advertising: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Advertising* 48, no. 4 (2019): 380-400.

Ghaziani, Amin. *There Goes The Gayborhood?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Giraud, Colin. "Gentrification in Paris: the elite versus the people?" Translated by Oliver Waine. *Metropolitics*, December 20, 2013. https://metropolitiques.eu/Paris-gentrifie-les-elites-contre.html.

Gunther, Scott. "Building a More Stately Closet: French Gay Movements since the Early 1980s." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 3 (2004): 326-347.

Jackson, Julian. *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics, and Morality in France From the Liberation to AIDS.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Jones, Colin. *Paris: The Biography of a City.* London: Penguin, 2004.

Johnson, David K. *Buying Gay: How Physique Entrepreneurs Sparked a Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

Mack, Mehammed Amadeus. *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.

Martel, Frédéric. *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France Since 1968*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

McCaffrey, Enda. *The Gay Republic: Sexuality, Citizenship, and Subversion in France*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.

Merrick, Jeffrey and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr. *Homosexuality in Modern France*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Gillian W. Oakenfull, “What Matters: Factors Influencing Gay Consumers’ Evaluations of ‘Gay-Friendly’ Corporate Activities,” *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 32 (2013): 79-89.

Peniston, William A. *Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth Century Paris.* New York: Harrington Park Press, 2004.

Perreau, Bruno. *Queer Theory: The French Response.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.

Provencher, Denis M. *Queer French: Globalization, Language, and Sexual Citizenship in France*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.

Ross, Andrew Israel. *Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century* Paris. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019.

Ross, Andrew Israel. “Sex in the Archives: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris,” *French Historical Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017): 267-290.

Shepard, Todd. *Sex, France, and Arab Men: 1962-1979*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.