

**When Cities Matter:
Comparing the LGBT Movement in Warsaw, Poland, and Buenos Aires, Argentina**

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THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Overview	1
B. Raising the questions: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaboration	5
C. Making the case for my cases	8
D. Data collection	13
E. A note on researcher positionality	16
2. THEORIZING THE CITY AS A SITE FOR NATIONAL LGBT PLACE- MAKING	21
A. Introduction	21
B. Territoriality and the global city	28
C. Abstract space and concrete space and why they matter	35
D. From abstract heteronormative space (nation), a concrete spatial intervention (LGBT place-making)	40
E. Conclusion	51
3. MULTIDIMENSIONAL WARSAW	53
A. Revisiting Legacies of the Past	53
B. Witamy w Warszawie / Welcome to Warsaw	60
C. Place-making as local specificity	65
D. What happens in Warsaw, does not stay in Warsaw (Warsaw as megaphone)	83
E. Incubator for civil society	84
F. Social movement formalization and institutionalization	93
G. Global Intersections, Injections, and Projections: Warsaw as Node, Importer, and Exporter in the Case of EuroPride 2010	108
I. Warsaw as node	111
II. Warsaw as importer	114
III. Warsaw as exporter	121
H. Conclusion	124
4. LIVED EXPERIENCE AND ISSUE FRAMING: WARSAW AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE NATIONAL AND THE GLOBAL	127
A. Introduction	127
B. Issue framing	130
C. Polish national identity and the rise of Catholic Church	141
D. Global movement as lived space and the LGBT political frame	148
E. Contesting symbols and framing issues	155
I. EU directives and human rights discourse	157
II. “Gender/Dzender”	159
III. Flags: technicolor and/or two-tone	163
F. Conclusion	171

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
5. ACTIVISM IN BUENOS AIRES: SOWING THE SEEDS OF COLLABORATION ACROSS TIME AND SPACE	173
A. Introduction	173
B. The push for Equal Marriage	175
C. Forging human rights and building coalitions.....	182
D. Of detractors and supporters: LGBT as a politically legitimate force	189
E. “We import more than just ham”	198
F. Conclusion	209
6. FROM GENERATIVE SPACE TO GAYCATION DESTINATION.....	211
A. Introduction	211
B. Buenos Aires as a central social site	216
C. Buenos Aires as a collaborator/negotiator/mediator	225
D. Buenos Aires as a center of gay tourism.....	235
E. Conclusion.....	242
7. COMPARING JABLKA AND NARANJAS.....	244
A. Theme 1: The city as site for place-making	245
B. Theme 2: The city’s legitimacy (intra-movement relations).....	247
C. Theme 3: National response to movement strategies (movement legitimacy)	249
D. Conclusion	254
8. CONCLUSION.....	257
A. Recap.....	258
B. Conceptual implications	261
C. Directions for future research.....	263
REFERENCES	265
APPENDIX.....	275
VITA.....	276

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. Map of Polish cities and respective levels of homophobia.....	63
2. “Gay, Atheist, Feminist, Polish” EuroPride parade participant.....	80
3. EuroPride participant in traditional Polish folk costume.....	81
4. Parade sign: “Equality and human rights for all”	130
5. Protest sign: “1410: Victory over the 1st Union. 2010: the beginning of the end of Euro-Sodom”	131
6. Issue framing rubric.....	136
7. Rainbow flags and Polish flag.....	167
8. Heart-shaped Polish flag.....	168

SUMMARY

With a focus on the role global cities play in facilitating specific kinds of interactions, exchanges, and strategies for local activists engaged in a global social movement, I investigate how LGBT activists in Warsaw, Poland, and Buenos Aires, Argentina organize their efforts for national place-making via the city.

I examine four dimensions: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaborations, correlating with the following central subquestions: (1) What are the mechanisms through which activists connect to a larger global movement?; (2) How does cross-national collaboration influence local projects in strategy, form, or goal?; (3) conversely, how does local context influence the "cosmopolitan" aspirations of urban civil society activists?; and (4) does recognition by and collaboration with international actors empower activist claims at the national and local levels, or hinder their attempts at political influence?

Through ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with activists in both sites, I analyze these cities as simultaneously local, national, and global spaces and explore how each dimension has been useful to activists. I also look at the past significance of cities for the construction of national identity and how dominant interpretations and frames have either been of help to activists or a major obstacle.

SUMMARY (continued)

My findings reveal different approaches by local activists in two cities, and my comparative analysis enables me to study the independent value of the city. The role and importance of the city was quite nuanced depending on the goals and strategies pursued by activists. What is more, the role each city has occupied historically - both domestically (as a site of national place-making), and internationally (as a global node) - has also had repercussions for activists utilizing the city to make their claims.

Several themes arose from this comparative study. First, the role of the city for both place-making and activism proved to be vital in both sites, although with varying levels of legitimacy in terms of intra-movement relations. Second, in sharp contrast with Warsaw's role in Poland, in Argentina, Buenos Aires proved to be much less of an imposing force on the rest of the country, but rather a receptor for a much more wide-spread national sentiment. Third, while activists in both cities deployed similar tactics and language, the reception by mainstream society varied greatly, thereby highlighting the differences in movement legitimacy within each context. In this case, I cannot overstate the importance of history and the national imaginary on either normalizing movement frames or contesting them as outside impositions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

Although “transnational networks” and “global civil society” have become buzz phrases in popular media and scholarly communities, *how* these networks or societies are formed and how they can alter well-entrenched political practices, advance democratic rights locally, and challenge strict notions of territoriality, remains a largely understudied area in political science. My dissertation offers one of the first systematic studies of global civil society by exploring one of the most neglected rights groups in political studies: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT)¹ movements in Warsaw, Poland and Buenos Aires, Argentina. This dissertation seeks to unravel the complexities of contentious social movement activism in global cities, and the tensions that arise from global-local intersections.

Contemporary social science seeks to explore how people participate in a globalized world, how they envision their community and their place in it, as well as the role the state and institutions play in influencing inter/transnational arrangements by non-state actors. As global issues are being tackled at the local level by activists through what has been termed “glocalism”, the inverse is also true: the resolution of local issues is no longer confined to the local context. Civil society groups are increasingly reaching beyond their immediate geographic boundaries and acting in wider inter/transnational contexts for the purposes of effecting change on the ground across very diverse issue areas. Such forms of mobilization are hardly new, as organizations like

¹ *A Note on Terminology:* Throughout this dissertation, I use the acronym LGBT, sans other letters. The now-popular Q remains absent, because at the time of my research, activists didn’t explicitly address Queer identities with me. Other than the occasional discussions of Queer theorists over steaming mugs of coffee, the identifier wasn’t brought up. While I recognize connections and the significance of the term for movement activism - and know that many activists themselves have since adopted new identities - in an effort to stay true to my fieldwork observations, I leave it off the acronym (along with vowels A and I, for the same reasons). I cannot impose an importance to a concept not expressly shared by my informants. Nor can I impose identities on subjects that they themselves have not claimed.

The Catholic Church have always had a far-reaching scope, and internationalist groups (most notably the Communist Party) have also emphasized alliances across borders. The difference now, however, is the ability of smaller, marginalized, and less well-established organizations to undertake such long-distance strategies for achieving political and social transformations locally. Currently, actors are employing very diverse strategies for purposes of contention, including building inter/transnational networks even if their policy goals remain very locally oriented. At the heart of this, albeit beating quietly, lies the city: through its history and domestic and global placement, encouraging certain types of activist strategies and prioritizing professionalized connections and tactics.

Cities have been theorized as important nodes through which four globalizations - economic, cultural, political and social - are produced and reproduced (Sassen 2006). The key of my focus rests on the idea of the city as a constitutive force: as the primary and therefore fundamentally determining phenomenon of contemporary social existence (Foster, 8). I argue that a focus on the city as a constitutive force is needed in order to understand the mechanisms, collaboration, local context, and influence of these movements. Cities have been understood as important resources for the development of global civil society, as sites of hyperactivism, and as harbors for micro spaces of belonging that contrast with larger national exclusions. Immigrant and diasporic cultures, the visibility of LGBT culture, and women's movements are all firmly rooted in the urban landscape. While Keck and Sikkink and others (della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Mellucci 1989; Escobar and Alvarez 1992) have studied transnational networks, the role of the city (or the urban) as a central part of a politics of place has not been as extensively explored; on the rare occasion when it has (Ippolito-O'Donnell 2012), the subject of space has been relegated to mere

geography, with little analysis of the relationship between the urban and social movements². I posit that each city's particularities as simultaneously local, national and global sites are key to understanding the movements in Poland and Argentina, and their very mixed consequences. Together, all these levels point to the central role played by the city in a "politics of place" that has rarely been interrogated in the analyses of global social movement development, growth and transnational linkages.

This project employs the movement for LGBT rights in Warsaw, Poland and Buenos Aires, Argentina as a frame through which to observe the above-mentioned processes. These sites have been selected because they are both global cities and political centers, and as such, hold the promise of national place-making. In this way, they belong to a specific class of cities that are both state capitals and cosmopolitan hubs, whose transnational imbeddedness and local goings-on have the ability to affect domestic policy. In this way, they are more similar to cities like Paris and London than New York or Tel Aviv. While other cities in both countries may also be cosmopolitan (Gdańsk in Poland) or even more progressive (Córdoba in Argentina), the fact that they do not house national governing bodies limits their ability to influence policies beyond their city limits.

My two sites follow the general patterns of metropolises. Generally speaking, larger cities are characterized as more socially tolerant than non-city designations, and LGBT activists in these

² Ippolito-O'Donnell tries to take on a more dynamic approach to contentious social movements, but not only skirts around the issue of space, but goes so far as to conflate it with what she constantly refers to as "geography". As a result, she claims that "the urban" hasn't been explored (30), and instead subsumed into other social categories – as if the urban, spatially understood, could ever be detangled or sterilized from "indigenous, gender, environmental, and transnational movements". Her own (mis)understanding of urban issues is sorely limited to economics and poverty, with absolutely no discussion of intersectionality.

respective countries are much more politically active in these cities than in other provinces. While this holds true under intra-state comparisons, the Warsaw-Buenos Aires contrast is marked by the drastically more cosmopolitan quality and socially liberal political culture of the latter over that of its Polish counterpart. One would expect activism to play out in very different ways in these cities as a result. While the social, political and historical contexts of both countries differ, my research reveals that activists in these sites use the specific natures of their respective global cities to employ surprisingly similar methods for creating connections transnationally, but with very different domestic consequences.

While LGBT activists in these cities aim to, and may succeed in, bringing about local changes, they also create and utilize transnational linkages that connect their cities to global networks. The projects that LGBT groups undertake and the language that they adopt reflect the relationships they have formed with local and national institutions, transnational allies, and international bodies. Taking these sorts of dynamics seriously, then, goes a long way in bringing together and bridging the separate insights found in the literatures on global cities, social movements, identity politics, consolidated democracies, and comparative studies.

My research understands the city as a central player in activists' struggles for political inclusion at the national level. The combination of focus on city and LGBT movement serves as an ideal case for understanding how transnational networks are formed, particularly when the rights group's demands face considerable obstacles from mainstream society. My research explores the various roles each city plays in the context of the LGBT movement: its local significance for the

daily lives of activists and LGBT people; its national significance both politically and culturally; and its global significance, particularly how activists negotiate global and local tensions.

Raising the questions: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaboration

This project investigates the political and social implications and outcomes of local-global intersections by asking how activists create and utilize networks, and specifically what role the city plays in facilitating specific kinds of interactions and exchanges. To identify how local rights groups are organizing their efforts I answer the following questions, which highlight four distinct analytic concepts necessary for understanding the urban dynamic at play: (1) What are the *mechanisms* through which they connect to a larger global movement? (2) How does cross-national collaboration *influence* local projects in strategy, form, or goal; (3) conversely, how does local *context* influence the "cosmopolitan" aspirations of civil society activists; and (4) does recognition by and *collaboration* with international actors empower or hinder activist claims at the national and local levels or hinder their attempts at political influence.

Four themes frame my chapters, which all relate closely and even overlap with one another in terms of understanding activism in and through the city: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaborations. In practice, it is difficult to untangle where one stops and another begins, but the purpose of this taxonomy is intended to clarify the ways in which cities serve as constitutive forces. I explore how the city functions as the key mechanism for facilitating activists' access to networks, which then influence the kinds of projects in which those activists engage. Because this influence is mediated by the city, however, projects will be mitigated and shaped by the

urban context in which actors perform. Understanding this process puts me in a better position to evaluate the efficacy and outcomes of collaboration between global, national, and local actors.

Focusing on urban-centered activism allows me to examine the *mechanisms* through which activists connect to a larger movement: namely, the city itself, through the country-wide and cross-national networks it has allowed activists to foster. While the movement in each country is centralized, with the capital at the helm, each case prioritizes different networks: Warsaw activists value their partnerships with Western European allies for funding, their Southern and Eastern networks for the leadership role it allows them, and their national, albeit weaker, network for follow-through. Buenos Aires activists value their strong domestic network for the widespread support it has allowed them nationally, and Spain as their primary international collaborator for the political legacy and legitimacy it has provided by way of its own policy successes. In both cases, the relationship that the city has had – historically and culturally – with the nation and the international sphere determines the sort of networked resources available, and the kinds of transnational relationships they can further foster. Cities play a crucial role in determining how local activists go about their politics, and the effect they have.

As part of a larger, global movement, it is important to note the actual level of *influence* that the meta movement has on those in specific sites. The chapters that follow explore how various trans- and international partnerships shape local ideas, goals, strategies, and projects. By analyzing specific strategies and projects adopted by activists – specifically ones promoted and/or funded by partners, this research reveals the resonance of certain “global” approaches for activists in the city, and thus the actual, limited, and specific influence of non-local actors on

movement goals. At times, activists have had to redirected their movements' focus to global issues, such as AIDS (Friedman 2012) (because, as one activists begrudgingly stated, "that is where the funding is"). Doing so may not address national concerns, such as police abuse of transgendered individuals, or disparities in access to appropriate healthcare for LGBT people. Other times, activists have been able to utilize "global" tools like human rights language to their advantage.

Conversely, this project also investigates how local *context* shapes the receptiveness to top-down approaches, and "cosmopolitan" aspirations of urban activists, emphasizing the translation and grafting of ideas that occurs in reality, as opposed to simple transplantation of old ideas in new soil. I analyze the thoughtful calculus in which activists engage in order to determine what works and what doesn't. In doing so, I illustrate the complex position activists in the city find themselves – as simultaneously local neighborhood dwellers, firmly nationally-conscious citizens of a particular country, and cosmopolitan residents of the world. As such they serve as primary mediators between local needs, national possibilities, and global aspirations. This frame allows for an additional exploration of the consequences of movement advances, by allowing context to explain the unfolding of both foreseen and unforeseen events – policy changes resulting in expansion of rights, as well as entrepreneurial regimes' profiting from those movement advances, or, further marginalization within the national body.

Lastly, I ask whether *collaboration* with and recognition by international actors empower or hinder national or local claims in each site. This inquiry explicitly tackles the tensions that arise from the colliding of local, national, and the global goals, and the questions of sovereignty any

cross-over may evoke. “Transnational support for domestic LGBT movements has had mixed results, particularly given national histories of dependence on, if not exploitation by, external powers” (Friedman, 35). In some contexts, transnational influences have resulted in “charges of cultural imperialism,” placing further obstacles in the way of activists. Additionally, such influences can lead activists to “over-estimate their own possibilities” and go into “dangerous political terrain” (Ungar 2001: 240; Mittelstaedt 2008). Alternatively, international collaborations or transnational advocacy networks (TANs) can lend credibility to a movement. The assets that smooth the way for transnational norm diffusion can help specific communities, but do not always benefit all sectors (Friedman, 2012: 35).

Making the case for my cases

The LGBT movement offers excellent grounds to understand how local issues and concerns in democratic societies are articulated through frames that go beyond simply extracting privileges or rights from the state, to include political visibility and recognition in the national body. The contentiousness of the issue serves to provide a visibility for the political battles being fought over identity politics, the role of the city for activist proliferation, and the issues of national belonging to which it speaks. Despite democratic consolidation, both countries are relatively young democracies. Both societies continue to debate the meaning of democracy, its inclusions as well as its limits, and many groups are still struggling to carve out spaces for themselves within the national discourse. LGBT rights belong to what scholars have labeled as “post-material” concerns (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998). They are so because sexual orientation and gender ascription remain lively manifestations of identity politics today, and many movements stem from and continue to work in concert with women's rights movements – a

movement that both countries have had decades of experience with before, during, and after their respective transitions to democratic rule.

The LGBT movement serves as an ideal case for understanding how transnational networks are formed, particularly when the rights group's demands face considerable obstacles from mainstream society. While struggles for LGBT rights share many characteristics with other minority rights group concerns (ethnic, religious, racial, women's, labor), as other movements have also propelled activists toward the international and global realms, they diverge drastically in several significant ways. While global human rights discourse has given credence to religious rights and indigenous rights movements, sexuality rights remains contested territory in almost every society around the world.

The difference is derived largely from the fact that the LGBT movement essentially challenges many of the conventional and religious mores that structure most modern societies in ways that other movements don't. The exclusion therefore cannot be simply accommodated or recognized³ but requires a reconception of the family and social relations. What is more, sexuality is not conceived as a primordial group identity, with claims to an ancestral past, making it more difficult for people to organize. As such, sexual minorities are still considered outsiders without legitimacy to claims-making, despite possessing "appropriate" nationality, gender, race, or religion. This renders LGBT people as nation-less and simultaneously propels them to seek support and legitimacy at the global level by connecting their local movements to ideas of universal human rights and social justice because remaining confined to local categories is

³ African Americans can be recognized as having the right to vote, Muslims can be recognized as bearing common freedoms of religion, etc.

limiting. The urban and LGBT case selection is strategic because it magnifies how groups that exist in contexts not conducive to group formation are able to overcome hurdles and carve out spaces of belonging.

Though their goals are local in that they seek to change domestic policy, activists engaged in struggles for social and political equality for LGBT individuals employ a battery of strategies to assist them in their battles. In addition to forming local and national links with NGOs and funding institutions, and making connections with sympathetic political elites, activists create linkages trans/internationally. They are involved in local campaigns and transnational social movements, consisting of individuals, NGOs, political groups, cultural and civic organizations.

My study focuses on activist groups primarily located in urban areas – Warsaw and Buenos Aires, respectively. The reason for this is that large cities have proven to be much more amenable to the creation of spaces of association for LGBT people than rural areas, and have been theorized since Aristotle's polis as the ideal settings for meaningful citizen participation (Isin 2002, Soja 2000)⁴. LGBT activism has largely part been an urban movement. This is significant, because urban space represents a vital element for the contestation of national belonging (Isin 2000). These cities are ideal units for witnessing the convergence of global influences on movements to deepen already-existing democracies. They are the sites where the effects of economic and cultural globalization are most pronounced. Cities have been understood as important resources for the development of global civil society, as sites of hyperactivism, and as harbors for micro spaces of belonging that contrast with larger national exclusion. The two capital cities represent sites of cosmopolitan urbanity, within the state and beyond -- both

⁴ Granted, for Aristotle, citizen participation was not a privilege naturally given to all.

Warsaw and Buenos Aires are central nodes in Central/Eastern Europe and South America, respectively. These cities have been designated as "Alpha World Cities" by the Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network (GaWC) in the 2008 roster⁵, and serve as the economic, political, and cultural capitals within their countries. Warsaw and Buenos Aires house the institutions of the national government bodies and NGOs, host international conferences and cultural events, and attract foreign direct investment. LGBT groups in Warsaw and Buenos Aires shape and are shaped by their local and national environments. They are also part of a global movement. How activists negotiate their location in the in-between is revealing of the ways that both the local and the global contexts shape grassroots democratic struggles, and how activists reinterpret and refashion global tropes and strategies to work in their particular local setting. Warsaw and Buenos Aires have recently had markedly different approaches to LGBT issues and claims, with Buenos Aires surpassing its Eastern European counterpart in tolerance⁶.

Both countries possess strong civil society traditions that have been studied under drastically different contexts – namely through their contrasting patterns towards democratization⁷. In the face of political repression, their respectively defiant civil societies played integral roles in the democratization process(es). Poland and Argentina have been influenced by histories of external dominance (Partitions, Soviet dominance, and Monroe Doctrine), and currently both belong to larger political blocs (European Union, Mercosur). Although both are largely racially

⁵ "The World According to GaWC 2008". *Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network (GaWC)*. Loughborough University. <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2008t.html>. Retrieved on 2009-08.

⁶ In cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, the mayor cited the right to "free sexuality", and a law that forbade same-sex couples from renting hotel rooms was repealed in early 2009. The legal measures underscore a dramatic bloom in gay culture. Argentina has several journals and magazines aimed at the gay community, but more importantly since the 1990s, homosexual bodies have entered the mainstream with images in general-circulation news magazines as well as representations via main characters in popular television shows. In Poland, on the other hand, gay pride parades were blocked in 2004 and 2005 in Warsaw and other cities.

⁷ Argentina became democratic only to fall to authoritarianism before consolidating in the 1980s, whereas post-partition Poland was destabilized by war, afterwards becoming part of the Soviet bloc before democratizing in 1989.

homogenous, they arrived at their respective homogeneity via different means, and still struggle with past and present questions of ethnic inclusion. The prominence, legitimacy and political importance of the Catholic Church in both cases constitutes a large obstacle for sexual minorities.

Regionally, Eastern Europe and Latin America experienced their collective peak for scholarly comparisons in the late 1980s and early 1990s when countries in both regions were experiencing profound transitions to democratic governance and capitalist markets. At that point in time, civil society was understood as a panacea for political ills that plagued the regions, and the vehicle through which democracy would be successfully instated. With their democratic transitions having been declared complete, it is necessary to understand the role that civil society now plays as one vastly different from its role before and during transitions; it is one which now must challenge the consolidated status of democracy by pointing out inconsistencies in policy that result in blatant exclusion and discrimination of large segments of their populations.

Both in Warsaw and Buenos Aires, LGBT activists are reaching out beyond confines of the state, creating communities, and organizing with groups not only for international projects but also for local transformations. While the tactics are relatively new, actors are tapping into their country's strong civil society traditions that have been studied under drastically different contexts (Górski 1994, 2001; Ost 2005; Przeworski 1991). In the face of political repression, their respectively defiant civil societies played integral roles in the democratization process(es). Activists' work, by their own admission, is a continuation of that legacy.

Data collection

In recent years, some scholars have taken issue with and grown weary of the metronormativity inherent in comparisons of cities (Brown and Bakshi 2013)⁸. While I understand their caution, I also think more case nuances/specificities (that they so admire) become visible and understood when propped up next to others cases. Therefore, this study relies on binational multi-sited ethnographic field research to understand urban-centered activism in global cities. The qualitative methodology includes over 50 interviews with key LGBT activists and other actors in Poland and Argentina; review of primary organization archives, news, and legal documents; and secondary sources focused on urban studies and global cities, social movements, LGBT activism, nationalism. Between 2010-2011, I completed six months of fieldwork in Warsaw, and three months of fieldwork in Buenos Aires. My ethnographic work in Buenos Aires draws on my research design in Warsaw. I combined multiple data collection methods including participant-observation, formal, open-ended interviews, informal collective discussions, and content analysis of activist-produced materials and local mainstream media. With the exception of a few activists with public profiles (as politicians and organization leaders), all informant names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

The snowball technique was my initial recruitment tool. In Poland, through mutual friends, I had been introduced to (via email) and been in touch with select activists who had pledged to help me make further connections with their colleagues upon my arrival. These initial contacts had

⁸ “By exploring cities on their own terms, rather than comparing them to other cities, we can highlight and discuss the formations and effects of metronormativities. In this book, we seek to make the metronormative strange, by taking it as our object of investigation. We do so by exploring the specificity of Brighton, seeking to shed light on the ways in which lives and politics are built in part by place.” (Browne, Kath, and Bakshi, Leela. *Ordinary in Brighton? : LGBT, Activisms and the City*. Farnham, Surrey, GBR: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 1 October 2015.)

also provided verbal consent to future interviews and discussions. Upon arriving in Warsaw, I promptly followed up with my contacts and began appointments to meet and chat. I had had a difficult time reaching anyone from the Kampania Przeciw Homofobii (KPH) office, so I just showed up at their non-descript office. That same day, I walked in as a casual volunteer, and walked out as a formal intern. This soon became my home base, and offered me a priceless credibility with other activists. I was able to observe activists in their “natural habitat”, and work alongside them on several projects, including translations (simultaneous, and written) and grant-writing. In return I had access to their archive of print materials, grant proposals, financial books, library, and most importantly, the activists themselves.

During my Buenos Aires research, I was also very reliant on the snowball method of subject recruitment. Unlike in Poland, I knew no one in Argentina, and had to make my own contacts by cold-emailing and posting info on forums. In one case, a professor I met with forwarded my recruitment email to a larger listserv. Within a few days I received several replies and began setting up meetings. Unlike in Warsaw, I was not affiliated with any organization, which made it more difficult to make contacts. However, I frequently attended events, lectures, and workshops, and was able to meet people this way. Everyone was very helpful and willing to introduce me to their colleagues, and shared contact information with no reservation.

I adopted the participant-observer method to gain a close and intimate familiarity with political activists and their practices, or in the case of Poland, the observing-participation method

(described by Marek M. Kaminski)⁹. I attended meetings, conferences, and participated in visibility campaigns like festivals, parades and protests. I conducted over 50 interviews, and also relied on informal collective discussions and life histories of activists. In formal interviews, activists were asked to reflect upon their activism in the city and share how political developments have shaped or changed the manner in which they organize, with whom they network, what they deem to be obstacles for the movement, and whether their international collaborations help or hinder their attempts at political inclusion. I collected original, local materials (reports, briefs, event schedules, advertisements and leaflets, campaign posters, project proposals, video footage, and press releases) produced by activist organizations working within the urban contexts of Warsaw and Buenos Aires. This practice proved crucial for a thoughtful interpretation of the city's role as a political space for LGBT activists engaging in a global movement, locally. Content analysis of local media has been helpful in laying out the legal and political context to illustrate the progress and change of these movements.

In addition to first-hand data collection, I further investigated the organizations' relationships with the state, other NGOs, and funding sources through analyses of organizational documents and reports produced by the groups, local newspaper articles, government statements responding to campaigns, PR briefs, and legal documents - all in an effort to lay out the legal and political histories to illustrate the progress and/or change of these movements.

⁹ The aim of the nuanced phrasing is to emphasize the researcher's hybridity, or partial or full membership in the specific community being researched. This distinction allows for a very different sort of access to the subculture and also shapes the researcher's perceptions in ways that are not possible for a full outsider.

A note on researcher positionality

My own identity (real and perceived) was acutely felt throughout the course of field research. My position varied quite a bit between settings. Since I was raised in, and later frequently traveled to Poland throughout the larger part of my life, I began my field research in Warsaw. As experience has taught me, in the context of Poland I occupied an ambiguous position as both an insider/outsider, with my national identity in question due to my hyphenated identity as Polish-American. However, my accent-less fluency in Polish, and my status as ally may have provided me with some credibility for my interactions with LGBT activists, although initially people were a little wary of my motives. My English abilities were valued and made me useful to one of the organizations. At the same time, as a (married!) hetero(a)sexual woman in an office dominated by gay men, I was invisible at first. Initially, I ended up spending most of my time with a fellow researcher from London, who had also started volunteering/interning at KPH at the same time, while working on his M.A. thesis. Once I befriended the full-time staff members, the office felt like home. I also had the added perk of an already-existing (non-activist) friendship network in the city, which was a welcome respite, although they questioned my subject matter, as well as my claim to Warsaw (my family hails from other parts).

After completing my six-month stay in Poland and gaining experience in conducting fieldwork, I began the second half of my research in Buenos Aires. In the context of Argentina, my positionality was less ambiguous, as I was clearly an outsider. I knew no one in the city upon arrival, and had never before stepped foot in the country. What otherwise was a decent grasp of Spanish did not prepare me for the cadence and Italian influence of the porteño dialect, which took some getting used to. I was basically a tourist on a scavenger hunt, armed with a dictionary,

map, and a notepad of questions to which I was desperately seeking answers. Having gotten a short haircut shortly before my departure, I also looked more on the “queer” side, as an eventual new friend later informed me. Most women wear their locks long in Argentina, and of those that don’t, many are nonhetero. This accidental deception may have helped me, although I never hid my orientation. Interestingly, no group had a particular desire to harness my English language skills. If anything, they were unimpressed by my Americanness. Instead, people exhibited a genuine interest in Poland. Everyone was friendly enough and agreed to meet or invited me over to their place for the interview, but breaking into close-knit social circles was difficult.

My positionality and activists’ reception of me were also a reflection of each movement’s relationship to domestic society and the international community. In the case of Warsaw, my interest in the topic was initially met with suspicion and reservation, even though my participation was desired and valued. I attribute this to domestic alliances not being as wide-reaching, and as a result, activists are eager for more international collaborations. The early trepidation regarding my interest can be linked directly to the general indifference or opposition by mainstream society. Activists saw my ability to empathize despite not identifying as LGBT as unusual, as it didn’t necessarily correlate with their own perceptions of the mainstream heteronormative population (as indifferent at best and hostile at worst).

In Buenos Aires, however, activists were fairly uninterested in me. Particularly as a North American, they saw no need or value in my perceptions or skills. They had absolutely no need for my English language ability, as most of their contacts internationally were either from Spain, or Latin America, and they already shared a common tongue. While polite and helpful, they were

unimpressed by my interest in the movement. To porteños, my curiosity and support of their movement was anything but novel. They had worked hard for decades to instill a sense of unity within the nation, and had successfully created broad alliances domestically. My presence was banal, as evidenced by the hordes of international academics who had descended upon the city following the 2010 victory of passing federal equal marriage legislation.

Overview of chapters

Chapter two explores Lefebvre's concept of the production of space and draws a connection between the urban and the national, further theorizing the city as a site for national LGBT place-making. This chapter sets the theoretical foundation for understanding the critical role of the city as resource, constitutive force, and battleground for LGBT activists and opponents, and the significance of specific spaces or moments over which contests over symbolic meaning take place.

Beginning with a short history of civil society and LGBT organizing in Poland, chapter three is the first of four chapters based on original ethnographic research, and explores Warsaw's significance as a local space, national space, and global space, and how Varsovian activists utilize the three for national and regional activism. This chapter emphasizes LGBT activism as a legacy of a much longer (and complicated) tradition of civil society engagement in the country.

Chapter four elaborates on the tensions inherent in the movement's global character, and how activists negotiate and filter ideas and strategies to apply to the national context. Specifically, the

chapter explores the role of nationalist discourse as an obstacle for LGBT advances, and how activists address the burden of having to prove an authentic Polishness.

Chapter five chronicles Buenos Aires' fight for nation-wide marriage equality, and explores the importance of broad civil society collaborations forged over time and solidified over earlier struggles for human rights, as well as Spain's integral role in the 2010 victory, and why the transnational collaboration has not been problematic.

Chapter six explores Buenos Aires as a social generative space for LGBT people more broadly, and its significance as a collaborator and mediator between local activists' goals and those in other towns and provinces. The chapter notes the importance of other towns in legitimizing projects later spearheaded by the capital, and utilizes the formation and operation of Federación Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, y Trans (FALGBT) to illustrate these points.

Chapter seven explicitly compares the two cases, side-by-side, by addressing three main themes: the city as a site for place-making, each city's legitimacy and how it determines intra-movement relations, and national and mainstream responses to movement strategies.

This project sprang from an interest in the way civil society actors understand their place in an ever-changing political world, particularly in cities that occupy global spaces, and what role those cities play in facilitating group objectives. Add to this my regional interests in Eastern Europe and Latin America, and contentious identity politics, and we arrive at this comparative investigation of LGBT social movements in Warsaw, Poland, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. The

chapters that follow chronicle my efforts to understand how (nationally marginalized) local activists working from the space of a global city engage in a globally-occurring social movement for purposes of domestic change. By employing the comparative method, this dissertation explores the unfolding of the controversial movement in both sites, and examines the role both cities play in shaping the movement in their respective country, and their drastically different developments.

My hope is that this dissertation succeeds in revealing how these cities' global placement and national significance has influenced not only activists' objectives and strategies, but also the eventual outcomes. For a movement that is often misunderstood as being defined solely by the global North, I aimed to provide an alternative narrative to the dominant perspective, and to prioritize and pay tribute to the particular understandings, contributions, and struggles of movement actors in sites generally overlooked.

2. THEORIZING THE CITY AS A SITE FOR NATIONAL LGBT PLACE-MAKING

Introduction

As cities grow – in size, population, and political and economic importance – so does their significance for global civil society activism. In the case of global cities, where the demarcations between what constitutes the local, the national, and the international become increasingly blurred, the role of the city as a tool for political transformation at all three levels, cannot be downplayed. I adopt Lefebvre’s concept of the “production of space” to understand socio-political processes of contentious social movements. In doing so, I aim to underscore how place-making is important not just in and of itself, but because movement activists do so in a global city and political capital, the city’s influence extends well beyond itself and has national repercussions.

The main question guiding my research asks, how the global city encourages specific interactions and exchanges for local activists involved in an internationally-occurring social movement aiming to bring about domestic changes? This question requires extensive unpacking. As such, it is helpful to think about all the intersecting spheres involved in this study: activists’ lived experiences and place-making activities (playing out locally), their goals which are national in scope, their inter- and transnational networks, global cities’ international and domestic significance, and a social movement with a worldwide presence. Lefebvre’s concept of the ‘production of space’ can help us understand how these spheres and their meanings are created and contested, and how they interact. To begin to address the main question, this project seeks to understand the following: the relationship between global cities and social movements; the ways

in which the city facilitates activism; and what tensions arise between movement goals and national contexts. The concept of production of space is a helpful starting point, as it allows us to understand how space and its meaning are constructed, both from above and from below. How actors (in this case, activists, opponents, state) understand their positionality vis a vis their neighborhood, city, nation, or global community, helps to shape the way they interact with it and those around them. While governance structures and social mores produce (abstract) space by setting the normative frameworks of what *should be*, people on the ground are producing (concrete) spaces by their daily lived experiences and interactions. They establish, in effect, what the city as a whole actually means to real people, as opposed to what it should mean. In the case of global cities and LGBT activists, the latter transform the abstraction of “the global city” by utilizing it and its resources to further challenge abstractions like the limits of nation. By utilizing/living/collaborating/challenging in the capital city, activists aim to produce space within the nation.

The city is not simply a place where things happen. Cities attract and contain an amalgamated concentration of assorted identities, histories, and ideas. It is in the city where diverse ideas coalesce and shape each other in turn; where the “us” and “them” are pronounced and antagonisms highlighted; where innovations occur and are met by creative opposition; where meaning is unearthed, created, challenged, and reinforced. My inquiry into a globally-occurring social movement in global cities is an effort to understand the nuanced role of the urban environment for local actors, those on the periphery, and foreigners alike. While the oversimplified phrase, “thinking globally, acting locally”, or vice versa, may have been appropriate not too long ago, the reality is much more complex. Civil society actors, at different

points in time, *think* locally, nationally, and globally, and *act* locally, nationally, globally, in every possibly configuration of the six. This kind of recognition is here to stay, so it is imperative that we ask ourselves what is lost and gained in these kinds of processes, how it is *informed by*, and how *it informs* urban space? That being said, this research seeks to bridge discussions in urban studies, social movements, and global networks, and contribute to the debates on the changing role of cities in a globalized context, as well as global cities in domestic contexts.

My interest in Warsaw and Buenos Aires stems from these cities' rich and complex socio-political histories, where questions of sovereignty, civil society, national identity, political transgression, democratic transition, and global positioning have all at some point been the focus of scholars. While Warsaw and Buenos Aires serve as sites for my inquiry, they are more than simply empty vessels, within whose confines residents go about their daily lives. Without going so far as to attribute agency to cities, I will concede that they possess a power, in that their histories, cultures, established norms, and resources actively contribute to shaping citizen behavior, who in turn attribute meaning to urban spaces.

By functioning as a model of social reality, cities provide an important lens for purposes of investigating larger social processes (Isin 2000; Orum 1998; Sandercock 1998). While social *processes* are discussed and framed within macro-level national and international contexts, social *interactions* occur locally, at cafes, on street corners, and neighborhoods, and cities. Relations and social processes are shaped in those places where people live in close proximity to, and engage with one another on the day-to-day. At a time when most of the world lives in urban

settings, the city has become an important reference for investigating social processes (Roy 2005, 2009; Sassen 1996). While social interaction comprises the micro-level, and social process comprises the macro, we can look to the micro as slivers of tangible reflections of abstract macro processes. This chapter discusses Lefebvre's concept of "the production of space" and adopts it to understand the complex roles of the urban for a contemporary and contentious socio-political issue - LGBT rights - that is sweeping the globe, and unfolding in a myriad of different ways spatially. Precisely because of his ability to link representation and imagination with the physical spaces of cities, Lefebvre's work is useful for my analysis. Applying his approach to my work helps to emphasize the dialectical relationship between identity and urban space.

This relationship serves as a gateway to understanding the larger implications of the limits or challenges to liberal democracy. In his analysis of post-transition Poland (but very much applicable to other relatively young democracies like Argentina), David Ost believes "we need a 'thicker' understanding of liberal democracy than most transition literature has embraced" (9). Specifically, he argues for looking beyond democracy "as merely 'a political system in which the formal and actual leaders of the government are chosen within regular intervals through elections'" (Ibid). According to Ost, the bar was set too low. Competitive elections were not at risk, seeing as political elites agreed on such a minimal definition in 1989, and the international bodies that new democracies wanted to join insisted on it as a condition of entry. What should concern scholars and citizens alike is the quality and openness of the democratic system. That is to say, "the degree to which it accepts all citizens as legitimate actors deserving of respect, while not singling out whole categories of people for exclusion" (Ost, 9), something Ost calls "inclusive democracy" (Ost, 27). This is the very core of political liberalism – "treating all

people in a community as citizens equally deserving of rights, opportunity, respect, and dignity. When parliaments... privilege one religion or nationality [or gender or sexual orientation] over another, they are being illiberal by creating whole groups of citizens subject to persecution by the state” (Ost, 10). It is worth pointing out, that if this is the definition of liberal democracy, then there really are only a handful in the world, at best. So while states – including Poland and Argentina - still have all the institutions and processes inherent to democracy, without its liberal soul (the universalist promises), all we’re left with is an empty shell. In effect, many liberal democracies are so only in name, something that has been painfully obvious to LGBT citizens for a long time. The current age of globalization has facilitated opportunities for working around the limitations of existing democracies. Identity-based social movements can tap into opportunities via urban-centered activism in their attempt to address the state’s various oversights or neglect that affects them every day.

What the addition of the LGBT activism component allows for, is the observance of how people understand and negotiate the “blurred lines” inherent to their locally-experienced lives as they participate in a global social movement, within a global city. Narrowing my purview to LGBT social movement activism in Warsaw and Buenos Aires has allowed me to interrogate the role of the city as a locus for local, national, and global political activity and strategizing by minority groups, as well as the conditions it presents to even make this a possibility in the first place.

As activists become savvier networkers, and contentious topics like LGBT rights pick up steam around the world, the role of global cities becomes integral to understanding the meaning of transnational collaborations - for movement activists, opponents, and bystanders alike. Tapping

into, and adopting symbols, language, and strategies utilized by the global movement in other parts of the world, activists deploy those networks for purposes of reappropriating urban spaces locally, thus producing new meanings for spaces, even if only temporarily.

While isolated elements comprising social movements can be noted (time, place, players, actions), the key to truly understanding the relationship between those isolated elements and the contexts in which they take place, is to also account for the *space* by which they're shaped, and with(in) which they ultimately interact. Many urban scholars stress that territory and space are not independent of social relations and politics but are themselves inherently socially constructed (Lefebvre 1984; Soja 2000). The city doesn't just contain social processes; the urban environment also molds them. Lefebvre argues that "space is becoming the principle stake of goal-oriented actions and struggles" (1984, 410). Other scholars note that an "unspatialized" social reality does not exist (Soja 1996). This means that space is not a trivial element of social reality, but that social relations are innately spatial in nature (or space is an element of social relations).

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre posits that space is a social product. It is a complex social construction "based on values, and the social production of meanings which affects spatial practices and perceptions". This argument is important because it shifts the research perspective from space in and of itself to the processes of its production via social practices. The implications of this refocusing are profound. Doing so allows for the recognition of contradictory, conflicting, and, ultimately, political character of the processes of production. "(Social) space is a (social) product... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought

and of action... in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it” (Lefebvre, 26).

Contested cities - like Belfast and the West Bank – can serve to illustrate of how space and politics are intertwined, and where visual claims to national, ethnic, racial, or religious identities play out spatially in urban contexts. In her study of Turkish women in Berlin, Annika Hinze presents an effective example of battles over spatial meaning by investigating integration policy implementation at the neighborhood level. “Different groups make their claims to urban areas, competing with other groups, as well as the government over the meaning and content of urban space” (Hinze, xxiii). While the focus in urban studies has tended to fall on ethnic, racial, and religious tensions, it is important to note that all cities, at various points in time, are contested, albeit in different ways (Castells). The struggles for place-making vary from city to city, as both the context and the players change. Historically and currently, claims to space that are made within the city, have repercussions that extend to the nation. As with many other marginalized groups, LGBT activists are seeking change not by simply claiming a locale or neighborhood, but have expanded their goals to place-making within the national imaginary, that is to say, changing society’s outlook and seeking recognition and acceptance rather than just tolerance. Exploring how this place-making occurs, and what unforeseen consequences it may invoke in the process, is the goal of this research.

Territoriality and the global city

The current epoch of contentious politics has introduced two new issues: globalization and the possible rise of a “movement society.” In the past few decades, a wave of democratization spread across the world, resulting in dramatic changes, including but not limited to, Latin America in the 1980s, and in central and eastern Europe since 1989...“Electronic communication and cheap international transportation have reinforced these connections, creating the possibility that the age of the national social movement may be ending” (Tarrow, 8). Tarrow posits that if national movements were linked to the rise of the modern state, the central question raised by these new waves of movement, such as the LGBT movement, is whether they are creating a transnational movement culture that threatens the structure and sovereignty of the nation state. While “threaten” may not be the right word, as it assumes reason for panic, there is no denying that changes in the role of the city have been occurring in tandem with changes to the role of the nation-state. Within this climate, there exist two distinct yet related challenges for activists. One is claiming, challenging, redefining physical space with all it embodies and represents. The other is doing so through global networks. Networks, as they are no longer tools relied on solely by elites, act as a counter to the constraints of space, no matter how fluid they may seem at times.

As contentious social movements operating within the context of consolidated democracies¹⁰ have been seeking a place at the table, and staking a claim in how they’re governed, they are no longer constrained in their goals and strategies by the state’s level of receptiveness. In the current age of globalization, and the increased importance of cities, social movement actors face significantly different changing opportunities and restrictions, which create incentives for social

¹⁰ Identity-based movements have been known to benefit from democratic transition, at least in so far as organizational proliferation is concerned.

actors who lack resources on their own (Tarrow 1998). They contend through known “repertoires of contention”, extending them by creating innovations at their margins. They are supported by dense social networks, increasingly transnational in scope, and galvanized by culturally-resonant, action-oriented symbols. Supported and strengthened - financially, morally, symbolically - by transnational connections, local activists play out their claims, desires, and demands (shared by their larger network) locally, in the city, and on the streets.

A striking difference between the LGBT “community” and ethnic, religious, or national groups in both Warsaw¹¹ and Buenos Aires, is that there are no “gay neighborhoods”. There are no equivalents to Chicago’s Boystown, San Francisco’s Castro District, or London’s Soho. Instead, LGBT sites are dispersed throughout both cities, and as such, have made the claims to space all the more complex, because, instead of remaining largely limited to one geographic designation within the city, the entire city remains *in play*. The entire city is the locus, because it serves as what Mary Louis Pratt (1992) calls “contact zones”¹². Not only do people become exposed to other groups, but also to their use of symbols and ideas, and in the case of Warsaw and Buenos Aires, not by intentionally strolling through the gay ghetto, but anywhere in the city, en route to the supermarket, or to the train. This presents both positive and negative effects. On the plus side, less isolation means LGBT sites are more embedded into the everyday – this is especially true in the case of Buenos Aires. On the downside, this dispersal can serve as an obstacle to LGBT community-building. Urban scholars have written extensively on the role of ethnic enclaves for creating vibrant communities (Abrahamson 1996; Hinze 2013; Logan et al 2002;

¹¹ An ethnic map of Warsaw became available in 2008, depicting the areas inhabited by large concentrations of foreign national groups, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Hindi, Koreans, Africans, and even Americans.

URL: <http://www.zw.com.pl/artykul/270247.html>

¹² It is important to note that Marie Louise Pratt originally applied this term to linguistic exposure, but I have come to find it useful in understanding the city as node or generative space.

Massey 1999; Portes and Wilson 1980), not to mention their importance for collective empowerment (Roy 2005; Soja 1999). Manuel Castells has called the phenomenon of ethnic enclaves “the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded” (1997, 9).

So what happens when there is no space where the excluded can exclude the excluders, so to speak? Having no territorially-defined neighborhood that, while increasing their *collective* visibility, decreases their *individual* visibility (Baumann 1995), LGBT folks in Warsaw and Buenos Aires have had a drastically different context in which to operate than either ethno/religious/national minorities, or even LGBT groups in the West. In utilizing the city, activists have expanded their goals to place-making within the national body.

In 1968 Lefebvre proposed the idea-turned-slogan, “the right to the city”¹³ which he later summarized as a “demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life”¹⁴. What is significant about this idea is that access to the city can lead to access to the nation, through visibility and political participation. This is particularly salient when capital cities, like Warsaw and Buenos Aires, act as incubators for civil society activism. This is heightened even further when the movement becomes more professionalized, as is the case in these two cities, and turns its attention to lobbying and litigation. Complicating the route to national or urban belonging, is its detour into the global arena – all within the same instant, within the same space.

“(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object... Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting

¹³ *Le Droit à la ville*

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, p. 158

others and prohibiting yet others... [c]onsider the case of a city – a space which is fashioned, shaped and invested by social activities during a finite historical period. (Lefebvre, 73)”

That the conceptual understandings of nation and national belonging are dominated by territoriality, make the connection to space all the more relevant, particularly at a time when people are challenging notions that place-making only occurs locally. In seeking leverage in the game of politics and governance, and ultimately, national-belonging, LGBT activists may *act* locally, but they are doing so beyond the confines of single, designated-gay neighborhood, and in spaces also deemed national and global due to the types of actions they undertake. This is particularly true in the context of global cities like Warsaw and Buenos Aires. The city's importance has grown not only for market purposes - as we have come to define globalization as a largely capitalist phenomenon, and the concept of global cities built around this notion - but as a means for citizens to make connections and create networks, local as well as transnational. So while it is true that the relationship between globalization and urban studies has largely been theorized and understood in economic terms (Sassen), non-economic human behavior – individual and collective – can offer a nuanced perspective on how else “the global” is conceived and employed in the city, and to what effect.

While critical of Lefebvre’s humanist-marxist approach to the urban question, and diverging from him in stating that the city doesn’t possess a creative function, Manuel Castells concedes that it has the ability to make assemblages: “and that is what the essence of the urban is in the last resort. For the city creates nothing, but, by centralizing creations, it enables them to flower (Castells, 1977: 90)” (Gottdiener 1994: 152). Herein lays his main contribution to the field of urban studies: his emphasis on the network society, which he later theorized as the *space of*

flows. He defines a network society as “a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks... which process and manage information and are using micro-electronic based technologies.”¹⁵ For Castells, the space of flows plays a central role in his vision of the network society, defined by nodes where networks of communication crisscross. He states that city elites are not bound by the territoriality of cities, but rather attached to the aforementioned “space of flows”. As such, real power is to be found within the networks, and not confined in global cities. At the same time, though, Castells posits that in an increasingly globalizing world, the locality acquires greater importance as a “source of self-recognition and autonomous organization (1997, 64)”. If the latter statement applies to elites, both may hold true, however, non-elites have also recognized the importance of networks. The idea that power can be *confined* to (global) cities, obscures the fact that cities play host to competing local, national, and global spaces all at once.

“We are confronted not by one social space but by many – indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or unaccountable set of social spaces which we refer to generically as ‘social space’. No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the *worldwide does not abolish the local*. This is not a consequence of the law of uneven development, but a law in its own right. The intertwinement of social spaces is also a law. Considered in isolation, such spaces are mere abstractions. As concrete abstractions, however, they attain ‘real’ existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships. Instances of this are the worldwide networks of communication, exchange and information. It is important to note that such newly developed networks do not eradicate from their social context those earlier ones, superimposed upon one another over the years, which constitute the various *markets*: local, regional, national and international markets... in commodities...money or capital... labour... works, symbols and signs... spaces themselves (Lefebvre, 86)”¹⁶

Despite the tensions between Castells and Lefebvre, Castells’ discussions of networks helps fill out the gaps, particularly as it is a phenomenon increasingly applicable to contemporary life shaped by a more intense time-space compression. However, modern societies are not solely

¹⁵ “Conversation with Manuel Castells, p.4 of 6”. Globetrotter.berkeley.edu.

¹⁶ Castells’ earlier critiques of Lefebvre’s theories of space helped inform the latter’s *Production of Space*

defined by technology. Cultural, economic, and political factors that make up the network society also play a crucial role. These factors are still shaped by religion, cultural upbringing, political organizations, and social status. These local determinants do not disappear with the network. Instead, it might be more useful to think of networks as allowing activists to create or capitalize on global spaces in local places, and how the *meaning* of places, people, events, symbols extend beyond their immediate physical locations.

“[S]pace... is always in a process of being shaped, reshaped, and challenged by the spatial practices of various groups and individuals whose identities and actions undermine the homogeneity of contemporary cities... The continually changing nature of public space and the rights people have to act in certain ways have increasingly been seen to produce various levels of resistance...(Cresswell, 1996)”¹⁷. Employing networks is an extension of that challenge, and Alberto Melucci’s notion of “action systems”¹⁸ speaks to such a claim. He emphasizes that it is the form which a movement takes that relays a message, so does the manner in which civil society actors organize that reveals the structures to which they respond and challenge. In plugging into global networks, LGBT activists respond not only to the state’s indifference, but

¹⁷ from art forms like graffiti, to transgressive political reactions like street riots

¹⁸ Melucci encourages us to consider a movement/civil society as an action system, meaning to stop treating it just as an empirical phenomenon. To him, movements are meaningful in and of themselves. Actors in conflicts are increasingly temporary and their function is to reveal the stakes, to announce to society that a fundamental problem exists. Civil society organization has a growing symbolic function (prophetic function) as a kind of new media (797). According to Melucci, movements/civil society are *action systems* operating in a *systemic field* of possibilities and limits. That is why the *organization* becomes a critical point of observation, an analytical level too often underestimated or reduced to formal structures. The way actors set up their action is the *concrete link between orientations and systemic opportunities/constraints*. Civil society manifestations are thus action systems in that they have structures: the unity and continuity of the association would not be possible without integration and interdependence of individuals and groups, and they are action systems in that their structures are built by aims, beliefs, decisions, and exchanges operating in a systemic field. For Melucci, the new organizational form of contemporary movements is not just “instrumental” for their goals. It is a goal in itself. Since the action is focused on cultural codes, the *form* of the movements is a message, a symbolic challenge to the dominant patterns (801). The meaning of the action has to be found in the action itself more than in the pursued goals: movements are not qualified by what they do but what they are (809).

also to the manner in which the world is organized – namely, no longer (if ever) in neat borders delineating one nation-state from another. Local and national desires not only occasionally require global interventions¹⁹, but calling upon regional/transnational/global networks may also be desirable on a symbolic level, signaling that the existing spaces are deficient.

Through a growing body of research, scholars have illustrated how specific identities are constrained in public spaces. The constraints on women is well-documented, (Wilson 1992, 1995, Smith 2013), but more recent literature has expanded the analysis and shown how the bourgeois public space has comparable effects on people of color, LGBT individuals, the homeless, the young, and the elderly (Ruddick 1996, Valentine 1996). Laws, cultural norms, and lack of resources curtail the resistance to/within dominant public space by certain groups. Space can be reappropriated through resistance, be it peaceful civil disobedience or outside the law by utilizing violence. Engaging in this form of spatial politics allows the marginalized to create “spaces of representation” through which they can represent themselves to the wider public. They must forcibly insert themselves in the discourses of the bourgeois public sphere (McCann 1999, Mitchell 1995). Violence is not always the most desirable, or logical option. The other alternative to creating spaces of representation, is to reach beyond the local and even national realm, or, to locate global spaces within local experiences.

The process that activists are plugging into is a global one, and their doing so locally, but in a global city, serves to blur the boundaries of civil society engagement, potentially harming their claims to national belonging, all in an effort to obtain it. In their attempts to alter the national context, and with it their local situations, activists are reaching out to global actors and building

¹⁹ As exemplified by Keck and Sikkink’s transnational action networks (TANs).

transnational coalitions. By doing this, their civil society engagement ceases to be limited to the local or even national level, opening themselves up to critique from opponents: their experiences, behaviors and strategies defy the normative prescriptions and expectations assigned from above.

Abstract space and concrete space and why they matter

Understanding the differences between two main categories of space (abstract and concrete) is central to appreciating activist interventions in redefining the meanings of the city and one's participation within it. Put simply, abstract space is produced from above. Governance structures and social mores set the normative frameworks of what *should be*. It has been commodified and bureaucratized. Concrete space, on the other hand, is produced from below, represents the realm of everyday life and experience, or "lifeworld"²⁰. Individuals and groups ascribe meaning to specific spaces by virtue of their daily lived experiences and interactions with both the space and other people in it. They establish, in effect, what the city actually means to real people, as opposed to what it should mean to an amorphous "citizenry". As a result, every space has an unlimited potential of meanings and significance, all contending with one another.

We know concrete space to be so, because we live it, touch it, kiss it. Abstract space, on the other hand, we know as a force applied on the everyday, because it attempts to dominate and reign-in the concrete and fit it into a neatly delineated, and limited categories (good heteronormative citizen vs. bad nonhetero). Norms of behavior, laws, restrictions, formal obligations and

²⁰ "Lifeworld", a concept introduced by Edmund Husserl in 1936, and later adopted and further developed by Jurgen Habermas in his social theory. "Habitus" by Pierre Bourdieu.

responsibilities imposed within specific boundaries are all examples of abstract spaces. Homogeneity is its goal, its orientation, its lens²¹.

For our purposes, this can be understood as such: by professing that the nation (a form of abstract space) is, or should be, heteronormative, it underscores the fact that in actuality it is not, as defining it as such would not be necessary. It is really heteronormative *and* nonheteronormative, diverse, complex. If reality was as purported, there would be no need to clarify it (“the lady doth protest too much”). But making such a statement creates a clear “us” and “them”. The purpose is to order the inherent chaos of social life, but ordering is itself an act of violence²². Abstract space is normative, in that it aspires to an ideal standard or model. Its aim is not to be descriptive, nor to accurately reflect reality²³.

Concrete space, on the other hand, is an intervention, a punctuation, a response. For no space is ever neutral, or devoid of meaning. If not through outright laws, spaces are always subject to histories, myths, customs, norms, symbolism. What is more, the meanings attributed to spaces are relative, and the greater the degree of distance between the prescribed meaning and the individual’s lifeworld, the more abstract the space, and vice versa. This explains why notions

²¹ Abstract space, and its production, is a contradiction: it emphasizes homogeneity, but it can only exist by accentuating existing difference. For abstract space to become dominant, 1) there must be a deliberate effort to define the appropriate meaning of and suitable activities that can take place within it; and 2) it must be rendered “ahistorical, devoid of any indications of the social struggles around its production, or traces of the concrete space it replaces” (McCann, 169). In other words, it must be understood and treated as “natural” and therefore unobjectionable.

²² Despite the best intentions, the temporally-circumscribed orderings in the form of proposals, laws, or codes, even if the result of a consensus, always entails an act of exclusion and are always open to debate. Although Tully writes about the nature of agonistic democracy, the analogy can be extended to space: if “no game is completely circumscribed by rules, if it is always possible to go on differently, if a consensus on the rules has an element of non-consensuality, then an important aspect of concrete human freedom will be testing the rules [...] ensuring that they are open to question and challenge...” (Tully, 144).

²³ According to Lefebvre, abstract space’s central feature of unity through homogeneity can only be attained and maintained through a “continued state-sponsored process of fragmentation and marginalization that elides difference and thus attempts to prevent conflict” (McCann, 171).

like patriotism are so contested, as different social groups experience the power of the state differently, while definitions of patriotism and expectations of citizens are narrowly set by privileged elites whose own experiences vis a vis the state may be overwhelmingly positive.

While the production of abstract space is relegated to the devising of plans, systems, and intentions (the perceived and conceived), even the most technologically developed system “cannot produce a space with a perfectly clear understanding of cause and effect, motive and implication.” The production of concrete space, then, occurs when “abstraction becomes true in practice” - influenced by the material, political, theoretical, cultural, and quotidian details. By transforming the physical environment and appropriating it, assembly and dispersion can be seen as practices of producing space. Material practices have the power to include or exclude in subtle ways. Instead of constructing bridges or walls, elites can make strategic investments in the built environment, rendering particular areas of the city desirable while disinvesting in others, as is the case with recent investment in privileged gay spaces in Buenos Aires for purposes of capitalizing on the tourist economy. Everyday practices allow for the appropriation of places and ideas, attributing positive meaning to some, and negative meaning to others.

Abstract space must “be a space from which previous histories have been erased” (Gregory, 1994, 366). Central to this erasure is the unique power of the state to reshape or suppress certain uses of the physical spaces of the city. One prominent example that comes to mind occurred in 2005, when then-Mayor of Warsaw, Lech Kaczyński tried to ban a gay pride parade from taking place in the city. This ban (ultimately deemed unlawful by the Governor of the Mazowsze

Voivodship²⁴), was a blatant attempt at rendering the undesirable invisible. It illustrates the attempt to make the concrete (the parade, the marchers, the public visibility of LGBT identities) abstract (by devalorizing, erasing difference), all in an attempt to maintain a homogenous normative standard – heteronormative, Catholic Poles.

This type of exertion of control over meaning also extends to the more conceptual notions of national authenticity. The determinants of what constitutes national authenticity and its expressions are idealized, imagined, and imposed by the state²⁵. Abstract space produces, imposes, and reinforces social homogeneity, and deploys that image for defining the nation. Much like whitewashing of American history involves fairytales of peaceful coexistence between Native Americans and settlers, or Argentina’s erasure of native peoples from national dialogue. In Poland, historical figures known to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, have historically been denied, their work devalorized on account of their unfavorable (non-homogenous) identity, or said identity dismissed as irrelevant.

Alternatively, instead of outright denying concrete space, the abstract can claim it through appropriation and commodification. The long-time (former) Mayor of Buenos Aires (and now newly-elected President), Mauricio Macri, while initially opposed to LGBT issues and the proposed equal marriage amendment, eventually came around to, if not embrace it, to not oppose it²⁶. There have been many theories for his change of heart, but the general consensus is that he became persuaded by arguments for the commodification of LGBT spaces, or rainbow-washing

²⁴ Administrative designation similar to a province

²⁵ In communist Poland, the image was “we are all comrades”, in post-1989 Poland: “we are all Catholic”, in Argentina: “we are displaced Europeans”.

²⁶ Journalist Bruno Bimbi recently wrote about the Mayor’s change of heart
http://blogs.tn.com.ar/todxs/tag/mauricio_macri/

the image of the city in order to attract “pink money”, thereby reverting/reappropriating concrete space (LGBT visibility and equal rights) to abstract space (tourist economy)²⁷. In this instance, that which can no longer be deemed homogenous (the jig is up), is embraced into the fold, so as to make use of its marketability and supposed economic advantage – in this case for the Buenos Aires tourism industry (a topic I explore in Chapter 5). While immediate commodification is not the rule, it is a logical trend adopted by political elites when social movement institutionalization looks inevitable – leading many movement activists to be suspicious of institutionalization or mainstreaming, as it often takes on an air of cooptation²⁸.

Due in part because the state produces and enforces normative definitions of space, and by extension the normative definitions of citizens, the intrinsic contradictions of abstract space allow for oppositional groups to continuously play a role in the production and reproduction of social space – precisely because their lifeworlds differ from one another. I turn to the example of pride parades or marches, as alongside them, oppositional marches often take place simultaneously. While the governing apparatus takes care to separate opposing forces by requiring their approval of parade routes beforehand (abstract), moments of intersection (concrete) abound, where actual people who hold contrasting ideas, passionately, butt heads. These are the uncensored, unplanned, and uncoordinated moments of spatial creation that accurately reflect the reality of societal tensions. Public discourse is a constant back-and-forth, physical bodies do obstruct passage on the street by other bodies, and tensions run high, feeding

²⁷ The myth of gay affluence abounds, and has often been used to persuade opponents with supposed economic incentives of allowing or providing gay-friendly spaces.

²⁸ In their significant work analyzing the cycles of social movements, *Poor People's Movements* (1978), Piven and Cloward's attributed social movement decline to the formation of formal organizations and bureaucratization.

off each other. They do not, as the planning and approval of parade and counter-parade routes lead us to believe, run parallel, isolated, and unaffected by one another.

Parade *routes* remain abstract because they've been bureaucratized and approved by authorities, as a means to temporarily appease a contingent of society, without actually committing to actual structural changes. The parade/march itself, however, concretizes the abstraction by playing out in the physical streets and thoroughfares. The exuberance of the participants, dancing along to music on floats or bouncing alongside down the street; supportive onlookers brandish their flags as they wave to reveling passersby; and oppositional protesters – the older, religious contingent on one hand, and angry predominantly male mobs on the other, all through their own spatial practices reveal the intricate social relations that lend (contesting) meaning to the issue and the space in which it unfolds. In this case, the space is the parade route, the streets and plazas, and by abstract extension - that in which change in ultimate meaning is sought - the nation.

From abstract heteronormative space (nation), a concrete spatial intervention (LGBT visibility and place-making)

“Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors; these actors are collective as well as individual subjects inasmuch as the individuals are always members of groups or classes seeking to appropriate the space in question. This pre-existence of space conditions the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance; yet the subject's presence, action and discourse, at the same time as they presuppose this space, also negate it... (Lefebvre, 57)”

In recognizing space as a social product, and inherently political, we understand that it is not devoid of meaning, or neutral. There is a spatial economy at play, which has something of a dialogue about it, in that (aside from formal laws) at its most simple, “implies a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contract, as it were, of non-violence. It imposes reciprocity, and a communality of use. (Lefebvre, 56)”. For example, under this social contract it is understood that individuals do not attack others on the street. Violators are found guilty of a criminal act. “This economy valorizes certain relationships between people in particular places (shops, cafes, cinemas, etc.), and thus gives rise to connotative discourses concerning these places; these in turn generate ‘consensus’ or conventions according to which, for example, such and such a place is supposed to be trouble-free... (Lefebvre, 56)”. Throughout much of the Western world, one of those tacit agreements concerned the nature of relationships between the sexes, and adjacently, the nature of same-sex relationships, with various rules and degrees determining the in/appropriateness of each glance, interaction, exchange, embrace. In prevailing spatial economies, the values of human inter/actions (the currency) is determined largely by the gold standard of heteronormative behavior²⁹.

What Judith Butler initially refers to as the “heterosexual matrix”³⁰, Gundula Ludwig develops further into a more dynamic “heteronormative hegemony” which “demonstrates that heterosexuality goes far beyond certain social, ‘intimate’ practices but rather serves as an imagined ‘normality’ and as a norm, and thus as a crucial and powerful force in current

²⁹ At its foundation, LGBTQ politics is about challenging heteronormativity – the inclination of societies to structure social relations and citizenship (legitimacy, rights, and expectations) based on the foundation that reproductive heterosexuality is the ideal, with heteronormativity as its standard. It is this standard that serves to judge a person's worth and eligibility for rewards (acceptance, safety, inheritance, pensions, status, welfare benefits, professional promotion, family rights). Eligibility is based on sexual partnerships only with members of the opposite sex, having and raising children in heterosexual settings, and performing strict gender roles that coincide with traditional notions of male and female, masculinity and femininity.

³⁰ In *Bodies That Matter*

‘Western’ societies (Ludwig in Castro Valera et al, 53).”³¹ Various hegemonies shape the social world, heteronormativity serving as the example of this work, being one of them. Arguably, unchallenged for centuries, it continues to influence the processes of recognition, worth, and rights in democratic societies, as it constitutes the “tacit agreement” which has only begun to be disputed with gusto within the past few decades. LGBT politics challenges existing hegemonies (abstract spaces) by revealing actually lived experiences (concrete space), and rendering them visible.

LGBT politics is primarily concerned with creating safe spaces for individuals who don't conform to the heteronormative expectations, and highlighting their worth as people and their valuable contributions to society. “Heteronormativity places all nonconforming citizens (and noncitizens) within any polity at high risk... experiencing exclusion, denigration, discrimination, ostracism, victimization by hate crime, forced migration, and neglect by state security and welfare policies” (Corrales and Pecheny, 3). Heteronormativity, then, trumps the basic social contract of safety in public. As a result, LGBT politics and social movement activity are efforts at combating the conditions that (can) result in these experiences, thus working to improve the quality of democracy for a group that has rights as closeted individuals, but not as out LGBT people.

Challenging abstract space/hegemonies/heteronormativity is a placemaking and/or space-making project. It is an interjection, an attempt at rectifying wrongs by producing alternative spaces (of visibility, of action, of belonging). Cities provide the necessary physical places where

³¹ Ludwig outlines how heteronormative hegemony leads to an understanding of heteronormative power “that grasps heteronormativity as grounded in social relations and social struggles, and is a power construction that operates through governing as a non-judicial *modus operandi*”.

personalities coalesce, ideas mix, and identities congeal to form collectivities with political potential. Cities are the incubators of citizenship. Cities are integral to processes of democratic belonging as they serve as sites for place- and space-making through visibility and interaction. The squares, public plazas, avenues, boulevards, parks, and city centers where pedestrian traffic is high, and citizens interact are more than sites of sociability or thoroughfares. They are sites of explicit urbanity where diverse identities converge and negotiate their claims on specific places and moments, extending to their right to the city, and by even further extension, belonging to the nation. Placemaking - usually used in terms of approaches to urban planning (design and management of public spaces) - is both a process and philosophy. The concept capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the ultimate goal of creating public spaces that promote well being (health, happiness, safety) for the public. It also allows for taking into account citizen agency, as various actors and civil society groups (re)appropriate spaces to publicize their claims and demands.

Pride parades, protests/manifestations, gay clubs, lesbian cafes, film festivals, walking tours, litigation and policy proposals are but a few examples of LGBT/queer placemaking. While often temporary, provisional, and sometimes even transgressive³², activists create spaces in which homosexuality is possible. LGBT people have to continually, self-consciously carve-out or *produce* spaces within which to exist³³.

³² "It is this spatial economy that determines... the 'politics and poetics of transgression', those moments when the rules of engagement are ignored but whose ignorance relies on the economy both for its beginning and its end (the return to normality)" (Elliot, 93).

³³ This can occur at three distinct levels, as outlined by Lefebvre's spatial triad: *representations of space* (perception: planning maps, laws), *representational space* (imagined: editorials, cartoons, symbols, images), and *spatial practices* (experienced: lived material world).

An interesting approach to spatial production and flipping the tables on heteronormative dominance has been the reversal of expressions of tolerance in specific locales. While certain spaces have proclaimed themselves (or been proclaimed) to be “gay-friendly” – a term that refers to places, policies, people or institutions that are open and welcoming to LGBT people - select gay establishments and services, all over the world, including Warsaw and Buenos Aires, have started to publicize themselves as “hetero-friendly”³⁴. This innocent reversal is a powerful symbol in that it has adopted a tool previously used to delineate the minority from the majority under the guise of patronizing tolerance, and in so doing, changed the representation of space, representational space, and spatial practices all in one fell swoop. This is an instance of, when given the chance to exclude the excluders, the excluded do precisely the opposite, and in so doing, also empower themselves. Place-making becomes an offensive³⁵ rather than defensive act. It is a form of proactive nesting, akin to making a home comfortable for habitation.

Home - as a desired place of belonging - is a frequently revisited idea in queer literature (Fortier 2001; Muñoz 2009)³⁶, and its tensions prove helpful in understanding activism and exclusion. As a site of origin or even destination, it is a problematic concept for those who do not conform to heteronormative standards - which are simultaneously conflated with indicators of the good citizen - and yet it is an ever-present, albeit unrequited desire. If home denotes a place of acceptance, comfort, and belonging, where one longs to return, and the nation-state, or homeland, is traditionally depicted as such a place, then for LGBT individuals this poses an

³⁴ I first became aware of this phenomenon during my 2010 fieldwork in Warsaw.

³⁵ As in, pro-active, not causing offense.

³⁶ Accompanied either directly or indirectly by the trope of mobility, as proposed by Ruth Vanita in an essay on “The Homoerotics of Travel”.

obvious contradiction. For purposes of placemaking, or creating "homes", activists must reimagine community along with their roles in it.

The trope of home - and the belonging to a nation that it entails - is also employed rhetorically by a variety of other groups including indigenous populations, immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities. The home that is sought after can be one of the past or future, or existing well-beyond groups' immediate locations. Despite these similarities, the LGBT case is different in a drastic way. While ethnic or indigenous groups may rely on ancestral ties to home, and on a primordial legitimacy exemplified by either real or imagined places in the past, those marked by LGBT status are excluded despite the ability to also make ancestral claims, prove citizenship status, and are unmarked by race (if white). Those claims to belonging are canceled out by their bodies as representative of non-heteronormativity and as such, pose a potential danger to the image of the very ancestors they may attempt to employ for claims-making.

Unlike immigrants, indigenous peoples, or ethnic minorities, for most LGBT people, points of origin do not automatically constitute the "home". LGBT groups long not for a return to a present home – because it is precisely the present-tense that eschews them. They do not express hope in resurrecting an idyllic past, but rather, they seek spaces of belonging in the near future without even possessing a folkloric history or primordial collective identity upon which to model their hopes, desires and needs. There are, of course, a few notable exceptions to this general pattern, namely the muxe and biza'ah - *traditional* transgender or third gender categories - of

Zapotec communities in Oaxaca, Mexico, the hijras of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and the sworn virgins of the Balkans³⁷.

It is within this context that place-making and home-coming become possible in the city. Since they are no longer restricted by the tightly bounded roles, norms and expectations found in more homogenous places (Sennett 2002), urban dwellers derive a sense of freedom from the diversity found in cities. Cities offer a concentrated look at the fragmentations inherent alongside what is purported to be the universal homogenous. Life in the city reduces “identity closure”, and individuals enjoy a degree of cognitive freedom, making it easier to redefine oneself, and establish new relationships with strangers, without the burden of fixed roles predetermining their behaviors.

“Hence, the concentration of diverse social relations in cities creates more freedom for people to sidestep narrow subjective categories of self and other, loosening the cognitive straightjackets that inhibit connections across difference. These new connections between diverse individuals make it possible to step outside of conventional boxes, draw on diverse resources and ideas, and create new solutions for old problems” (Nicholls, 843).

The possibility of what Michel Foucault advocates as “thinking and acting differently” is a living and real possibility in cities. What LGBTQ activists often allude to as the “anonymity” of the city (that make it a haven for sexual minorities), is more of an *ambiguity* by virtue of a (relatively) diverse social environment. The fact that people “are no longer bound by the tightly circumscribed roles, norms and expectations” of non-urban places allows citizens to “practice

³⁷ While these examples fit under the umbrella LGBTQ acronym, they remain problematic, as they are all examples of acceptance of trans identities. The trouble arises when we discover that acceptance/tolerance comes only when those identities conform to the traditional social roles, and oftentimes remain chaste. I offer this caveat because while we are quick to herald the “progressive” attitudes of select societies, we may fall into the trap of blinding ourselves to the limitations of that progressive guise. Iran - the country with the highest number of transsexual surgeries - is a case in point. The reasons for surgical intervention are more sinister, as men revealed to be homosexual are forced to undergo gender reassignment as a means to correct for their “deviance”, thereby conflating gender identity and sexual practice.

their freedom” as Arendt puts it, by not being bound by the rules of the game. Cities are where it is possible to not only test the rules of the game, but also where they are less dogmatic, and more suggestive and pliable³⁸.

However, because there is a constant tension between abstract space and concrete space, the “thesis of alterity and freedom in cities plants the seeds of its antithesis: control and rationalization” (Sennett 2002). States react to social behaviors by ordering complex urban environments and creating policies and bodies that govern the various functional and geographical areas of cities (abstract bureaucratization). While not necessarily intended to be malicious, the techniques used to control and make sense of these environments ultimately form the complex regulatory grids that organize spaces of diversity. Sennett argues that urban spaces are where these dialogically linked processes unfold with the most intensity: where concentrated diversities produce novel exchanges, but also where this diversity ignites a thick web of bureaucratic controls to tame the chaotic attributes of urbanity. The greater visibility of difference found in cities (the concrete expressions of the everyday) triggers the construction of a range of bureaucratic organizations to control and rationalize an increasingly disjointed society (the homogenous abstract).

This calls to mind the raids on gay establishments (most famously in the 1960s in the United States, and currently in other parts of the world), the creation of anti-sodomy laws, banning of

³⁸ For Arendt, “political activity involves contests for recognition and rule, but the agonistic element of the game has nothing to do with modifying the rules. It has to do with challenging an opponent and gaining recognition in accord *with* the rules.” A change in the rules is not associated with agonism. Herein lies Foucault's unique contribution. He links together the following three elements: “the practice of freedom, the modification of the rules governing relationships among players in the course of a game, and agonistic activity. He sees the modification of the rules of any game as itself an agonistic game of freedom: precisely the freedom of speaking and acting differently” (Tully, 143). He broadens the concept of agonism by extending “its application to any form of activity or language game in which the coordination of action is *potentially* open to dispute, as a 'permanent provocation'” (144).

pride parades by public officials in Poland in 2005 and 2006, and counter-manifestations organized by opposition groups. This idea is further supported by what Corrales and Pecheny refer to as the “paradox of success”, wherein any movement success, even as minimal as achieving safe spaces within the city, can end up creating obstacles of complacency (at best), and “growing comfort zones might actually make homophobes sharpen their attacks by making [them] more aware of their targets. Just as comfort zones encourage LGBT citizens to come out and act collectively, they can draw out homophobic sentiments as well” (Corrales and Pecheny, 27). The dialogical processes Sennett emphasizes are directly related to the renegotiation of the terms of identity and the claims for recognition by other citizens through the act of participation. The city is central to understanding Arendt's concept of “free action”, because citizens don't contest the rules of the game abstractly. Rather, they do so in a particular way, place and time, together with and in opposition to their peers, invoking specific imagery and emotions.

The production of space is not simply a reproduction, but also a production – not just in terms of commodification and consumption – but as an expression of agency, particularly when space becomes both *reappropriated* (by citizens previously made invisible) and *reappropriator* (insofar as it can envelop and overcome other meanings previously attributed to another space). Space, and its meanings, is produced. Just as the nation and national identity is produced – through long histories of conflicts, moments of unity and peace, iterations of us/them similarities/distinctions, festivals, enjoyments (culture), repetition, and so on. We are active participants in constructing our national identities (and by extension, the nation), just as we are active participants in the production of space – either through our acceptance of the status quo, or through our attempts to challenge and redefine. In seeking leverage in the game of politics and governance, and

ultimately, national-belonging, LGBT activists may *act* locally, but they are doing so in spaces also deemed national and global.

In June 2012, in Warsaw's Plac Zbawiciela (Savior Square), artist Julita Wojcik, constructed a large rainbow sculpture made of plastic flowers, which she intended to be innocuous. It was commissioned by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, and stands in the middle of a roundabout in the square, on a patch of grass. The artist called upon the long history of positive connotations with the rainbow as a universal symbol of love, peace, and hope. While not intended by the artist to be political, it ended up being exactly that. 'Rainbow' appeared at the culmination of several different events: On June 2, the Equality Parade took place, then the Feast of Corpus Christi, followed by the start of Eurocup 2012. Wojcik explains "it [Rainbow] is appropriate for all these events, which in turn underscores my main assumption: that 'Rainbow' not be appropriated socially or politically, but rather for it to be free of all imposed meaning. For it to simply be beautiful"³⁹.

Had it been left untouched, this may well have been the case. However, it didn't take long⁴⁰ before it was set alight, and it burst into a "flaming rainbow" (pun intended). The community was devastated, although not particularly surprised. In further politicizing the sculpture, the act of vandalism served as a catalyst for community-building, solidarity, and place-making. People began placing live flowers into the metal frame that once supported the technicolor symbol of the international LGBT community. One by one, blooms of every color imaginable replaced the ash. Instead of allowing the square to symbolize intolerance and hatred and destructive violence,

³⁹ "Tecza" Julity Wojcik w Warszawie. Culture.pl. Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, 2012.

⁴⁰ 12-13 October 2012 (the individual responsible was arrested); New Year's Eve 2012 (casualty of fireworks), November 24, 2013 (during the March of Independence), and 7-8 November 2013.

locals took it upon themselves to rebuild that symbol as an act of love, resistance, and ownership of not only the rainbow flag (global), but also of the square (local). Place-making occurs at the local, national, and global levels.

Criticism of location for the installation, or the days of various manifestations, portrayed in terms of “offending public religious sentiments”, don’t take into account the reasons for the confluence of seemingly oppositional expressions. Quite simply, it is not necessarily for purposes of causing offense (although elements of provocation do exist), but rather, as expressions of the multiple identities of the Polish nation – which like the concrete abstractions inherent in space, are simultaneously homogenous (Polish), and fragmented (hetero-, homo-, queer, straight).

As the example above illustrates, while at certain points serving as a strength, the explicit global character to the LGBT movement - as epitomized by the international use of the rainbow flag - also poses some considerable obstacles for activists seeking change locally and nationally. The movement, along with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans identities have been conceived as a foreign imposition, and an affront on Catholic national identity. What symbols are deployed where, and by whom clearly determine their appropriateness within the larger spatial economy. The utilization of “the global” component isn’t always treated as intrinsically evil, or intrinsically desirable. The question remains if whether invoking global conceptions for local purposes gets in the way of ultimately performing the lived experience.

Conclusion

The global city is an interesting case in terms of its spatial significance, particularly for LGBT activists. Are these cities local spaces? National spaces? International? At different points in time they can be any and all, depending on how they are used and interacted with. It is with this in mind that I aim to interrogate specific moments in an effort to understand the confluence of local, national, and global spaces and symbols, the way they inform one another in turn, as well as the tensions that arise from their convergence. Scholars have resolved “to raise questions about both the politics in and the politics of public space,” by examining “how boundaries between what is public and what is private, what is material and what is metaphorical, are constructed, contested, and continually reconstructed” (McCann 165). Cities serve as a lens through which to observe and analyze the reproduction of roles, relationships, power dynamics, norms. Working under the principle that urban space is inherently political, investigating social movements through an urban context is logical, particularly when both the movement and the city are “global”.

These cities carry with them the weight, significance, and legitimacy of global city status. As such, the activism taken up by local activists will have repercussions that extend beyond the city locally understood. By virtue of their placement and local visibility, their understanding and connection to global networks, and their use of the city as a resource to alter national policy, activists engage in place-making projects at the national level. Strategies for placemaking – through exhibitions, monuments, festivals, litigation, and policy prescriptions – are not simply instances or symbols that come and go without any significance. They are concrete spatial practices employed for claims-making and challenging abstract (representations of, and

representational) space. The chapters that follow aim to understand the production, reproduction, contestation of, and interplay between the concrete and abstract spaces within the city. In so doing, I will tease out the local, national, and global significance of the city for LGBT activists, and the contradictions and tensions that arise from these intersections.

3. MULTIDIMENSIONAL WARSAW

Revisiting Legacies of the Past

Upon first impression, one might think Poland a strange lens through which to study the LGBT movement. However, civil society (in the form of unpaid voluntary work) has had a long tradition within the Polish context, and in many ways, the contemporary LGBT movement is a continuation of earlier civil society movements. The genesis of third sector organizations can be traced from the ideology of Christian mercy, dating back to the medieval age. Additionally, voluntary interventions by the aristocracy to help the poor influenced secular welfare traditions (Siciński 2001). “Both in pre-partition Poland, and in the inter-war period the pro-social attitude and engagement in the activity to help others who are in need was common in some social circles” (Nowosielski, 37). During the partitions of Poland from 1795 to 1918, “efforts to alleviate poverty, bolster the national spirit, and preserve Polish culture became important social, cultural, and political forces” (Leś et al, 1). While there were restrictions during this period, charitable and philanthropic organizations kept up their work. Once Poland regained its independence in 1918, these organizations occupied a central role in rebuilding Polish society and shaping national identity. Approximately 10,000 associations and 3,000 foundations were registered by the Ministry of Interior Affairs in the inter-war period (Leś et al.,2001). These foundations and associations proved vital to the country’s recovery following World War I, both in terms of material losses and leveling the complex legacies of partition.

All this changed after World War II, and the activities of organizations were subject to strict political and administrative controls of the new communist regime. “In the People’s Republic

of Poland... a degradation of the idea of community work took place - a range of obligatory 'social actions' as a part of communist ideology and constituting support for the regime resulted in a substantial social suspicion towards this type of activity" (Nowosielski, 37). Many of those that existed prior to the war were dissolved, and their property confiscated and nationalized. Additionally, the Catholic Church was relieved of its charitable function by 1950, and the only organizations permitted winnowed to the Polish Red Cross, the Polish Scouts' Association, and the Society of the Friends of Children. What is more, all were required to support the same political and welfare objectives as the state, effectively rendering them as extensions of the state.

The most well-known manifestation of civil society engagement in Poland has been the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" (Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność”)⁴¹. Within the Warsaw Pact countries, it was the first trade union independent of the communist party, and it signaled a shift in conceptualizing notions of civil society, namely of "anti-politics" and a "third way" wherein civil society operates separately from both state and market but flourishes in a permanently open democratic public sphere (Ost, 4)⁴². Its membership reached ten million by September 1981, which constituted one third of the total working-age population of Poland. Prior to Solidarity, sporadic oppositions to the government did exist between 1950 and 1979, frequently catalyzed by price increases of food

⁴¹ Five months before she was to retire, Anna Walentynowicz was fired from her work at the Gdańsk Shipyard on 7 August 1980. Fellow workers staged a strike a week later, followed by solidarity strikes by other workers along the coast and across Poland. Management granted Lenin Shipyard workers their working and pay demands on the third day, leading Lech Wałęsa and others to announce the strike's end. Walentynowicz and Pienkowski insisted the need to continue for the sake of those workers outside the shipyard who had joined in solidarity. Largely thanks to the efforts of these two women, the strikes continued despite management agreeing to workers' original demands. The government relented and signed an agreement allowing Solidarity's existence on August 31, 1980. After over twenty factory committees of free trade unions merged into one national organization, NSZZ Solidarity, it officially registered on 10 November 1980.

⁴² At its onset, Solidarity had embraced "antipolitics," with its scorn for parties and states for two reasons: because this embodied the ethos of the 1968 generation who had given the movement its intellectual foundation, and because the then-ruling communist party made renunciation of political goals a condition for accepting the movement.

staples. The government cracked down on dissent, forcing groups to form underground networks, of which labor unions filled an important part. These networks would later be vital to the successful organizing of Solidarity.

With Solidarity as a backdrop, LGBT resistance was fomenting quietly in the years leading up to the transition. For communists, same-sex relations were a legacy of the bourgeois-capitalist past, and homosexuality connoted nonconformity, a threat to the social order, and was incompatible with state ideology. While same-sex relations were not illegal, they were dangerous if discovered. In the 1960s the state enlisted medical experts to police “abnormal” behaviors and label patients as sexual deviants, and militias conducted surveillance of environments where men congregated to have quick and anonymous same-sex encounters, becoming criminal nonconformists in the process (Imieliński 1963; Kurpios 2003). At the same time, the Church branded homosexuals as lustful and inherently sinful. Since marriage and reproduction provided a standard formula for the Church’s teaching on human sexuality, same-sex acts were viewed as socially unconstructive. Both these elements converged to shape a setting that was not conducive to the development of a gay social movement (Leszkowicz 2004).

That is, until the 1980s when the state’s repressive crusade actually galvanized lesbians and gay men (Kurpios 2003). In 1985, the regime’s answer to the threat of AIDS was “Operation Hiacynt” (Akcja Hiacynt). Public authorities linked homosexual environments to transmission sites of AIDS. Suspects were screened and catalogued into the so called Pink Files (Różowe Kartoteki). Instead of silencing people and rendering homosexuality invisible, the state’s response to the global AIDS epidemic brought the topic into the fore of public life.

Small groups began to take shape, albeit largely underground, with the express purpose of encouraging empowerment, providing self-help, and AIDS awareness and prevention. Organizing efforts were largely spearheaded by university students⁴³. For a brief moment even gay print media made a splash with “Filo” and “Efebos” in 1987, in Gdańsk and Warsaw, respectively. In 1989 the Warsaw Homosexual Movement (Warszawski Ruch Homoseksualny) initiated the gay and lesbian group, Lambda. In Wrocław and Gdańsk, the groups *Etap* and *Filo* helped organize the nationwide Association of Lambda Groups (Stowarzyszenie Grup Lambdy, or SGL) (Boczkowski 2003). All these endeavors, however, were short-lived. Groups were underfunded (despite receiving grants from The International Lesbian and Gay Association, or ILGA), weak, and generally unprepared to take on the tasks of community and institution building, particularly in a setting where not many people were willing to come out. Most crucially, a society committed to diversity and pluralism, as well as the expansion of the public sphere to include sexual minorities, was yet to be forged (Krzeminski 2006).

Utilizing methods of civil resistance, Solidarity was active throughout the 1980s despite years of political repression, including a period of martial law. As a social movement, its aims were to advance workers’ rights and social change. While the movement started out as a workers’ rallying cry, it grew to include students, intellectuals, nationalists, and Catholics. In the end, the government was forced to negotiate with Solidarity, and the round table talks between the two sides led to semi-free elections in 1989. By the end of August, a Solidarity-led coalition government was formed, and in December 1990, Lech Wałęsa was elected President.

⁴³ Scholars credit Waldemar Zboralski and Sławomir Starosta, both students of sociology, as the main architects of the post-“Hiacynt” homosexual underground. In 1987, for instance, Zboralski coordinated the activities of three different gay youth groups in Warsaw, Gdańsk, and Wrocław (Krzemiński, 104-105).

As irony would have it, the transition to democracy was in a way a defeat for Solidarity's worker base. Since 1990, Solidarity ceased being a social movement, having splintered off into several smaller groups, and what is left has become a more traditional, liberal trade union. What is more, some argue that the manner in which the transition occurred is responsible for the eventual rise of the political right (Ost 2005). In the '70s and '80s political elites had fought alongside workers. However, after 1989 they refused to organize around workers' demands, and soon lost the labor base. "In the end, workers drifted to the right because their erstwhile intellectual allies pushed them there" (Ost, 36). This would eventually have a profound impact on the nascent LGBT movement.

In an inverse correlation, since the transition from communism, Solidarity's star has fallen drastically, while stars of other civil society groups have risen. Poland has experienced a renaissance of civil society in the form of voluntary initiatives, nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations. While Solidarity's membership dropped 680,000 by 2013 (a third of what it was in 1991⁴⁴), the number of foundations nearly doubled and the number of associations quadrupled between 1992 and 1997. 90% of organizations were established after 1989. This includes LGBT organizations.

The 1989 transition to democratic pluralism was central to accelerating gay identity- and community-building in the context of liberal-democratic institutions. However, the onset of post-communist gay and lesbian politics was not the direct consequence of the transition to liberal

⁴⁴ <http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl/artukul/947036,zwiazki-zawodowe-glosno-krzycza-ale-traca-sile-ilu-jest-zwiazkowcow,id,t.html>

democracy. Democratic reforms entailed the forging of a renewed civil society as well as the consolidation of a capitalist free-market economy. While homosexual milieus existed in twentieth-century Poland, there were virtually no signs of an organized homosexual subculture in Poland prior to the 1980s. A cohesive lesbian and gay movement did not emerge until later in the decade. The primacy of communist orthodoxy in conjunctions with a deeply ingrained Catholic cultural ideology obstructed the development of an organized gay social world. What is more, scholars link popular resentment of homosexuals in the post-communist period to broader social anxieties associated with a painful economic transformation (Mizielińska 2004; Sypniewski et al. 2004). In their quest to shed the trappings of communism, political elites came to embrace not only democratic liberalism, but especially economic liberalism. The latter came at a painful price for average Poles. In general, the transformation of post-communist states generated weak and unstable governments, corruption, economic insecurity, and the erosion of social welfare upon which citizens had long relied. Indeed, rapid modernization reforms had a profound effect on societal relations (hitting women particularly hard). Aspirations to privatize healthcare and the liquidation of many social assistance programs contributed to marginalizing women in the public sphere (Štulhofer and Sandfort 2005), while “shock therapy” economic reforms stimulated the feminization of poverty (Bielasiak 1998). Furthermore, the rise of an increasingly assertive Roman Catholic Church further polarized society. In contesting the realm of sexuality, both Church and state presented themselves as purifiers and defenders of the nation (Biedroń 2007: 157). Democratization and socio-political reforms throughout the first post-communist decade facilitated the emergence of an organized lesbian and gay movement, even though post-communist cultural and political elites did not always treat the rights of lesbian and gay Poles seriously (Sypniewski et al. 2004). What is more, even as it was slowly emerging, the movement

and the people it represented were immediately cast as whipping boy. The social cleansing of an overwhelmingly Catholic and ethnically Polish country such as postwar Poland required the invention of national scapegoats (Mizielińska 2005: 127).⁴⁵ For both the Church and the state, the appearance of new social movements during the transition period, in particular the women's and gay rights movements could not have been more fitting.

To those not in the know, that is to say most people - heterosexual and gay – organizational work went largely undetected. Movement leaders sought to empower and prepare gays and lesbians for life in a democratic and free society (Krzemiński 2006). At the same time, by focusing inward, activists sought to transform lesbian and gay Poles into a society set on contributing to the remaking of post-1989 Poland. The 1990s were a time of reflection as activists focused their efforts on building a base for future action through identity-building and consciousness-raising projects. By 2000, goals had shifted and along with the emergence of new organizations came new forms of activism that focused on visibility campaigns (pride parades, protests, billboards and posters, social awareness projects) in the public sphere. Developments in the West also encouraged activists to pursue social change at home, and the first ever parade took place in Warsaw in 2001. Later that year, activists formed the Campaign Against Homophobia (Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, or KPH), the largest gay-oriented political and social aid organization in Poland.

⁴⁵ In the aftermath of World War II Poland became an ethnically homogenous nation-state. Six years of German and intermittent Soviet occupations, in addition to a large scale civil war in the eastern borderlands between Ukrainians and Poles, as well as significant postwar border shifts contributed to the homogenization of Poland. By 1947, Poland was 97 percent ethnically Polish and Catholic (Snyder 2003: 202).

Since the early 2000s, more LGBTQ organizations have been popping up in Poland. While many still retain their self-help, recreational/social, or educational goals, others (like KPH, Lambda Warszawa, and Tranz-fuzja) have moved beyond a casual volunteer model and have become professionalized NGOs, with small, permanent staff members operating on modest budgets, but with increasingly impressive networks both domestically and internationally. It is these groups that are changing our understandings of civil society, as they constantly find novel ways to engage with society at large, participate in politics, build networks of support, and shape the national dialogue.

Although it has gone through some permutations, civil society's current manifestations – not least the LGBT movement – draw strongly on local traditions of engagement, while also overcoming the obstacles of certain concessions made in earlier struggles, as well as adjusting both their form and function. As it stands, it is not the lack of a civil society tradition that poses difficulty for the LGBT movement, but rather its form, as well as the manner in which it was betrayed by elites, allowing for the eventual success of the political right and serving as one of the largest obstacles to LGBT recognition in Poland. What follows in this chapter and the next is an exploration of these legacies and how they are being addressed.

Witamy w Warszawie / Welcome to Warsaw

When I set out for Warsaw to conduct field research, my timing was strategic. I arrived in early June, in time for the July 2010 EuroPride Parade and corresponding events the city was hosting – although the official apparatus of the city did not endorse the festivities like other cities had done

in previous years⁴⁶. The organizing was an across-the-board grassroots effort, with a leading role played by Fundacją Równości (Equality Foundation)⁴⁷. Warsaw surprised me. It was not at all what I had expected. Like most cities, it is a city of contradictions. It is simultaneously conservative and progressive. It has a powerful and sad history which is harnessed by both conservative, nationalist/patriotic sentiments as well as progressive, “leftist” elements⁴⁸. It does harbor spaces of belonging and acceptance, to a much larger extent than I could have imagined. In a short five years, the LGBT movement in Poland, and particularly Warsaw, has come a long way, something it shares with the movement in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Informants in both sites repeatedly expressed this sentiment throughout the course of fieldwork.

I was expecting the Warsaw of a Poland I visited five years prior. The political landscape looked quite different then. In 2004 and 2005, several Polish cities including Warsaw blocked gay pride parades.⁴⁹ Despite this, about 2,500 people marched on 11 June 2005, with several being arrested. The parade was condemned by then-Mayor of Warsaw (and eventual late president), Lech Kaczyński, who had repeatedly made public declarations of his opposition to homosexuality. Public opinion was not favorable to LGBT issues. A 2006 survey conducted by the European Commission, found that only 17% of Poles polled believed that homosexual marriages should be allowed throughout Europe, and only 7% thought that adoption should be

⁴⁶ Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, while not banning the events, did decline to serve as honorary patron of the festivities, something no other Mayor in past EuroPrides has done.

(<http://www.feminoteka.pl/news.php?readmore=6771>)

⁴⁷ http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundacja_R%C3%B3wno%C5%9Bci

⁴⁸ Historically, Warsaw is a site of strong political resistance to foreign oppression and injustice (like the Warsaw Uprising, Miracle on the Vistula, etc), the memories of which serve to inform contemporary activism, and simultaneously reinforce nationalist pride and patriotism.

⁴⁹ City officials cited various reasons including: the likelihood of counter-demonstrations, interference with religious or national holidays, the lack of proper permits
<http://www.gay.com/news/article.html?date=2005/05/20/4&navpath=/channels/pride/>

authorized for homosexual couples throughout Europe⁵⁰. A public opinion survey conducted in 2009 by survey research firm PBC DGA found that 45% of Varsovians supported the parade, with 44% opposing it. In 2005, only 33% of residents were in favor⁵¹.

In contrast, a 2013 survey conducted by researchers at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, reveals a much more nuanced portrait⁵² (see figure 1). The survey set out to determine which regions in Poland were the most homophobic (Antosz 2013). Each region was shaded to reflect the level of acceptance of gays: the darker the grey, the less accepting. Within each region, is a yellow circle, the size of which was determined by number of residents' familiarity with a gay individual. The larger the circle, the greater level of contact (max 35%, min 10%). Interestingly, a larger or smaller circle size didn't necessarily correspond with a lighter or darker shade of grey, respectively. The Mazowieckie region, where Warsaw lies, is assigned one of the top five larger circles (25%), indicating that one in four residents knew a gay individual (surpassed only by the Pomorskie region, with 35%⁵³, but with a lower level of acceptance at 45%). The level of social acceptance is the same as the national average (55%), surpassed only by the Lubuskie region on the West (bordering Germany, where residents historically have had strong ties with their neighbors). According to previous studies inhabitants of big cities are the most tolerant towards LGBT individuals, because more people have contact with sexual minorities, which the Warsaw scores support, but medium-sized cities are much more difficult to explain.

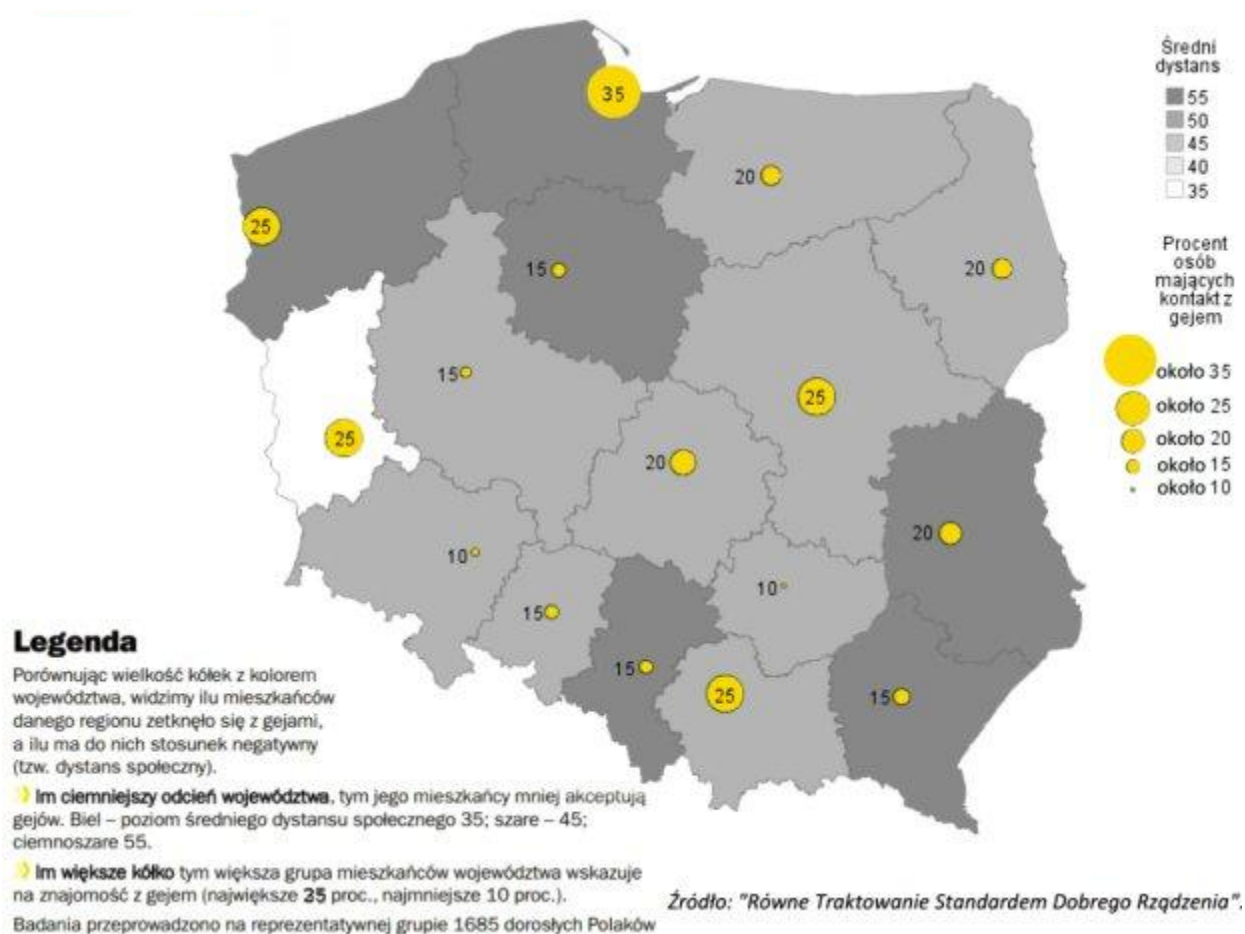
⁵⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb66/eb66_highlights_en.pdf

⁵¹ http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,7435104,EuroPride___test_dla_warszawiakow.html

⁵² http://www.spoleczenstwoobywatelskie.gov.pl/sites/default/files/rowne_traktowanie_standardem_dobrego_rzadzenia_-_raport_z_badan_ilosiolowych_ost_0_0.pdf

⁵³ The largest urban area in this voivodeship is actually a tri-city configuration (Gdańsk, Sopot, Gdynia), skewing the results.

FIGURE 1.



The goal of this chapter is three-fold: First, this chapter draws on interviews, observations, and specific events to gauge how the movement materializes in the city (pride parades, clubs, cafes, demographics), as well as how the city influences the movement and strategies, and evokes responses from mainstream society (conservative groups, politicians, media, and civil society). This allows me to interrogate the notion of the city - specifically Warsaw - as a site for possibility, visibility, connection, action and change - for individuals as well as for social movements. The second goal is to explore the impact that activism, as it is manifested in the city, has on Poland and Eastern Central Europe, which I refer to as the sphere of regional influence. To do this, I focus on the tangible and symbolic ways that the movement manifests in Warsaw, its local particularities, as well as its broader connection to the global movement.

The third goal of this chapter is to explore the relationship between the local context of the LGBT movement in Warsaw as defined by its global influences and ambitions, and compare it with the relationship it has with other Polish towns. Warsaw's strategic role in the movement is illustrated by its contrast with other towns/cities, and not simply an "urban vs. rural" distinction. The concerns, aims, and strategies of activists in Warsaw are quite different from those of non-Warsaw activists (ex. Wrocław, Kraków, Gdańsk). The movement in Warsaw can be understood as occurring on three levels, all illustrated by the relationship between it and other towns, as well as their dissimilarities.

I posit that Warsaw's specificity as simultaneously a local, national and global site leads the movement within Poland, as well as the (Eastern Central European) region, with mixed consequences. Together, all these levels point to the central role played by the city in a "politics

of place” that has rarely been interrogated in the analyses of global social movement development, growth and transnational linkages. While Keck and Sikkink and others (della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Mellucci 1989; Escobar and Alvarez 1992) have studied transnational networks, the role of the city (or the urban) as a central part of a politics of place has not been as extensively explored. This work seeks to bridge discussions in urban studies, social movements, and global networks, and contribute to the debates on the changing role of cities in a globalized context.

Place-making as local specificity

Even when a social movement – like the LGBT movement – occurs internationally, leading us to refer to it as a global movement, the everyday realities for movement activists are experienced locally, at the level of home, neighborhood, and even city. Warsaw’s classification as a global city complicates the demarcation between what constitutes local and non-local Warsaw. While “the local” is usually understood as pertaining and confined to a specific geographic boundary and authentic in its uniqueness, particularly in terms of institutions, spatial form, characteristics, and culture, much of what transpires in Warsaw eventually trickles down to other cities, or even gets discussed and implemented nationally.

While no city exists in a vacuum, and ideas and trends constantly travel between locations, the case of Warsaw exemplifies the complicated role(s) a global city plays in local, national, and transnational contexts. Since many of the Warsaw LGBT campaigns and projects are national in scope, Warsaw’s localness is by default more than that. We can, however, speak of a local character, and elements which make the city special or distinct from other places. There is a

particularity to Warsaw which makes it significant, especially in terms of the LGBT movement: its status as capital city, its relative demographic diversity, its institutional concentration, and younger, more politically-engaged generation⁵⁴.

While many may contest its status as a cultural capital (rivaled largely by Kraków), its prominence as the political, economic, and media center of Poland is indisputable. Warsaw has secured a status of Alpha- global city⁵⁵. As the capital of Poland, Warsaw is the political center of the country. It is also an important economic hub in Central Europe, and a major international tourist destination.

It is also the media center of Poland, and serves as the headquarter of major local and national television and radio stations (TVP TVN, Polsat, TV4, TV Plus, Canal+ Poland, Cyfra+ and MTV Poland), nationwide newspapers (*Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Dziennik Polska-Europa-Świat*), and a sizeable movie and television industry.

Warsaw's ever-growing business community has been noticed globally, regionally, and nationally, and the city “was ranked as the 7th greatest emerging market. Foreign investors' financial participation in the city's development was estimated in 2002 at over 650 million euro. Warsaw produces 12% of Poland's national income, which in 2008 was 305.1% of the Polish average, per capita (or 160% of the European Union average)” (Wikipedia.com).

⁵⁴ In the early transition years (1990s), “protesting groups were largely defined by their professional status (workers, service sector employees, white collars). This changed towards the... [early 2000s] as protest by employees diminished, but young people and groups of neighbors continued their engagement in contentious politics. This signals the possibility that a civil society based on post-material values has been slowly emerging” (Ekiert et al, 29)

⁵⁵ The Globalization and World Cities Research Network (GaWC) define alpha & alpha- cities as “very important world cities that link major economic regions and states into the world economy” (<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2010t.html>)

Poland has long been a bridge between the East and the West, and Warsaw - situated in the center of the country - exemplifies this, having witnessed the shifting (and disappearing and reappearing) of state borders through the centuries. It is also the point from which activists set their gaze in different international directions. While there is much activity in Warsaw, it is important to note that it is not representative of activism or outlooks of other towns. It is an important site for the movement - this is not in dispute - but its specificity sometimes obscures the situations in other cities. Perhaps the most pronounced difference is in the degree to which Warsaw has felt confident to look beyond Poland, and endeavor to participate regionally, as a leader – a point which I will interrogate more thoroughly, later in this chapter.

In terms of Poland, Warsaw is quite diverse racially, ethnically, religiously, ideologically, and in terms of class, gender, and sexual orientation. Warsaw has historically been a destination for both internal and foreign immigration, particularly from surrounding countries. Demographically, it was, and continues to be the most diverse city in Poland, with a significant numbers of foreign-born inhabitants, and prior to WWII there used to be a significant Jewish minority in Warsaw (constituting about 30% of the population). Within present-day Poland, Warsaw remains a space of difference, alterity, and freedom. The “anonymity” of the city that many activists refer to carries with it the possibility of what Foucault refers to as “thinking and acting differently”.

While the above may read like material produced by an office of tourism, all these factors lend themselves to favorable conditions for both LGBT activists and LGBT people in general. As one informant, whom I will call Adam, a Polish-American who returned to Poland several years ago,

stated, “There’s a lot going on here, and it is the center of activism, and it’s the place to be if you want to do this kind of work, that’s for sure... There are local groups in other towns, but for very professional kind of activism or the movement, it’s Warsaw [to be in].” After being involved in various types of social justice work in the US (environmental justice, economic justice, human rights), this activist returned to Poland specifically to pursue LGBT activism. After initially considering staying and working in Kraków, close to where most of his extended family lives, Adam quickly reconsidered after realizing there wasn’t much he could do there, or at least not the way he would have liked, namely, explicitly political work. Jan, an independent activist and blogger from a small town, also extolled the virtues of Warsaw and the type of people it attracts,

“the most mobile people in the country travel to Warsaw. Those who believe that only in the biggest cities, only at the fastest pace, and they are the ones who frequently travel internationally, travel more often, work in multinational corporations, thanks to which they more easily discover Western patterns, glorify them a bit... but there are more mobile people in Warsaw... people who moved and spent time in Warsaw are more accomplished, they’re more active, they work in NGOs, international firms, are more motivated to participate in the rat race... there’s also a greater mix of different people.”

We could also count the number of LGBT and LGBT-friendly establishments in town (bars, clubs, cafés and restaurants). The number totals somewhere between 25 and 40⁵⁶, with a quick turn-over rate common with eating, drinking, and recreation establishments in general. This would, of course, be a crude and oversimplified assessment. While important for recreation and social life, the specific number of establishments in and of itself is not as important as the fact that they exist in the first place. As social establishments, they are subject to the same market forces of basic supply-and-demand principles. What *is* significant, is how they’re used, and what their presence denotes. In other words, the fact that they are now visible (no longer just

⁵⁶ <http://gaywarsaw.pl/?p=h&s=3&l=1>
http://warsaw.gayguide.net/Gay_Guide/Bars_Clubs/

underground, or seedy cruising areas), and frequented by both LGBT people and hetero people alike, indicates that a cultural shift is occurring, spearheaded largely by younger generations - a shift which activists frequently stressed as having occurred in just five years.

As a global city - and a hotbed of political and social activity in Poland - Warsaw plays an indispensable role in informing the LGBT movement, both in Poland and regionally. As one activist succinctly put it, “the public life goes on here.” This sentiment was echoed by most informants I encountered during my field research. The largest concentration of LGBT organizations and associations is in Warsaw – this a result of two mutually reinforcing factors: because it is a site for LGBT migration within Poland, organizing and membership is more successful in Warsaw, and because it has the most diversity in terms of LGBT organizations, it attracts more LGBT people. This allows for community-formation by sheer density. The density contributes to LGBT visibility. Visibility, in turn, feeds place-making projects.

Strategically, it is also the most logical. Activists have the greatest access to partnering organizations, media outlets, government bodies, and funding sources (foundations and foreign embassies). An informant who has been active in KPH for many years stated,

“Most of the bigger [Polish] organizations we work with or that we *want* to work with are here, and obviously [Warsaw] attracts young, dynamic people... The orgs [sic] we want are here, the people we want are here, the institutions we want are here. So are the governmental institutions, and whoever we want to lobby, the ministries and everything, they’re based here. Everyone is physically here so you can meet with people privately, see them, have a more personal contact with our partners. We have our webmaster in another city and I can see even the problems *that* creates.”

This is highly specific to Warsaw, as its movement activities have largely shifted from self-help, identity-formation and empowerment, and LGBT-centered recreation, to definitively more professionalized and high-skilled missions, including lobbying, legal work, and social campaigns. The focus is no longer on simply congregating as a merry band of misfits, but on changing institutions through the tools available in a democratic society. This is most visible with the organization Kampania Przeciw Homofobia or KPH (Campaign Against Homophobia), which, since its inception in 2001, has become highly professionalized. KPH's seeks to create a society in which LGBT people feel safe and comfortable. The organization undertakes a wide variety of activities including conferences, exhibitions, demonstrations, socials, workshops and training, meetings with politicians and academics, political lobbying, legal and psychological counseling, publishing the quarterly *Replika*, and leaflets, and cooperation with similar organizations from other countries and international bodies (Kampania Przeciw Homofobii 2009). While there are affiliated branches throughout the country, the Warsaw headquarters is one of the only ones that has maintained a permanent office. It also has several permanent staff members, who work full-time and coordinate volunteer activity. Most activists speak English fluently, oftentimes in addition to other tongues. The staff includes highly-educated individuals, and white-collar professionals like lawyers, teachers, and psychologists. Volunteers, on the other hand, are largely comprised of younger people, mostly university students. Interns – at the time of my field research – were English-speaking foreigners pursuing advanced degrees and writing their theses.

Even though they are part of the same organization, other branches of KPH look quite different. Comprised solely of volunteers, their ability to take on projects is much more precarious –

focusing predominantly on small-scale social campaigns and self-empowerment. Groups in other towns are limited by the frequent turnover and volatile schedules of volunteers, many of whom have full-time jobs or attend university, and are hampered by a lack of stable meeting space. In the rare instances that groups are able to rent an office of their own – the Wrocław and Gdańsk branches were both able to do this at one point – the leases have been temporary and activists once again had to find alternatives. Those alternative arrangements most frequently consisted of subletting a room from a larger organization (the Wrocław contingent rented from feminist groups, and Gdańsk contingent rented from trade union organizations), usually in exchange for tidying up and light remodeling work. Other times, groups met at private homes or at LGBT-friendly bars or cafes. While it may be comforting that some kinds of alternative arrangements are available, informants frequently stressed the advantage that the Warsaw branch has and their own desire for a permanent office space to call their own, “just like the Warsaw group has.”

However, just as Warsaw can be a space of difference, alterity and freedom, it can also serve as a junction for opposing forces, and facilitates the exchange between and among actors of both camps. The city is not simply a utopia for minorities, but instead reveals a more complicated picture, as it is where supporting and opposing forces converge, mutually reinforcing an “us” vs. “them” dichotomy. This isn’t necessarily a negative thing for LGBT activists, as an anti-LGBT response has made homophobia visible in Poland. As one prominent activist stated, “it showed that there is a problem... with discrimination of LGBT people. And it showed that this is a problem not of LGBT people only, but it’s a problem of democracy itself, and how we exercise the democracy”. Activists on both sides of the issue are vocal in the entire country, but more profoundly in Warsaw, because this is where voices have the most power. Warsaw acts as a

megaphone for the rest of the country. The very fact that people – citizens, educators, policymakers, movers and shakers – are currently having these conversations (they are not always hysterical sparring matches) about partner beneficiary rights, adoption by same-sex couples, and civil partnerships, is an incredible thing that should not be undervalued, even if it is not the ultimate end result for which activists are hoping. This fact is all the more noteworthy when we consider that what is happening now was barely imaginable five to seven years prior.

The defining element that makes Warsaw different from the rest of Poland, is that certain things are possible in Warsaw, and from that possibility arises visibility, which in turn feeds a sense of greater possibility, etc. “The present is not enough”, one activists stated, indicating that although some signs of progress have been made and small victories won, there is more to do, and activists show no signs of giving up just yet. Their surroundings in Warsaw fuel their hope. Amidst the antagonism, there is just enough positivity to let them feel that all is not lost.

Many people speak of the anonymity possible in big cities. This is not a trivial prospect. In many cases it is the ultimate form of human freedom. To grasp the importance of this is to understand the fundamental difference between urban and rural life. “Urban life entails reflexive activity. The forms of such activity are not fixed for long... [o]penness and expansiveness are implicit in urbanism as a way of life. What was once the exception – a meeting with the Other: strangers from another tribe, clan, or village – becomes increasingly the norm (Magnusson, 22).” It is relatively easy for an individual or a group to escape a previous enclosure or ascription and establish a new way of life. The density of human interaction – cultural, social, economic, and political – is such that possibilities for earning a living, finding a place, making a name tend to

proliferate. “Thus, the city is widely perceived as a locus of freedom: a place where the enclosures of family and tribe and tradition can be escaped and where new modes of life – perhaps ones that refigure family, tribe, and tradition in new ways – can be created.”

Anonymity, in this case, is not synonymous with secrecy or mystery. While the city does provide a protective cloak of sorts for individuals - by mere virtue of population density - it does not mean that people aim to be secretive. Instead, it means that people’s lives are governed by less strict rules and social norms, making self-determination not only a possibility, but also a liberating reality. Anonymity constitutes the other side of the visibility coin. It makes place-making possible. Jan, the independent activist and blogger, illustrates this seemingly contradictory relationship. While he is a public figure, largely through his blogging (musing on current events, and critiques of LGBT movement activities, reports on happenings), he walks freely in the city as an anonymous, regular citizen. People who know of him generally hail from activist circles. His neighbors don’t know his business, nor do they pry (as they did in his small hometown, where he took no part in LGBT activism). More frequent visibility of LGBT people becomes normalized, and through that normalization, un-extraordinary. In Warsaw, LGBT manifestations are largely stripped from their exoticism. While they might be colorfully plumaged and out-of-place peacocks elsewhere, in Warsaw they veer more towards everyday, urban pigeons.

For non-Warsaw activists, trips to the capital serve as inspiring moments of hopefulness. Alex, a EuroPride participant from Wrocław, made a comment regarding activism in Warsaw and how invigorating it was to be in the thick of it and meeting people from all over, and hearing about all

the projects and campaigns, brainstorming, and thinking about how to incorporate some of it in Wrocław. Her comments spoke directly to the importance of Warsaw as a place-making space and the potential that it carries for activists both within the capital and beyond. The interesting thing is that Alex isn't from some rural wasteland. On the contrary, Wrocław (my old town), is a young place, population-wise. It is progressive and hip. There are many cultural events that take place there, and the town is open to supporting more progressive agendas. And yet, there's something mysterious about Warsaw – not just because the event was taking place there, but that it was *selected* to take place there in the first place. Upon closer inspection, the mystery element is not mystery at all. Over the years, Warsaw has etched out a reputation for itself as a cosmopolitan city, and as such, a place hospitable to grafting by diverse social flora. Put simply, LGBT place-making already has a firm foothold in Warsaw, and hosting the event there was the most logical choice in regards to hospitable environment, experience with yearly Pride parades⁵⁷ in the past, and existing infrastructure to support the potentially large crowds of European visitors. KPH activist Mark supports this, explaining that because many solidarity projects already underway, “that’s why EuroPride was here this year. And I think that’s all because of our cooperation with other organizations. Because they could do a lot of [grunt] work for us as well”.

Amidst the various LGBT establishments (bars, clubs, cafes), film festivals, LGBT media, workshops, conferences, and clustering of organization headquarters, I witnessed several significant projects aimed at place-making. The most intriguing examples of LGBT possibility and visibility in Warsaw have included things as varied as the ‘Niech Nas Zobaczą’ (Let them see us) campaign, the publication of the *Homo-Warszawa* book and accompanying city walks,

⁵⁷ The closest equivalent to Western Pride parades are the yearly Equality Parades, which are themselves more of a march than carnival-like parade.

and the *Ars Homo Erotica* exhibit that was curated by Paweł Leszkowicz for the National Museum.

I had heard about the “controversial” and “provocative” *Ars Homo Erotica* exhibit before leaving Chicago, so I was excited to see it in person. The museum website informed visitors that “[t]o select works from the perspective of female and male homoerotic iconography is to queer the museum collection, to reach areas of the unconscious and to renew the methods of their presentation. It also aims to uncover and accentuate many forgotten artefacts[sic] and to highlight neglected meanings.”⁵⁸

It contained collected works from contemporary artists from around the world, as well as pieces by well-known Polish painters. The exhibit was broken down into several different themes (struggle, homoerotic classicism, male nudes and couples, homoerotic mythology, Saint Sebastian, lesbian homoeroticism, transgender representation, and archives). One room played a film (commissioned by the museum) depicting a young man being beaten, stripped, hung, and ultimately shot by a group of soldiers. It was meant to be a metaphor for the treatment of LGBT people in Poland, and directly alluded to the story of St. Sebastian. Adorning the adjacent walls, the film was accompanied by the painted depictions of Saint Sebastian belonging to the permanent collection of the museum. The fact that many people, especially older women, cursed and flailed their arms at the piece and reacted so strongly to it was telling. Saint Sebastian is one of the most popular themes of Christian art, and his image is featured in thousands of

⁵⁸ http://www.mnw.art.pl/index.php/en/temporary_exhibitions/exhibitions/art55.html

representations, not all homoerotic. Only some works possess this unique quality thanks to an intensification and intersection of suffering, ecstasy, and sensuality.

The most interesting aspect of the exhibition wasn't the individual installations, so much as what was happening around them. The exhibit's placement in the gallery began immediately in the foyer. No museum visitor could avoid being confronted by at least a few "uncomfortable" images (although those in the main hall were mild and contained mainly various organizations' campaign posters). Most people, after making jokes and pointing, especially the visiting school groups, shuffled through to admire "real art", the permanent collection.

Whether the exhibit was powerful content-wise is disputable. However, the installations' collective presence was much more impressive and symbolic of a cultural transition in Poland. Of course, many political battles had to be fought in order for the Museum to even propose such an exhibit, but I came to understand the eventual proposal adoption and exhibition's coming into fruition as a sign that these things are *no longer unimaginable nor impossible*. That a small battle can be fought (and won) is a significant change/achievement. The exhibit lasted from June 11 to September 5, 2010, all the while unmistakably advertising the exhibit with a giant poster at the front entrance. So even if people didn't go inside see it, the National Museum's placement on a main artery in the city, where countless cars, trams and bus routes passed, not to mention where pedestrian traffic was high, meant that people took notice, whether they wanted to or not.

The act of hanging and displaying the exhibit poster mirrored one of the pieces housed inside the museum. Czech artist David Cerny's 2009 installation entitled *Entropa (The Polish Part)*,

included in the *Time of Struggle* theme of the exhibit, depicts priests planting the LGBT rainbow flag on a Poland-shaped potato field (mirroring *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima*)⁵⁹. In a very meta-conscious way this was an act of place-making, by the curators, designer, artists, and museum board.

In a similar vein, there have been several publications aimed at rediscovering and revealing LGBT history, as well as outing and reappropriating cultural and historical icons. All were written by Warsaw activists and published by presses in the capital city. One such text, entitled *Queer Warsaw* (English version), was born out of a series of conversations between activists (both affiliated with formal organizations and independent, free agents) and resulted in the first edition in Polish entitled *Homo Warszawa*. The first edition was meant to serve as a walking guide around town as a way to publicize an obscured/censored LGBT presence, both present and past. Specific places are listed, but so are important public figures such as artists, writers, and politicians. The English version follows a similar format but it includes more background information of which non-Poles wouldn't necessarily be aware. Another motivating factor for publishing the book was to emphasize that Poland, and Warsaw specifically, has for a very long time harbored queer spaces and individuals, and that it wasn't simply a "western import" – as critics of the LGBT movement in Poland frequently argued.

Two years preceding the publication of *Homo Warszawa*, and two years following, Krzysztof Tomasik published *Homobiografie. Pisarki i pisarze polscy XIX i XX wieku* (*Homobiographies: Polish Writers of the XIX and XX Centuries*), and *Gejeral. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*

⁵⁹ http://www.mnw.art.pl/index.php/en/temporary_exhibitions/time_of_struggle/

(Gejere! Sexual Minorities in the Polish People's Republic), 2008 and 2012, respectively. Both were historical analyses and interpretations of homosexual presence. The first contained stories of prominent (homosexual) writers like Konopnicka, Rodziewiczówna, Iwaszkiewicz, Andrzejewski and Maria Dąbrowska. He received many negative reviews claiming that he's harming literature, and that since these authors are beloved *not because* of their sexuality, why even raise the issue? Which is exactly why he claims he wrote the book in the first place: to pave the way for new interpretations, of literature, history, and national identity⁶⁰. In his most recent book, *Gejere!...*, Tomasik explores homosexuality during Poland's communist era by flipping through reports, forgotten literature, records of court cases, speeches of politicians and authorities, diaries and letters. He tracks previously unexplored discourse and presents insight into topics previously unaddressed by literary critics, cultural historians or researchers.

While the museum exhibit provided artistic reinterpretation of cultural iconography, both Polish and foreign, the three aforementioned books peel back the covers of history and reveal not only a queer *interpretation*, but a real, tangible gay presence. They offer facts and evidence of an organic gay and lesbian Polish "scene", prior to EU intervention, prior to (the most recent) Russian intervention, and prior to (the most recent) German intervention. Doing so presents the possibility of a historical and culturally relevant LGBT visibility, lending credibility to the contemporary movement manifesting itself in Poland.

At the core of these creative projects and expressions is the need to assert an authentic *Polishness*, and is not limited to formal execution by galleries or publishing houses. Throughout

⁶⁰ <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/336292/Niech-nas-zobacza/?pg=1>

the course of my field research, the everyday use of the most important symbol of nationality - the flag – was in constant use by LGBT activists, and conservative forces, alike. During the week-long EuroPride event, and most visibly at the march itself, activists were engaged in what Simon Harrison calls a “propriety contest”, wherein “the contestants agree on the prestige of the symbols but dispute their ownership” (Harrison, 259). Actors on opposite sides of the issue tried to lay claim to the idea of Polishness or authenticity, albeit in different ways. Movement activists understood themselves to be a part of Poland that could no longer be subdued. They identify themselves with the “new” Poland, one that is heading towards pluralist democracy, further integration into Europe and liberal social values. Conservative parts of society, and in many cases, the politicians, saw Poland as a bastion of “normalcy” among European liberalism and immorality. The idealization of the Polish family, the church, and a strong sense of gender roles characterized these opinions. The flag was deployed by both sides during the Pride march and counter demonstration to emphasize their ownership of their respective understanding of Poland.

During the EuroPride festivities, many floats, other vehicles, and individuals displayed Polish flags alongside the movement’s rainbow flag. By flying them side-by-side, activists were claiming the LGBT community’s place in Poland. Some carried large Polish flags while marching on the ground, similar to a nationalist parade. Many carried home-made banners, flags and signs that made reference to Poland too: one depicted a large white and red heart (Polish colors) and the word “Polska” written in an equally loving font. White and red balloons were flown throughout the scene. A drag queen on the KPH float was adorned in feather boas, pearls, silk dress, gloves, wig, all in Polish flag colors. Another drag queen accompanying her was

decked out in everything rainbow – dress, wig, eye shadow, accessories. They waved, swayed and danced to the music together, mirroring the flags that billowed around them.

There were other ways in which activists displayed their belonging and claims to authenticity, and played with traditional constructions of identity. One long-time activist wore a basic white t-shirt on which he had written with markers “Gej, Ateista, Feminista, Polak”⁶¹ (Figure 2). The first three descriptors were written in black marker, and the last in red. There could be no clearer attempt to highlight oneself as both gay and Polish (and liberal, and non-Catholic), and in so doing, problematize the overly-simplistic dominant narrative of national belonging.

FIGURE 2.



⁶¹ “Gay, Atheist, Feminist, Polish”

Another marcher donned a folkloric Krakowiak costume consisting of a long, blue, wool jacket adorned with red and gold embroidery and beading (Figure 3). The man accessorized with the traditional black and red hat worn with a long peacock feather protruding from it, and leather boots to complete the ensemble. This is the costume of Kraków, the town considered the cultural capital of Poland, and is a symbol of tradition and royalty. The marcher wearing it did alter the traditional costume by omitting the red and white striped trousers, thereby sexing it up for the occasion.

FIGURE 3.



A pivotal social campaign aimed at promoting (contemporary) LGBT visibility in public spheres occurred several years before my project started. “Niech nas zobaczą” (Let them see us) was launched back in 2003⁶². However, its effects continue to this day, as it was the first gay and lesbian public advertising campaign in Poland. It sparked a nationwide debate about LGBT rights and introduced the topic of homosexuality into the public sphere. The campaign was organized by Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) and executed by Karolina Breguła, who photographed 30 same-sex couples holding hands in public spaces. The campaign encountered some obstacles. Initially meant to be displayed on 500 billboards in Poland's biggest cities, starting with Warsaw, the company (AMS) renting out ad space backed out at the last moment. Another company, Cityboard Media, stepped in and provided its structures for the project, but the posters were soon vandalized. The photos eventually ended up on display in art galleries throughout Poland, including the aforementioned *Ars Homo Erotica*⁶³.

“Niech nas zobaczą” was a breakthrough. It gave lesbians and gays widespread media exposure – for the first time in Poland. The campaign was met with immense amount of conservative protests; quotes about “deviants”, “flaunting homosexuality” and “homosexual propaganda” were thrown around, even though the couples in the photos were only holding hands. Not only was there no nudity, but since many photos were taken during the winter months, participants were decked out in several layers of warm clothing. More interestingly, many of the couples pictured were not even homosexual. Instead, they posed on principle.

⁶² <http://www.booki.cc/queerwarsaw/niech-nas-zobacza-let-them-see-us/>

⁶³ <http://www.cafebabel.co.uk/images/430/ars-homo-erotica-wystawa-w-warszawie/4/>

The very name of the campaign is revealing: “Let them see us”. It explicitly speaks to public visibility, while simultaneously responding to an unspoken, subtle hesitation. The campaign began in Warsaw, where the initial acts of vandalism occurred. The posters were eventually moved indoors. The posters toured throughout the country and were exhibited in Kraków (Burzym & Wolf Gallery), Gdańsk (Łaźnia Gallery), Sosnowiec (Crossing Over Association Gallery), and Lublin (ACK UMCS "Chatka Żaka”). While some may deem the campaign a letdown, due to the vandalism, and subsequent retreating into the shadows of gallery space, it did pave the way for future social campaigns and traveling exhibitions⁶⁴.

What happens in Warsaw, does not stay in Warsaw (Warsaw as megaphone)

As unique as the local characteristics of Warsaw are, in terms of its influence on other designations, these elements are also subject to seeping through the pervious local sieve, as the “Let them see us” campaign illustrates. The movement is largely centralized, with Warsaw at the helm. What happens in the capital drives the direction of the movement nationally, particularly as activists in Warsaw become more professionalized and aim to institutionalize movement goals. However, Warsaw’s role nationally highlights movement tensions between Warsaw and “the rest”, and even exacerbates resentments that activists in other towns may sometimes feel toward the capital. This is especially true when activists in other cities would like to define the movement for their own localities. The Warsaw contingent has increased its efforts to lobby the national government for more inclusive anti-discrimination legislation, legal definitions of hate speech, and civil unions, as well as pursuing strategic, high-profile litigation on behalf of LGBT

⁶⁴ “Jestem gejem. Jestem lesbijką. Poznaj nas!” (I am gay. I am lesbian. Meet us!) 2003/2004
“Homofobia. Tak to wygląda!” (Homophobia. This is what it looks like!) 2007.
“Berlin - Yogyakarta” Project 2009 (travelling exhibition).
“Miłość nie wyklucza” (Love does not exclude) 2010.

individuals. All of these campaigns have had an effect on the activities in other towns, as local, isolated goals seemed to have been left by the way-side in favor of bigger-scoped projects – something felt particularly acutely in terms of funding resources. In an effort to feel they are making an impact, activists on the peripheries feel pressure to participate in the national projects, something which is then later confirmed when they travel to the capital city and are exhilarated by what they encounter – namely spaces of belonging, which they had a distant role in creating (arguably, at the expense of belonging more locally). Regardless, activism in Warsaw ends up acting as an incubator for citizen participation, and this carries with it the potential to take root and flourish elsewhere. To recap, there are two main ways in which ‘Warsaw as national megaphone’ manifests: social movement formalization and institutionalization, and Warsaw as an informal incubator for civil society engagement. Each is discussed at length below, beginning with the latter.

Incubator for civil society

The Polish political establishment remains unconvinced about the civic status of LGBT Poles. By rightwing media accounts, activists are trying to impose a “dictatorship of equality” (dyktatura równości), while curbing essential Polish freedoms (Leszkowicz and Kitliński 2005). At the same time, social authorities understand the concept of freedom very creatively. Namely, freedom connotes the freedom to resist progressive social reform. It includes the right to deny gays, lesbians, and trans people basic civic and human rights. Most importantly, it is a right to restrict the very limited access that the LGBT community has to the public sphere. Yet to LGBT activists, citizenship and equality are inextricably linked to social visibility (Leszkowicz and Kitliński 2005).

In large part because place-making projects are possible in Warsaw, the city comes to serve as a testing ground for projects that may take root elsewhere. Relatedly, participation - particularly by youth - in various events or campaigns in Warsaw oftentimes has the effect of serving as an initial platform for future civic and political engagement, both in Warsaw and beyond. So while there exists formal social movement institutionalization - an aspect to which I will return later - the less formal movement expressions adopted beyond Warsaw are also indicative of the influence of capital city activism, most notably a revival in civic engagement by younger generations. There have been several campaigns, projects, and events started in Warsaw and adopted elsewhere, not to mention branches of organizations with starting points in Warsaw (KPH and Lambda in particular). Activists oftentimes travel to the capital specifically to attend workshops and training events. They accumulate knowledge and best practices, and witness other possibilities first-hand. They then take those experiences with them and further share human capital with colleagues back home. Both the “Love does not exclude” and “Let them see us” campaigns travelled to other towns, as well as inspired off-shoot projects.

Sometimes, activists will be inspired by an event and tweak it, rather than adopting the idea in its entirety. For example, taking its cue from Warsaw’s “Equal right to love” festival, organized since 2006 by the KPH Youth Group in honor of Valentine’s Day, activists in Wrocław, Gdynia and Kraków created and distributed Valentine’s Day cards to strangers in public spaces, signing them as queer individuals.

The expansion of projects to other towns has the potential to inform democracy in Poland. Certain campaigns (like “Let them see us”) or parades have had a profound, albeit coincidental

effect on democracy because they've served to involved and catalyze people to join discussions and action. As one long-time activist and co-founder of KPH stated "it really involved people who I think would never get involved in LGBT movement, like straight people, human rights advocates, who I remember were very skeptical of LGBT rights... they never would have gotten involved as much as they did when they saw that the freedom of assembly is being interrupted somehow." The more people witness disruptions to peaceful demonstrations, or overt discrimination, the more they are likely to recognize that a problem exists.

A curious obstacle for any kind of activism in Poland – not just LGBT activism – is that in terms of a *regular and sustained* culture of engagement, civil society remains rather weak. Compulsory collectivism promoted during communism has resulted in a general reluctance to become involved in collective action, and is still perceived as the main obstacle for the development of civil society in Poland. "Compulsory work on a voluntary basis in the communist period produced the term 'social activist' which is sometimes considered in a negative way, rather than a positive one" (Siciński 2001).

While people mobilize in times of crisis, they don't necessarily engage in regular, prolonged volunteerism or activism. Adam, the Polish-American who returned to Poland, puts it succinctly: "Activism isn't valued here. People are suspicious of it." Many activists, particularly student volunteers, have used their involvement in LGBT activism as a sort of training ground for other types of civic engagement- a concept largely eschewed by older generations due to their experience with obligatory membership and participation during PRL. Magda, an activist leader from Wrocław who frequently travels to Warsaw explained that (young) people "learn

citizenship through activism, oftentimes through stints in Warsaw”. Local groups function as “incubators” for students, for people who don't have stabilized lives, family lives, and oftentimes leave after completing university or entering the work force because they don't have time anymore. Despite the short-term nature of activism, Magda expressed hope, “...it's cool that they get hooked somewhere and join. That they learn citizenship, at least in terms of engagement. Maybe not at the level of lobbying through government, but taking care of their interests like a social group.” She went on to explain why in the Polish case, this type of activism is rather extraordinary, with emphasis on collective identity as the catalyst for long-term potential,

“On one hand it's a moment of engagement, of having an influence on what's happening, doing something for their group, that's cool because in Poland there isn't a culture like this, of civil society. There's a culture of reacting in moments of crisis – that's the history we have. When there's a crisis, we join together... So in moments of crisis we function well as a civil society, but in moments of non-crisis, of stability, long-term stages, it's worse. But at least there's this 'adventure with citizenship'... I'm convinced that if someone has an adventure, their awareness changes dramatically. From one of 'what's the point? It's my business that I'm gay or lesbian' – from a position in which the person doesn't see themselves as a member of that group and that that orientation in this country determines their position [within society]. People completely don't see this. And this changes, they start to notice this. That there exists a social group, generally, and that they don't belong, and that they are in this group, influences their functioning. So it's not just a personal fate and should come to terms with it. It's a collective experience. So this is what I see from a positive view-point.”

Interestingly, for many informants from other towns, engagement was something exotic and adventurous, largely made possible by moving to the capital. Alternatively, interviewees originally hailing from Warsaw seemed to largely take their own activism for granted. Many understood it as a natural *a priori*, but then explained it by citing family history and ancestors' participation in the underground partisan forces during WWII, and/or the Solidarity movement, and understood their own civic and political engagement as merely an extension of a much

longer political project for social justice. One lesbian activist from Warsaw, commenting on the Equality Parades in Gdańsk (her new home) via social media, had this to say:

“Continuing a family tradition (one grandfather fought in the Home Army and took part in the Uprising with grandmother to the last day; the other grandfather was killed in guerrilla warfare, grandmother deported to Kazakhstan), I will march in the first row at the Equality March, to stand up for freedom. Because it’s always been about freedom. Which again, someone is trying to take away from us.”

Just as histories of political participation are harnessed by movements of the left, in a similar vein, many people in the city who are engaged in conservative movements also cite their activism and interest in politics as a continuation of their families’ role in WWII and Solidarity. In either case, active political engagement is a more ingrained part of life in Warsaw than in most other places (the exception, perhaps, being Gdańsk), and may stem from a longer urban history of engaged citizenry.

Mark, an activist who has lived in Warsaw for several years and now works as an attorney explained the relationship between Warsaw and engagement well. His own personal history illustrates how engagement is endemic to Warsaw’s local specificity:

“Warsaw does better against the backdrop of Poland in terms of engagement... It’s also in part thanks to the city that I came to learn who I am, and what’s important to me. I came to understand how engagement in activism has a personal component. I wanted to improve my own social position. And Warsaw is a place where – while still somewhat restricted – there are possibilities to realize your ideas. Warsaw has always been such that here things start. Movements – gay, lesbian, or feminist - they largely begin in Warsaw. People are more diverse, they have different ideas, so Warsaw is decidedly the kind of city where one can begin activist activities. It offers possibilities. And these possibilities only seem to multiply. The fact that we are part of the EU and people travel abroad more, which not too long ago wasn’t so common, we become familiar with new methods of action, we encounter new cultures, new people, ideas, strategies. Warsaw is the kind of city where one can at least try to graft them [ideas], and start doing those kinds of things”.

For activists in other towns, trips to the capital are seen as rewards for active participation, and have become tangible incentives for what oftentimes seems like reward-less work. One such opportunity for learning and exchange of ideas was PrideHouse, the weeklong schedule of events leading up to the EuroPride parade⁶⁵. While there were parties, exhibitions, dances, and presentations all over the city, PrideHouse served as the center point for all activities, and meeting place for disparate visitors. Located in the foyer of the intellectual group, Krytyka Polityczna's (now defunct) café, *Nowy Wspaniały Świat*, the Information Point included a complete schedule of EuroPride week events and corresponding maps, LGBT literature (including the bi-monthly feminist-lesbian publication *Furia*, and the monthly LGBT cultural magazine *Replika*, as well as recently published books like *Homo Warszawa*, and various organizations' brochures and reports), t-shirts and other souvenirs, condoms, lubricants, mini-conversation books and dictionaries, as well as tourist information about the city itself, as well as Polish customs, traditions and culture. The Information Point was manned largely by young volunteers who travelled to Warsaw from other towns, usually in exchange for transportation and lodging covered by the organizations in which they were active. Many workshops were geared towards younger participants, with telling titles like 'Why I am a LGBT Youth Activist' which was led by IGLYO⁶⁶.

It served as the locus at which to congregate and meet others. Lost foreigners had a specific location at which to meet their fellow travelers, whether they were attending PrideHouse events, going sightseeing, or attending the myriad of other events organized parallel to PrideHouse happenings. The trendy café space included seating indoors and outdoors, a diverse and

⁶⁵ Full program (in Polish): <http://kph.org.pl/download/pridehouse-PL-el.pdf>

⁶⁶ International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organization

reasonably priced menu, and two upstairs venue spaces for the corresponding workshops, conference panels, debates, and film screenings, and photo exhibits. In the evenings, the café would host drag shows/performances, stand-up, parties, and DJs on the main floor. On a basic human level, it was a welcoming space at which to just hang out, drink, flirt, and socialize, wax philosophic⁶⁷.

Many panel participants included activists and politicians from abroad, as well as ambassadors and representatives residing and working in Warsaw. Panels were informative, and discussions afterward were rich⁶⁸. The Polish activists, both from Warsaw and those who traveled from beyond, eagerly spoke with their compatriots from other lands, took notes, exchanged contact info, and showed foreigners around town. They not only networked but become invigorated by the energy around them. Activism can be depleting, but these events recharged their passion. It made the impending parade all the more cathartic.

One particular panel⁶⁹ was illustrative of the kinds of themes being addressed and discussed by activists and public servants beyond the setting of PrideHouse conference panels. It mirrored the kinds of discussions activists were having about the movement in global terms, the role of

⁶⁷ From July 10-18, PrideHouse hosted the following, providing a key indicating in what languages the events would be led (with Polish and English being the default languages offered via simultaneous translation). Workshops and activities included the following themes and activities: *How to discuss safe sex with youth*, *LGBT specific lingo in various European language*, *Drag King how-to*, *Queer Latin-American dance*, *Queer Warsaw guided walk*, *LGBT and Jewish guided walk*, *Swedish Freddie Mercury Choir*, *Urban game (scavenger hunt) based on Queer Warsaw*, *Why I became a LGBT youth activist*, *Is Warsaw a LGBT-friendly city?*

⁶⁸ Panel discussions included topics like: *Furia editorial board discusses the role of lesbians in the movement*, *Relationship between homophobia and anti-Semitism*, *What the Bible says about homosexuality*, *History of homosexuality in Poland*, *Education and LGBT*, *International law and LGBT rights*, *European equality bodies and LGBT guardians*, *Different shades of trans*, *Situation of LGBT people in Easter Europe (Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia)*, *Art Pride and Polish gay art*, *Discussion with European Deputy Christoffer Fjellner*, *Civil partnerships in Poland and beyond*

⁶⁹ July 15, 2010 at 15.00 Panel: “European Equality Bodies Defending LGBT Rights”. Moderator: Krzysztof Smiszek (KPH, PTPA). Panelists: Katri Linna (Swedish Ombudsperson), Ulrike Lunacek (European Green Party), Prof. Jaworska

government, local context, and responsibility of civil society. The civil society issue is a particularly salient one, and it was raised during the very first Pride House panel (meeting with the *Furia* editorial board), and echoed in subsequent talks. Panelists stressed the fact that formal institutions like parliament do not suffice in bringing about change, and that a vibrant civil society is crucial for the development of democracy and progressive social change. This very well may have been a reflection of the popularity of the concept at this time, particularly among policymakers. However, the question of constructing a stronger civil society-oriented political culture is a highly context-dependent one, and the Polish case is fraught with issues of a (dis)engaged citizenry. What's more, movement activity in general waxes and wanes, as people have a tendency to disengage after small victories have been achieved.

Poland's civil society still suffers from the legacy of its socialist past. However, while associations and organizations have flourished since 1989, the social legacies of the previous regime are difficult to root out, and volunteering in Poland remains an incidental phenomenon, consistent with earlier reflection by activist Magda: in contrast to regular, sustained engagement it is triggered on special occasions, usually in times of crises (2015-2016 KOD protests are a prime example of this). Data on volunteerism in Poland has remained steady at 20% for a few years now, although 10-12 years ago, it was at 24%, with the majority (51%) volunteering a couple times a year, and only 12% doing so systematically, several times a month⁷⁰. The general aversion to engagement is a response to compulsory collectivism promoted during communism. People, especially the older generations, are reluctant to join associations and groups, or engage politically or socially, especially since they now have the *choice* not to. According to 2007 data, around 4 million (13.2% of the adult population) Polish adults participated in organized

⁷⁰ Based on data collected by the Klon/Jawor Association. URL: <http://fakty.ngo.pl/wiadomosc/2005671.html#>

voluntary activities. The age group most committed to volunteering are young people below 25 years of age⁷¹. This differentiation between age groups is slowly changing with more people between the ages of 36 and 45 showing higher levels of voluntary activity, and those between 26 and 35 participating the least⁷².

What makes the LGBT movement in Poland interesting – Warsaw, and to a lesser extent elsewhere – is that activists seem to recognize that their personal involvement is necessary, whether it be through NGOs, grassroots campaigns, or as independent, free-agents. Many understand their political engagement as an extension of a larger democratic project, one hinged on the idea that recognition of minority rights (through the establishment of formal institutions) are paramount to the health of a society.

Engagement, however, does not translate equally across the entire country, especially around LGBT issues. Warsaw has the most LGBT organizations and members, and partly thanks to its strength in numbers, the movement is slowly becoming institutionalized⁷³, despite remaining highly controversial. It has been able to do so for two other reasons: First, it is very much centralized, and the dictates of Warsaw organizations take precedence. Second, LGBT activism in the city has also become increasingly professionalized, with full-time staff, experienced grant writers, media savvy, English language proficiency, and projects focused on lobbying

⁷¹ Between 2001 and 2005, the share of young volunteers tripled, suggesting that volunteering is a substitute for vocational experience to enhance the employability of graduates entering the job market (Samolyk, 2005).

⁷² Possible factors may include the lack of a stable personal and professional situation after having completed university, and the mass economic migration of young people abroad.

⁷³ Evidenced by electoral politics and legislation. Visible LGBT candidates have run for office in the last couple elections, and 2011 saw the election of Poland's first out-gay member of parliament, Robert Biedroń, and first trans member of parliament, Anna Grodzka. Additionally, proposals for a more thorough antidiscrimination legislation, and civil partnerships have periodically been introduced in the senate.

government. As a result of this proximity, activists in Warsaw are reminded every day of the connection between their work and the larger political implications for the nation as a whole. One can easily imagine their local activities as feeding into a larger national dialog, with repercussions that extend beyond the scope of their locally-lived experience, and influence not only LGBT politics nationally, but also ideas about what it means to be an engaged citizen.

Activists volunteering their time and know-how in various towns around Poland may seem far removed from the hubbub occurring in the capital city, but they are very much an extension of the same, broader civil society project, albeit the connection is a bit more elusive. The everyday letter-writing, grant applications, social awareness campaigns in the form of flyers and public visibility stunts may seem like isolated events, but when activists reconvene as a larger community, their collective identity is reaffirmed. When activists descend upon the city, they don't just get to live the reward of spending time in the capital, they bring their experiences from home, share them, learn from others (from other towns as well as those from Warsaw), and disperse again with a sense of common purpose, and civic know-how. Whether or not they remain involved with LGBT activism, they also learn skills that they can later transfer to other issues, and many do.

Social movement formalization and institutionalization

Of all the characteristics that distinguish activism in Warsaw from activism in other parts of the country, the city's role as the country's capital is the most profound because it has a direct influence on the shape of the movement, nationally. While Warsaw's expanding regional influence is taking place through much more informal means, such as visibility campaigns, loose

networks and collaborative grant-writing, *nationally*, the movement is becoming increasingly formalized, and in turn, institutionalized, sometimes due to the international connections made available by Warsaw's status as both capital and global city.

The movement in Poland is centralized. As such, Warsaw generally sets the example and awaits others to fall in line, a pattern that has been long-established in the country's political history. Warsaw has spearheaded the formalization of LGBT politics through social movement institutionalization. I would go further and break this down into two distinct processes. The first - social movement *formalization* - wherein specific political mechanisms are used as tools by activists outside the halls of government. Examples of this are petitions, lobbying, collaborating with international bodies. The second - social movement *institutionalization* - as expressed through using tools from within the belly of the beast. In the case of the latter, examples include introductions of proposals by sympathetic political parties, the election of LGBT candidates into public office, or the passing of legislation. The distinction is crucial, because while both processes connote a level of professionalization by activists, only the latter signifies a structural change to the status quo. In Poland, formalization is aplenty, and institutionalization is limited.

The tools of governance are made and reside in Warsaw. People are cognizant of the fact that to have access to the tools of governance, let alone change them, proximity is a must, and this reinforces the city's importance in the contemporary political climate. One attorney-activist I spoke with had this say:

“Everything happens here, everything that's important. It would be difficult for us to lobby for changes in parliament being in Szczecin. And I see the difference between Warsaw and groups in other towns like Rzeszów, Bydgoszcz, and not just LGBT, but civil society in general in other towns, and the difference is

visible. Because we here are more [proactive] - and this is rather unfair, because we're closer to everything here – but for us it is normal to walk into Sejm and hold a press conference. Or we invite politicians or go to some ministry for a meeting. For a group from Rzeszów, a trip to the ministry is a two-day journey and preparation. This is very specific to Warsaw - that it's a political center, economic, cultural, and global.”

While great for Warsaw, the city's position as a capitol city is also a cause for tension between it and other towns, in terms of movement goals. This is because its perspective will always be broader than “the local” as defined by the city limits. What happens in Warsaw influences the rest of the nation, either informally through its trend-setting status, formally by way of policy implementation, or simply by setting the tone for a national discourse. This isn't necessarily the case with other towns. What occurs in Wrocław has the potential to remain contained within the city limits of Wrocław, whether it's a discussion or a statute. Whereas Warsaw's limits are much more porous, because as the political center of the country, it has tentacles that reach beyond itself. However, one thing is clear, “the local” in Warsaw means something quite different than “the local” elsewhere, as the national and the global are de facto elements of Warsaw's particular localism. It's always had an international history and character, made more prominent since the capital relocated there from Kraków in 1596. This local particularity is also what has allowed activists to begin the process of institutionalizing their goals. By taking on more professionalized activities like grant-writing, activists have been able to engage in more formal campaigns and strategies like lobbying, while activists in other towns - having limited resources, including the lack of proximity to decision-making bodies – are left with smaller, localized goals, whose coming into fruition depends largely on sporadic volunteerism. Not least of all to Warsaw's

advantage, Warsaw's international appeal has attracted foundational support (funds), cementing the leadership status of organizations headquartered there⁷⁴.

There are several formal mechanisms available to LGBT activists in Warsaw, which have been harnessed in interesting ways. Some are viable strategies due to Warsaw's capital status (lobbying, legal action, anti-discrimination legislation), while others have been made possible due to its global status (funding sources, political allies, media). The thing to note is that these formal mechanisms, while made available to citizens following Poland's transition to democracy, are utilized by actors who still find themselves trying to make changes from *outside* of the political apparatus. While highly professionalized, these actors remain on the fringe in terms of their actual political influence. They are not policymakers, nor do they work for government agencies. Instead, they resort to applying pressure on policymakers to recognize limitations of existing institutions, and to make the requisite alterations. Some examples of the kind of formal mechanisms that LGBT activists have harnessed include lobbying efforts, taking up select court cases, as well as utilizing the media to raise awareness. All these aforementioned strategies have been effective in their approach in large part thanks to their allies and supporters abroad. The kinds of professional and formal strategies adopted from outside the governmental apparatus are illustrative of the "boomerang pattern of policy development" as explored by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ Various organizations and projects have received grants and infrastructural support from the likes of Open Society Institute, Rose Luxemburg Foundation, EU, as well as support from various embassies (Norwegian, Dutch, and British).

⁷⁵ Keck and Sikkink created a foundation for understanding collective action and transnational advocacy networks, taking the theories of social movements defined by Tarrow and others to a transnational level – increasing the scale of collective action while staying grounded in Olson's high-cost understanding of group formation and the need for formal organizations. Keck and Sikkink differentiate transnational advocacy networks (TANs) from traditional modes of organizing by explaining that they are "motivated by values rather than by material concerns or professional norms."

In this model, barriers in the form of “blockages” exist between domestic activists or NGOs and their domestic governments. The goal of transnational advocacy is to lower these barriers, in order for change to actually occur. When this proves impossible, activists will approach outside sources, using information exchanges, to find an entity that can apply pressure on the state in question. Activists seek help from other states, NGOs, and international organizations in order to achieve a goal within an offending state. In terms of the LGBT movement in Poland, activists in Warsaw have frequently cited their reliance on external sources to publicize specific issues that were not receiving due attention domestically, and on pressure administered by international organizations and suggesting amendments to policies or statutes. In eliminating blockages, activists engaged in the more professionalized activities via lobbying and litigation, gaining media attention, as well as becoming players in representative politics. All of these are integral to LGBT activism, and are made possible through their placement in Warsaw, however, they all make clear that it no longer suffices to be active domestically for national goals. Instead, these strategies highlight the interconnectedness of local place, national goals, and international networks.

One attorney I spoke to, Daniel, an activist for KPH and co-founder of the Polish Association of Antidiscrimination Law, listed his lobbying efforts as some of his most significant activist work. Daniel offers an interesting perspective on the role of the city for more professional types of activist strategies, from both within the political apparatus, and from the outside. After relocating to Warsaw to attend University, he remained and was eventually employed in the Prime Minister’s office, in the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Equal Status of Women and Men⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ The office was abolished in 2006 under the Kaczynski government, but in 2008, Prime Minister Tusk reinstated it, albeit without assigning clear competences.

Highlighting the relationship between Warsaw's national role and the international setting in which it exists, the role of the office was very much influenced by international sentiments. At this time, Poland was preparing to enter the EU and had to restructure in order to meet the member requirements set forth by the EU, known as the Copenhagen Criteria⁷⁷.

Daniel's situation - illustrated by his employment history and projects- highlights the mutually-influencing relationship of local, national, and global activism in Warsaw, particularly in terms of professionalized activist strategies. Since his stint at the government agency, and thanks to opportunities and connections honed while in Warsaw, he has since moved on to work in other spheres, mostly in the NGO sector. He's been associated with KPH since 2003 (and through which he's been able to network with ILGA-Europe), co-founded the Polish Society of Anti-discrimination Law in 2006⁷⁸, and from 2008-2010 worked in Brussels for EQUINET (European Network of Equality Bodies⁷⁹), first as a lawyer, then as a policy-coordinator dealing with antidiscrimination strategies implemented by the official offices. Additionally, through an international project called EqualJus, funded by a grant from the European Commission, Daniel, along with other lawyers, presented a shadow report at the 2007 United Nations forum in Geneva. At this time, Poland was being examined by the Human Rights Commission. The shadow report, written for ILGA Europe, was a collaboration between KPH and experts in other countries (Italy, France, Lithuania). This document resulted in the UN making several

⁷⁷ The Copenhagen criteria includes the following conditions: "That candidate countries achieve stable institutions that guarantee democracy, legality, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; That candidate countries have a working market economy, capable of competing effectively on EU markets; That candidate countries are capable of accepting all the membership responsibilities, political, economic and monetary." (URL: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/international/enlargement/criteria/index_en.htm)

⁷⁸ The association is an expert, non-governmental organization made up of lawyers specializing in anti-discrimination law. The association coordinates an informal alliance of 52 nongovernmental organizations that make up the Coalition for Equal Opportunity.

⁷⁹ Equality bodies are independent organizations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and promoting equality, in accordance with EU directives (<http://www.equineteurope.org/>)

recommendations to the government of Poland, namely calling for officials to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation, particularly in regards to LGBT people.

The complicated back-and-forth waltz between local work, international connections, and national policy is an enlightening example of Keck and Sikkink's "boomerang pattern of policy development". Daniel summarized it himself when he said, "To be effective, it no longer suffices to be active on the national scale." He went on to explain, that during the "really horrible times between 2005-2007 [when Poland was run by the right-leaning Kaczynski administration], then our contacts helped us bring attention to this official government-sanctioned homophobia, at the international forum - the EU - thanks to our contacts with European parliamentarians, specifically an inter-group in parliament consisting of lesbians and gays and allies." Due to this collaboration, the European Parliament adopted two resolutions regarding homophobia in Europe. "You have to have these kinds of contacts in order to publicize an issue in Europe or have a successful project."

Warsaw is much more amenable to employing the boomerang model than any other place in Poland. The idea puts forth front-and-center the transnational character of social movement activism. Location plays just as important of a role in these terms as they did when social movement theories focused largely on the local. For transnational connections to be at all effective, their fruits must be utilized in strategic places. Since foreign embassies and many local as well as international NGOs are located in Warsaw, the costs to transnational activists are already much lower than in these entities were divided by greater distances. People representing

governments and agencies are able to meet for lunch or an impromptu press conference. Precisely this has been integral to the momentum gained for antidiscrimination legislation⁸⁰.

Another means of utilizing existing tools to empower LGBT individuals and emphasize their rightful place in Polish society has been exhibited through litigation, something unfathomable only a few years prior. The relationship between the Polish courts and LGBT organizations has been a relatively positive one, as explored in a report commissioned by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights⁸¹. One of the services that KPH offers is legal assistance (in varying degrees) for persons experiencing discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity/gender expression. Assistance is provided in the areas of labor law, criminal law, civil law, and administrative law. The cases that KPH either directly takes on, consults, or indirectly observes feed into a larger project, 'Monitoring Discrimination' (funded by the Open Society Institute through the Human Rights and Governance Grants Program)⁸², wherein – as the name implies - the organization records instances of LGBT discrimination in the media and keeps tabs on court cases that inform the development of LGBT status in Poland.

The international role on the Polish legal system is not to be overlooked, as Poland's membership in the EU has placed upon it specific legal obligations, and has also empowered LGBT individuals before the law. One of the earliest (high profile) cases of LGBT issues being raised in

⁸⁰While the Polish Association of Antidiscrimination Law have been central to drafting proposed antidiscrimination legislation, and have lobbied heavily for it, I address it later in the chapter, in the segment dealing with institutionalization because its momentum is derived from recent receptive politicians supporting it.

⁸¹“Another example of good practice is the positive cooperation between the Polish ordinary courts and administrative courts and NGOs in litigation of precedent cases. Polish courts accept public interest litigation, especially if an organisation is presenting an amicus curiae brief or legal opinion, and may take advantage of views expressed therein. It is of great help in advancing the rights of the LGBT community and may have good effects if the legislator or the executive is not responding correctly to the needs and problems of the given minority (Rzeplinski, 6).” URL: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/332-FRA-hdgso-NR_PL.pdf

⁸²<http://monitoring.kampania.org.pl/>

the domain of the courts took place in 2005 when then-Mayor of Warsaw, Lech Kaczyński, tried to ban the gay pride parade, justifying his stance on a combination of moral and logistical grounds claiming that: parade organizers had not submitted an appropriate traffic organization plan, the parade would promote a "homosexual lifestyle" in Warsaw, and he is opposed to "propagating gay orientation". Days before the event, organizers petitioned the Governor of the Mazowsze Voivodship, and argued that the city's decision was an infringement on their right to peaceful assembly. The Governor eventually ruled in favor of organizers, stating that the city's requirement of a traffic plan had been unlawful and that the parade was unlawfully restricted. In spite of the ban, approximately 2,500 people marched on June 11, 2005.

The issue was later introduced at the European Court of Human Rights by event organizers⁸³.

The ECHR accepted the case on December 5, 2006, and delivered a favorable ruling on May 3, 2007. Even though participants still marched, the ECHR ruled that the city authorities' banning of the event represented an infringement of freedom of assembly under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as violations of Articles 13 and 14⁸⁴ ⁸⁵. This case was a legal milestone for the movement, as the decision was the first affirming that banning of LGBT events went against the right to freedom of assembly and association. Since the ruling, subsequent parades/events/assemblies have gone down without a hitch.

The Polish legal system has also (incrementally) been instrumental in addressing grievances of individual citizens. Successful cases are all the more powerful because individual victims rarely

⁸³ Headed by longtime activist Tomasz Bączkowski

⁸⁴ http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

⁸⁵ ECHR ruling in Case of Bączkowski and Others v. Poland. URL: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-80464#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-80464%22%5D%7D>

seek justice in the courts. The 2012 case of Ireneusz Muzalski was a milestone in terms of fighting workplace discrimination based on homosexuality, as it was the first instance when the court decided in favor of the plaintiff⁸⁶. Mr. Muzalski's case was bolstered by the 2011 (January 1) law passed on equal treatment which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment. The sum of compensation is one of the highest that Polish courts have granted to victims of discrimination based on sexual orientation⁸⁷.

A hallmark of any democratic society is the freedom of the press/media. Media's power to inform, indoctrinate, and sway make it an invaluable resource for various social groups seeking equal footing in the public arena. While not isolated from mainstream temperament and therefore reflective of the views of the majority, the fact that room for dissent and opposing viewpoints exists is a crucial resource for LGBT activists. The importance of the media for activists cannot be downplayed, especially considering that Warsaw serves as the media center for the nation. Events being covered, publicized, and debated in Warsaw become topics for national discussion. Additionally, a foreign spotlight on Poland tends to reintroduce issues that may have fallen off the radar. This once again highlights the importance of transnational alliance for LGBT issues.

At the time of my research, media censorship wasn't really an issue in Poland, but the concept of information fatigue / issue desensitization was. Sometimes issues need to be reintroduced via a different channel in order to register w/ the public as relevant. Daniel, the lawyer, told me about an experience he had, illustrating the power of media for activist goals. On behalf of KPH,

⁸⁶ Mr. Muzalski, had been employed as a cashier at a branch of grocery store chain Netto in Slubice, in Western Poland. According to Muzalski, he was regularly verbally abused by his employer in front of colleagues and customers, and eventually fired, without explanation. During the trial, witnesses testified that the victim was a good worker, and that he was a victim of bullying.

⁸⁷ The court instructed the chain to pay the former till-attendant 18,000 zloty (US\$ 5,770), in addition to court costs.

Daniel appeared in the European parliamentary forum in Brussels to present a petition, specifically, a problematic issue for lesbians and gays regarding civil union certificates (Social Watch 2011). Daniel, along with colleagues, filed this petition, and had the opportunity to push an issue that had previously been blocked by Polish parliamentarians. Largely thanks to their determination and fruitful collaboration with the EU intergroup (on LGBT issues), they were able to break through with this information, and make it relevance once again in Poland.

“We can do lots of things here, but we get the sense that Polish media, or Polish society, has become accustomed or even bored with the LGBTQ issue. Maybe there’s just too much information, or maybe not all the information we’d like to publicize has found fertile ground. In Poland there still remains this issue of when they tell us from abroad that it’s bad in Poland, then we just get more indignant and listen more. These kinds of strategies, with allies from abroad, are very effective... the petition before the commission that I participated in was very boring and very long, and it could have seemed very uninteresting, but when I left the hall I was flanked by seven cameras from the Polish media, with microphones in my face and about 30 reporters. I felt like Paris Hilton! This international pressure on Poland, reignited interest *within* Poland.”

Of course, foreign attention to domestic issues can also have the inverse effect, as another informant illustrated earlier. Daniel agreed that it is a fine line to walk, in that foreign interference and Polish sovereignty are very sensitive issues for Polish society, and that depending on the issue and on the audience, the reception can vary greatly. In the case of the aforementioned event, Daniel stressed that foreign allies and international forums are important because there continue to be new issues, as well as old issues. “Poland is the only country in Europe that doesn’t have antidiscrimination legislation. Our role is to [raise awareness], through formal (Brussels) or informal contacts (ranking officials of European Commission). They are continuously vital. The context changes, the form and shape of collaboration sometimes changes, needs change, but the necessity still remains”. In the current social-political context, transnational alliances and international forums are but one more tool in the activist arsenal, and

it's not likely to disappear. Activists' use of the media has been very strategic and helpful in not only raising awareness of social disparities, but also to publicize their own projects, and set the tone for debate. In the last five years, there has been a significant shift in public opinion, not least of all due to the LGBT community's growing media savvy.

While on the one hand attempting to utilize mechanisms already in place - albeit from the outside – on the other hand, activists are also influencing national politics from *within* existing institutions, most notably by engaging in electoral and representative politics. It has been widely acknowledged that insider allies (or elites, if you will) are an important component to bringing about political and social change, a point not lost on LGBT activists. Recent attempts to present/push/pass legislation by the help of inside allies has come after many years of hard work from the outside⁸⁸. Many (out) LGBT candidates ran for local office in recent elections, largely on the Green Party ticket. Two prominent LGBT activists who honed their skills in Warsaw, had gone on to become MPs (Robert Biedroń and Anna Grodzka), running on the short-lived Ruch Palikota (Palikot's Movement)⁸⁹ ticket⁹⁰. While Grodzka dropped out of politics after her stint at MP and instead refocused her efforts on media, Biedroń went on to become Mayor of Słupsk (in northern Poland).

While the aforementioned electoral victories were very high profile cases, one of the first LGBT candidates to be elected occurred in 2010, in Warsaw. Krystian Legierski, an entrepreneur, and LGBT activist responsible for introducing the first draft of civil union legislation into the Polish

⁸⁸ <http://monitoring.kampania.org.pl/images/biuletyn11pl.pdf>

⁸⁹ Ruch Palikota, until June 1, 2011 was known as Ruch Poparcia (Movement of Support) is a liberal, and anti-clerical, political party in Poland. The party is headed by Janusz Palikot, a Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform) party member before breaking away and forming his own political party.

⁹⁰ <http://replika-online.pl/archiwum/replika-34/>

legal system, was among the founding members of the Polish Green party in 2004. In November 2010 he won a seat in Warsaw City Council^{91 92}. He was the first openly gay politician elected to a political office in Poland, albeit at the local level. Legierski's case is all the more unusual because in addition to being gay, he also stands out racially in the Polish context. His father is of Mauritian background, and Legierski is of darker complexion than the typical Pole. His running for office attracted much media attention due to the novelty of his “otherness”, but his eventual election to City Council was very much a Warsaw phenomenon. He was already a well-known individual in the city, as an entrepreneur of several clubs, cafes, and cultural spaces, and between 2006-2010 he co-hosted a segment⁹³ on an LGBT radio program on station TOK FM.

Legierski's election signaled a change in social climate, and revealed the possibility of elected office for other out LGBT activists, most notably Anna Grodzka and Robert Biedroń, surprising many Poles and the international community by their eventual wins. Grodzka's candidacy was surprising because she was running in the southern city of Kraków – a devoutly Catholic city, and once home to the late Polish-born Pope John Paul II. Grodzka won with 19,451 votes (43.15%)⁹⁴. Biedroń ran in the northern city of Gdynia and won with 16,919 votes (39.11%)⁹⁵. The results were a surprise, and invoked a huge wave of international attention as people were astonished that a country whose general reputation is one of Catholic conservatism managed to elect some rather unorthodox candidates, and with such strong numbers, to boot.

⁹¹ <http://replika-online.pl/archiwum/replika-28/>

⁹² He ran on a Social Democratic ballot, following an official electoral agreement between the Greens and the Democratic Left Alliance.

⁹³ *Lepiej późno niż wcale* (Better Late Than Never)

⁹⁴ <http://wybory2011.pkw.gov.pl/cpr/sjm-13/pl/419cf3ae-fe1d-4597-929d-b9a03f73281f.html>

⁹⁵ <http://wybory2011.pkw.gov.pl/cpr/sjm-26/pl/14a1d118-54ed-4b45-8228-21fdd4888723.html>

While the world of politics was not unfamiliar to them⁹⁶, what seemed to help both Grodzka and Biedroń in their political victories was, incidentally, their temporary breaks from party politics, and instead, their renewed attention to the emerging civil society sector - in the form of LGBT NGOs. They both left party politics in the 1990s, due to disillusionment with the Left's response to LGBT (and other identity) issues. No one wanted to broach the topic in public, and instead swept issues of LGBT inclusion under the rug – a position adopted by all political parties across the ideological spectrum. Simply put, it was still much too taboo to be taken seriously. Both Biedroń and Grodzka focused their energies in the groups they respectively co-founded.

In 2008, Grodzka created the Trans-Fuzja Foundation⁹⁷, where she served as president until 2011. Robert Biedroń, on the other hand, had been out for quite some time, including during his earlier stints in local politics in northern Poland. After co-founding KPH in 2001, he became a public figure, often appearing on television shows, press conferences, and radio broadcasts.

After her victory in the 2011 parliamentary elections, Grodzka has largely pursued social issues, and also become a bit of an international cult figure, receiving official invitations from around the world to participate in parades, conferences, and interviews⁹⁸. As presidents of their respective organizations, both activists became public figures, frequently appearing on television

⁹⁶ Before her transition, Grodzka was a Communist-party member of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) until it was dissolved in 1990. Biedroń was a member of Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland – PZPR's main successor – and then the eventual Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). While both had been politically active with the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) for a number of years, they eventually became disenchanted with the party and its approach to identity politics (or lack thereof), and refocused their efforts on activist work directly in the LGBT community, founding the Trans-fuzja Foundation and Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH), respectively.

⁹⁷ Trans-fuzja is committed to raising awareness about transgendered people, as well as taking action to support transsexuals and cross-dressing

⁹⁸ She took part in, and was a guest of honor at the 2012 Stockholm Pride; was interviewed by The Guardian (<http://careers.theguardian.com/anna-grodzka-worlds-only-transsexual-mp>); and served as the Grand Marshall of the 2013 Dublin Pride Parade in Ireland (<http://www.dublinpride.ie/>)

in the news, talk-shows, and radio. An HBO Polska documentary following Anna Grodzka's transition premiered in November 2010⁹⁹. Their already visible profiles allowed them to step out and easily transition into visible candidates with compelling stories. The public's familiarity with them worked in their favor as it undoubtedly helped garner votes, and ultimately win parliamentary seats. Their victories also caught the attention of international and foreign media, putting Poland into the political spotlight, as their victories surprised many, and painted Poland in a much more nuanced light than simply as ultra-conservative, homo/transphobic, and close-minded. For if people voted for them, this was a much more accurate portrayal of a complex political and social reality present in Poland today.

Biedroń also made himself internationally relevant, securing the position of first rapporteur for LGBT issues in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)¹⁰⁰. In this capacity, Biedroń was able to formally address the issues he represented, in the form of PACE reports, motions, amendments, and recommendations¹⁰¹. Biedroń's representative development was significant in two ways. First, his position made Poland more visible internationally, and

⁹⁹ http://www.hbo.pl/movie/trans-akcja_-70141

¹⁰⁰ The LGBT Issues Unit was created in October 2011 under the Directorate of Human Rights and Antidiscrimination (DGII), as part of the reform that transformed the Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into the Committee on Equality and Non-discrimination, which covers issues of equality and discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or political beliefs. Robert Biedroń succeeded Håkon Haugli, lawyer of the Norwegian Labour Party, who served as rapporteur in 2012. The main duties of the rapporteurs include: actions to protect and promote the rights of LGBT people, gathering information on discrimination of LGBT people, observing activities and their relations with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers and the European Court Human Rights and national parliaments, the European Union Parliament, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Commission, as well as to control and supplement the existing resolutions and recommendations of the Council of Europe for LGBT people.

¹⁰¹ While PACE can only investigate, recommend and advise, even with these parameters, its recommendations on issues such as human rights carry weight. EU institutions often refer to the work of PACE, especially in the field of human rights, legal cooperation and cultural cooperation. Given the LGBT movement's close connection to human rights law, the close cooperation between the LGBT Unit and the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is not surprising. The close association, and adoption of human rights discourse has been integral for the LGBT movement's success.

may have helped change the image of Poland, particularly in terms of LGBT issues, to that of a more leadership role. Second, his new function highlighted the regional movement goals that activists in Warsaw have been harboring and addressing through less formal avenues¹⁰², as exemplified through the case of the 2010 EuroPride festivities, explored in detail below.

Global Intersections, Injections, and Projections:

Warsaw as Node, Importer, and Exporter in the Case of EuroPride 2010

During an exceptionally stifling summer, July 17, 2010 was both literally and figuratively the hottest day in the year¹⁰³. For many activists in Poland, the beginning of the summer had been building up to this climactic moment. It was the day of the EuroPride parade, marking the end of the week-long festivities that preceded the finale. I jumped on the tram and headed to Plac Bankowy (Bank Square) where the parade floats were convening. One hour before the parade there already was a large crowd gathered – singing, dancing, chanting, jumping in the water fountain. The group would eventually swell to numbers between 8,000 (very conservative figure) and 30,000 people. Police were already lined up on the streets alongside the main boulevard (Marszałkowska), easily identifiable by their bright yellow vests.

I wandered about a bit, found people I knew and eventually made my way in search of the KPH float. Walking past a religious conservative group congregated on the corner of Marszałkowska

¹⁰² When asked what issues he will tackle, Biedroń replied that: “The most pressing matter is the criminalization of homosexual behavior - not all countries have abolished it. For example, in the part of Cyprus it is still a crime. Additionally, the ban on so-called 'homosexual propaganda'. For now, Russia has changed the law on this issue, but similar legislation is being prepared in Ukraine, Lithuania, Moldova. Lying fallow are transgender rights issues...” *Gazeta Wyborcza*

http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,14624315,Biedroń_perswazja_upomni_sie_o_prawa_europejskich.html

¹⁰³ <http://weatherspark.com/history/28907/2010/Warsaw-Mazowieckie-Poland>

Street and Senatorska Street, equipped with banners, crucifixes, and buckets of holy water, I spotted our float and was called to by a vibrating mass of happy youth and glammed-out drag queens.

As I mentioned, there was a police presence. They came out in large numbers, but sported a much different demeanor than past parades. In place of militarized uniforms and riot gear, officers donned more casual clothes (both uniform and civilian attire) marked simply with yellow vests. This proved to be important for several reasons, including the tone that they set for the events that would unfold not only to the parade participants, but also to observers and counter-demonstrators. They were less aggressive than previous events, smiling at people, snapping selfies, tapping their feet to music, and treated attendees politely. There had apparently been several meetings with parade organizers prior to EuroPride and one of the things that organizers emphasized was to not approach or detain revelers who had stripped off their clothes, but rather, to let the organizers handle the situation discreetly. This had been a major point of contention in the past, and as this year the parade attracted many foreigners, they wanted to make sure to avoid any unnecessary escalations.

The parade route itself was very symbolic. It deviated from previous marches in that it did not resembled the May Day marches (straight line), but rather zig-zagged through town, passing by many historic monuments and spaces (thus highlighting a shadow of a past gay presence, as well as a current one). There were anti-parade protesters, but I was surprised by how few. Other than the peaceful religious opponents at the very beginning of the march route, the only other group we encountered were bald, male youths armed with egg cartons. Quite a while back, they had

submitted application materials for a public demonstration before the parade route was even finalized. They were approved, and were supposed to be located on a route parallel to the EuroPride parade. However, the 200 or so youths eventually deviated from their path to join ours causing us to also detour), but were stopped by police units, which detained many of the participants. I only heard of one casualty, a police officer who had been attacked by an aggressive counter-protester. He was hospitalized but was not fatally injured.

In a lot of ways the parade was a success, but in others it was not. This event was supposed to attract people from all over Europe. While many did come, the number of international guests was much smaller than anticipated. However, many Poles attended, and the streets were lined by a diverse demographic – elderly, youth, children, males, females, students, workers, etc. Standing on the sidewalk along the parade route, one older woman attended with her elementary-school aged grandchildren and when asked why she came to watch, replied that she didn't know who her grandchildren will grow up to be, and as far as she knew they could very well be gay, and taking this possibility into consideration, wanted them to know that they could grow up and live in an inclusive, tolerant world free of fear.

The events surrounding EuroPride illustrated Warsaw's global role and relationship in three distinct ways: Warsaw as node, wherein the East and West converge; Warsaw as importer, adopting select ideas from the West; and Warsaw as exporter, translating, repackaging and shipping ideas and projects to the South and East.

Warsaw as Node

As a global city, Warsaw serves as a multifaceted node: for transportation, professional networking, and inter-group collaboration. It is the major transportation hub in the country (air and rail), and is frequently where people fly to, or out of, or make their connecting flights. More often than not, Warsaw plays host to conferences, workshops, and demonstrations and acts as a magnet for Poles throughout the country as well as for foreign visitors. This is especially true when participants hail from both Western and Eastern Europe, as it is a logical midpoint. Activists frequently stress the importance of these international encounters. Many either meet foreign activists when they visit Warsaw, or they themselves gain invaluable experience by traveling to countries outside Poland. This characteristic played a large role in designating Warsaw as the site for the 2010 EuroPride. This, in turn, resulted in the most significant instances illustrating the role of Warsaw as a hub and generative space occurred the week leading up to EuroPride. In addition to the requisite parties and theme nights, all Warsaw-based LGBT groups participated in organizing workshops and conferences that their members, foreign activists, politicians, public figures, and celebrities took part in. This was a rather high-profile event in the LGBT community, and Polish activists travelled to Warsaw from around the country, taking advantage of all the meetings, conferences, and workshops.

I was privy to several meetings hosted by Warsaw groups, for which activists from other towns specifically traveled in order to attend. One workshop, led by educators and psychologists, was for teachers, and focused on how to address LGBT issues in their classrooms and coursework, as well as how best support students dealing with issues of coming out, bullying, hostile families,

etc. Teachers, not necessarily activists, traveled to Warsaw from all parts of Poland, including Lodz, Kraków, Gdańsk, Szczecin, and Wrocław.

Another meeting, an informal luncheon between KPH activists and members of the Dutch Ministry of Education, also focused on the intersection of education policy and LGBT issues. Additionally, a cocktail hour was organized by OECD in honor of LGBT activists and attended by activist leaders, diplomats, and volunteers. This event was largely a meet-and-greet and networking event for full-time activists and foreign service workers and diplomats.

Warsaw's role as node - where East and West converge (ex. EuroPride) – serves two very different functions for those converging. Many Eastern allies traveled to Poland and participated because doing so in their own country was not an option. Their traveling to Warsaw was not only an opportunity to participate and be (safely) visible, but it also allowed activists to meet with Western activists, whom they would not otherwise have had an easy time accessing. In one such instance I was allowed to sit in on a meeting between KPH members, CoC Netherlands representatives¹⁰⁴, an ILGA Europe representative, and two activists from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. For the past week, the annual Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conference was held in Warsaw, and all the aforementioned organizations had attended the events. Adam (of KPH) had traveled to Kazakhstan within the past year, and knew the CoC and ILGA members already. The new person to the group was the representative from Kyrgyzstan (who did not speak English, but the Poles could understand most of her Russian, while her colleague translated English into Russian). After brief introductions and explanations of what each respective organization does, or what the most recent projects entailed, the

¹⁰⁴ Founded in 1946, CoC is the oldest extant LGBT organization in the world.

discussion turned to how they could work together, specifically, how KPH, CoC and ILGA could help the Kazakh and Kyrgyzstani groups.

There was talk of possible exchanges and workshops for young activists, but what was expressed by the Kazakh and Kyrgyzstani activists as important was advice on specific movement strategy. For example, with the help of funding from an OSI grant, the Kazak group had adopted KPH's methodology from an early report (Abramowicz 2007)¹⁰⁵ to create a similar report entitled, 'Monitoring Discrimination Against LGBT People in Kazakhstan'. This was very flattering for KPH because they didn't seem to know that the organization did this. The Kazakhs' main challenge was not knowing how to publicize the report, how to use it in the public or with media. So the groups shared their strategies like holding press conferences, and illustrated how the availability of hard numbers empowered them when they had issues with police¹⁰⁶, and had even used it in court cases (in one recent instance, a judge in Poland cited a KPH report on hate-speech as a large factor in her verdict in favor of a gay plaintiff).

Westerners, on the other hand, had come to relive the excitement and euphoria of participating in the nascent stages of a movement, one that resembled their activist experiences decades prior. Magda, the long-time activist from Wrocław explained Dutch activist participation in Polish events,

“the Dutch... travel here for the marches because they feel power from our side, that we've got motivation, 'spirit', real movement. This energizes them. At home they just sit around and debate different things. They perceive us as the USA in

¹⁰⁵ http://www.kph.org.pl/publikacje/sytuacja_bi_homo_2007_EN.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Police oftentimes remarked that no one reports discrimination based on homophobia therefore it must not exist, to which KPH responds with statistics of how often such discrimination occurs and why people choose not to report to the police. Also, up until 2010, many police officers thought they were being “neutral” when omitting a victim's sexual orientation, therefore leading to unreliable data on hate-crimes.

1960s – obviously not on the same scale, on a much more micro, mini scale. They get excited by it... they come here and there's a group of people on the street coming to heads with a band of hooligans yelling things like 'fags to the gas'. This really raises their spirits”.

Many activists stressed the moral and symbolic relevance of making international connections.

Adam, a full-time activist, expressed the role of the European Union and the transnational connections made possible after Poland's entry:

“...the international support we get, the solidarity actions, the projects we do with international actors is a savior for us, in many ways. During the worst times - the Kaczynski times - the pressure of the European Parliament and other organizations, really a lot of NGOs and LGBT organizations all over Europe were so sympathetic, you felt like you weren't alone, that there were people out there helping, like you weren't totally being persecuted by yourself.”

Another informant expressed happiness in knowing there were supporters abroad even when things at home remained hostile, and that she felt “part of a larger family”.

The extensions of the international LGBT “family tree” were visible in city spaces, most notably diplomat participation in conference panels and debates, and when rainbow flags were flown by foreign embassies during EuroPride week. Such expressions of solidarity are not limited to this one event. The British embassy has consistently flown the rainbow flag during the designated pride marches, even though the march routes do not pass through that part of town.

Warsaw as Importer

As a relatively nascent movement, compared to Western Europe and the USA, activists in Poland readily look to the West for ideas and inspiration. However, given that the contexts are all very different from their own, activists have had to carefully weigh whether adopting certain tactics is

wise or even feasible in Poland. Many issues are at play, not least of all the simultaneous need to reassert a Polish LGBT authenticity, a theme explored earlier in the context of visibility.

Politically-speaking, the European Union's role in shaping Polish democracy has been met with considerably hostility by conservative elements. Given that Poland's sovereignty has been precarious and brief, citizens are wary of supranational entities dictating their policies, even if the state is a member of that conglomeration. Other than financial support, the EU has provided activists with another type of arsenal: a specific type of democracy discourse, and competing notions of democracy. Gathering from very informal conversations with friends and peers in Poland, citizens' understanding of democracy as *majority rule* is quite literal, in that minorities are expected to abide by the decisions set by dominant society. When asked about the gay rights movement in Poland, figurehead of the Solidarity Movement, former President, and Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, Lech Wałęsa himself stated that if gays want to have a march, they should go somewhere where they're the majority, because they're not the majority in Poland, and in democracy, majority rules. The EU's influence has problematized this notion by introducing an understanding of democracy as *majority rule, with minority rights*. This has quite literally changed the rules of the game. LGBT activists, as minorities, have readily embraced the new rules and used them to their advantage. One senior activist of KPH explained what he deemed to be the underlying problem in Poland:

“The whole concept of democracy is maybe not well-developed enough. And I think that's a very rudimentary... goal of ours. To advance this idea in Poland. In my understanding, democracy is very much based on diversity, on respecting minorities in any sense, and pushing this idea of pluralism... and this is something very lacking in Poland, which very clearly affects whether there's homophobia or not. Because if people don't understand that diversity is an advantage to a society, not a disadvantage, that pluralism is an advantage, that in a democracy you respect the rights of minorities, you don't impose the will of the majority...”

This activist understood LGBT activism and democracy as directly linked. He explained that the organization's fundamental mission was to propagate democratic values and ideals of pluralism and equality, as much as possible. He goes on "I think we [as an organization] try to underline [this] as much as possible, which is why I think we still call it an equality march/parade or tolerance march, and that we say everyone is invited, and that it's equality and tolerance for everyone". He explains that until the concept of democracy is understood as a means for achieving equality, the LGBT issue will remain too exotic. "you can't explain to people why you should be allowed to have a freedom of movement - a parade - if they don't understand why people have human rights at all... people here still think that the more people are the same, the better. So, that's very much one of our priorities, and whether or not we achieve it, I think we do stretch out the concept of what is okay in Poland."

At the same time, this activist was aware of the possibility of contradictory effects of movements. "Sometimes, of course, we see a big backlash, and we see the more we do these parades, the more people are convinced that it's wrong, that it's... manifesting something that should be private, or that it's just inflaming these differences between people. So sometimes there can be the argument that activities actually push people back and away from this kind of concept of democracy we want". Activists have to not only contend with traditional norms surrounding sexuality, orientation, and gender, but also notions of authentic Polishness, as well as definitions and understandings of democratic citizenship. The latter has become much more of a contentious issue since Poland was admitted as an EU member state in 2004, because it invariable challenges the former concepts.

The role of the European Union has frequently been extolled as a blessing for LGBT activists both symbolically, politically, and financially. One activist summarized it this way, “during the 2005-2007 era [the Kaczynski years], basically we would feel totally imprisoned, isolated... without this transnational aspect. Really it was our saving grace. We always knew we could send something to the European Parliament or count on the support of other organizations to apply pressure, to lobby”.

EU membership, has not, however, necessarily translated into more favorable funding opportunities for everyone. One activist from Lambda offered a different interpretation (from KPH) and sentiment regarding EU membership. While moral support is nice, official membership had a negative effect on funding priorities of some Polish groups. Namely, since EU admission Poland ceased to be considered a high-priority case in terms of LGBT assistance. While this may have been the case for Lambda, it was not the case for KPH. This may have been a direct result of many KPH projects entailing explicit international collaboration (with groups in higher-priority countries), whereas Lambda’s formal projects tended to remain national in scope, and members’ international networks remained largely informal.

While financial assistance is usually seen as desirable, many activists have expressed conflicting feelings about their international allies, their ideas, and the role of the EU in advancing LGBT rights in Poland. Activists fully comprehend the delicate nature of international collaboration for purposes of advancing their cause, and while many elements have been adopted into the Polish context, most notably: rainbow flags, framing the issues using human rights language, pride parades, and specific terminology like “queer”, “gender”, “coming out”, activists understand that

there is a great danger in doing so. There is a delicate politics of language at play within the movement itself.

At several points in time, discussions centered around the appropriateness of adopting English language, and by doing so, who it may isolate. One panel discussion – with the editorial staff of *Furia* - during Eurpride asked precisely this, and the ensuing debate was a thoughtfully interactive one, where panelists and audience members both recognized the exclusionary power of language and how using English ostracizes older generations¹⁰⁷, as well as those with lower level of education or of the working class. The use of non-Polish language is problematic also because it distances the movement from the context within which it is located. This became evident during a Queer Studies session hosted by KPH. The aim of this was to educate people about gay history, culture and identity, and the instructor leading the course would often take a critical stance towards using too much English terminology. For example, the phrase “coming out”: it is esoteric for Polish people in that many would not understand it, and so it creates a sense of estrangement. Again, a discussion arose around whether there was not a better phrase in Polish, something non-homosexual people (or those not engaged in the movement) could better understand. The attempt to make homosexuality congruent with being Polish is on the political agenda of the movement, and language and symbols help do this. On occasion, Polish is used: “Wychodzić z szafy” (literally, “coming out of the closet”), or “zadeklarowany gej” (literally, “declared gay” meaning “out”), but this is done more in an outside-group setting, such as by the media, politicians, public, while English remains widely used by activists.

¹⁰⁷While younger generations in Poland are quite comfortable with English, the baby-boomer generation was required to learn Russian and is not as familiar with English.

A long-time activist with KPH understood the tensions inherent in international support, and specifically connects it to the advantage and power that it gives conservative forces, represented by the Catholic Church which has had the most success as a defining characteristic of Polishness:

“I think in general it’s needed, but we do have to be a little bit careful not to go too far with it... the more [the Polish people] see it as transnational or international pressure on Poland, the more they’re gonna [sic] say that it’s not *ours*, it’s not us, it’s an import, and it’s another way *they’re* trying to take over our country... People are really afraid here of losing their identity, and it’s obvious for me why then the Church is so strong, because they’re always the one that’s saving the Polish nation from being anything else than Poland. So this is perfect for them, because the Church is naturally against this issue, and so naturally it fits perfectly into these complexes that so many people have of losing their national identity, and this is the best thing the Church can deny or work against, because it’s saving the Polish nation, and everyone signs up for it, like hook, line, and sinker.”

The pride parades or marches are another example of questionable adoptions, and mixed outcomes. Expressing frustration about the existence of “parades” in general, one prominent activist said, “there's nothing to celebrate yet. We're still waiting for our Stonewall”. This imperfect transplantation of a strategy was visible during the official EuroPride Parade. Despite the jubilant character of the event, it remained very march-like, and raised critiques from both activists and observers that perhaps implementing events that were successful in the West may not always translate appropriately in the Polish context. Coming from a long history of invasion and occupation, Poles don't take too kindly to implementation of “foreign” ideas, nor to large masses of outsiders marching down their streets. This is the largest obstacle for Polish LGBT activists to overcome: exposing an organic LGBT Polish past, whether it be in iconic figures who have long come to define Polishness, like authors Maria Konopnicka and Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, or instances of homoerotic expressions or queerness in folklore. The 14th century legend

involving my own namesake, Nawojka, involves themes of cross-dressing, transgenderism, and coming-out (as a woman).

The proliferation of organizations and events aimed at raising awareness of LGBT issues has grown slowly, most visible during the annual parades all over the country. While initially modeled after the US and Western European Pride parades, and oftentimes evoking the Stonewall Riots and other pivotal moments in LGBT history, the Polish event has been tweaked for local context and takes on a more march-like (albeit jubilant) character - and is usually referred to as Tolerance or Equality marches - contrasted with the festival/carnival spirit of its Western models¹⁰⁸. The sobriety found at the Warsaw EuroPride is important to note. Rather than displaying the LGBT movement's somewhat stereotyped culture of hedonism and consumption, the organizers of the march urged for decorum during the day. Knowing that authorities would be watching and that the Pride had secured protection by police, the LGBT community chose to adopt the values of the wider conservative society in order to demonstrate that they are serious and can hold a political event as orderly as a religious or political rally elsewhere. "In this sense, the movement decided to forgo its own value system (liberalism and hedonism) to directly compete using the criteria of straight society. This is direct competition... in an attempt to increase their own recognition and prestige, the LGBT movement's parade was done on the terms of the dominant society (Mossakowski, 42)".

A colleague of mine who was conducting field research in Warsaw the same time as me, and whose subsequent work focused on symbolic conflict, came to understand that there is a

¹⁰⁸ There are three "Pride Festivals" (with Pride Marches) in Poland: in April in Krakow (Culture for Tolerance Festival www.tolerancja.org.pl), in June in Warsaw (Equality Days www.paradarownosci.pl) and in November in Poznan (Equality and Tolerance Days www.dnirownosci.most.org.pl).

consensus in the conflict for LGBT rights over the prestige of the set of symbols relating to Poland. Nationalistic sentiment and identity are especially important for the country, which is arguably seeking a sovereign identity post-communism. The aforementioned political show of national pride by the LGBT community is an attempt to secure greater legitimacy. By doing so, it also underlines that the movement is not a product of Western influence, but rather something that is being born out of Poland. This is an important political move as identification with a foreign nation (or set of values) might further marginalize the LGBT community and its goals. “Whichever side has greater control over the symbols related to Polishness, has a better vantage point (Mossakowski, 41)”. Any international involvement of foreign visibility has the potential to discredit the movement. Directly following the Pride parade, one cartoon from the July 17-18, 2010 *Rzeczpospolita* newspaper depicted two androgynous, dancing ballerinas with cranks on their heads, directed by a sitting man via remote control (with an EU flag on his seat). All that was written at the bottom of the cartoon was “parade”, which in Polish can also mean “spectacle”. *Rzeczpospolita* is the second-largest newspaper in the country, and it is also the conservative one. The presence of the cartoon was not particularly unexpected. If anything, its subtlety was surprising.

Warsaw as Exporter

As complicated as international collaboration is, with Polish activists on the receiving end, the situation is equally complex when it comes to Poles as the foreign “others” in relation to their South and Eastern neighbors. Warsaw’s hosting of EuroPride illustrated both its global positioning and its own regional projection. Since the first EuroPride parade hosted by London in 1992, the 2010 EuroPride was the first time an Eastern European country hosted the event. Out

of all the cities in Poland, the selection of Warsaw for the event site was the most logical for all the reasons mentioned earlier regarding place-making. Things move faster in Warsaw, and because of this the LGBT movement has seen more progress than the rest of Poland – at least in terms of a climate of acceptance and more favorable public opinion - and it's eager to move on, having set its eyes on collaborating and influencing its neighbors to the East and South (Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia). Many activists in Warsaw feel they have learned and adopted as much as they can from the West, implementing what they felt could work – sometimes with mixed results (as in the case of Pride Parades).

There is a recognition that they can borrow no longer (terminology, HR discourse), and instead must forge ahead with a more organic approach, one with a specific Polish flavor – although this has yet to be defined. This, many feel, makes *them* – rather than the West - more equipped to assist their South and Eastern neighbors, not least of all their shared (imposed) communist history. One activist explained optimistically:

“Our partnerships with Western organizations can only go so far because their experiences can't be transposed here in many ways. So we learn a lot from each other, and now we're at the stage where *we are* also exporting *our* know-how, which is why we're focusing a lot on the East now. And we feel like our experience, in these 9 years, that we can export that basically to Ukraine or Russia or Belarus, and explain what it is like for us in a post-communist country, and the situation being what it is. Which is the same, I think, for a lot of our contacts South of Poland, too, in Romania or Bulgaria. I think they value our experience as well.”

To some extent, this nascent collaboration between Poland and its southeast neighbors has proven successful, as evidenced by the dialogue that took place between KPH members and the two Kazakh and Kyrgyzstani activists. The usefulness and applicability of Warsaw activists' research, strategy, and media dissemination know-how in the Polish context, to the Kazakh and

Kyrgyzstani situation became all the more apparent when the US and Dutch participants sat idly by as southeast activists addressed most of their questions to their Polish counterparts. In response, the Polish activists talked animatedly about potential strategies for disseminating results of the research conducted by the Kazakh group.

This idea of Poland/Warsaw as a leader of the movement in Eastern Europe was shared by another activist in Warsaw, albeit with more frustration. After returning from a trip to Slovenia where she took part in an international lesbian conference organized by ILGA, this activist grumbled to me about what she understood as the Slovenian women's conservative positions and sentiments, and how a campaign that was supposed to be revolutionary and cathartic turned out to be nothing but mild-mannered garbage (her sentiments, not mine). This is interesting, because while Warsaw activists – recognizing that cultural context matters - are deliberately trying to create a movement largely in accordance with mainstream Polish ideals and norms – which to Westerners may seem quite conservative - these same activists express frustration when groups whom they try to mentor or assist do the same, as with the Slovenian lesbian case. Regardless, there is a strong desire to make an imprint on their neighbors' movements and activism.

This kind of leader sentiment is not necessarily echoed by activists in smaller towns, who instead feel that they still have a lot to learn from the West, and don't necessarily care about the plight of, say, Belarusians, etc. because they still have unfinished business locally and nationally. An experienced activist from Wrocław explained that "a lot of things we learned [from the West] can't be applied here. But I think even that kind of contact, exposure to projects that for us seem like they're from outer space – where police in the UK are doing more in terms of activism than

organizations here. At least that kind of perspective is good for us as well.” The significance of the global LGBT movement differs substantially between activists in Warsaw and those elsewhere. Those in Warsaw already feel part of a global network, namely because they not only belong to international organizations, but also serve on their boards (International Lesbian, Gay Association; International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization; Association of Nordic and Pol-Balt Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Student Organizations), and thus feel ready to move on and expand their efforts, while those in Wrocław, Gdańsk, Kraków, etc. want to reel it in and refocus on their particular local circumstances, their limitations and possibilities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I’ve outlined various roles that Warsaw plays locally for the LGBT movement within the city; nationally, in other parts of Poland; as well as internationally, for activists in other countries. Locally, Warsaw is a place of difference, convergence, and freedom. It lends itself to nest-building by various groups, and allows for the peaceful cohabitation of contradictory mores and ideologies. In this, it is different from Poland in general. Simultaneously, however, what occurs in Warsaw influences the social and political culture of the country as a whole, as it is also the capital city and the economic, media, and political hub of Poland, and what becomes commonplace in the capital tends to also take effect in other regions. Globally, activists in Warsaw, are much more connected to the global LGBT movement. Activists have more opportunities to make connections in their own town with foreign visitors, acquire funds that allow them to travel internationally, as well as have access to the kind of logistics required to host large, international events like EuroPride.

The city is also the site where activists from one corner of Poland travel to and meet colleagues from other corners, Warsaw activists, and foreign activists alike. It is also where activists from the South and East can make connections with activists from the North and West. In this sense, Warsaw is very much a node, and generative space for transnational networking. As eager as activists have been to learn from the more mature movements in the West, they have also been astute enough to recognize that simply adopting strategies and implementing them without adjustment to local context would not be enough. So they have selectively chosen to embrace certain symbols and language, while foregoing others for more locally-appropriate replacements. At the same time, activists have been diligent in reasserting their Polishness as a means to gaining legitimacy in the eyes of mainstream society. The Warsaw contingent of activists, more so than those located in other areas, believe that their ability to tailor the global movement to the Polish setting is what makes them better equipped to assist their neighbors to the South and East. In this sense, they have ceased to identify the movement in Poland as simply nascent and themselves as students, but now view themselves as movement leaders and are slowly expanding their regional sphere of influence.

This being said, Warsaw's relationship with the global movement and desire to develop its own leadership role is markedly different from, and may come at the expense of its relationship with, other Polish towns. Warsaw's strategic role in the movement is illustrated by its contrast with other towns/cities, and not simply an "urban vs. rural" distinction. The concerns, aims and strategies of activists in Warsaw are quite different from those of non-Warsaw activists (ex. Wrocław, Kraków, Gdańsk). As Varsovians – deciding that they've learned all they can - are eager to shake off the West's influence and branch out to help other countries, while activists in

other towns feel a greater urgency in not only refocusing on local matters, but also making more connections with Western groups and campaigns.

Movement activists in Warsaw balance a fine line. They have taken on a huge responsibility, as their actions inevitably seep beyond the confines of the city. Activists must ask themselves whether they have the moral authority to dictate movement activism for the rest of Poland, and whether its regional projections – despite the good intentions – are impositions to its Southern and Eastern neighbors in a vein all too similar to the way Western projects have been perceived in relation to (implementations within) Poland. However, since the Euroskeptic right-wing Prawa i Sprawiedliwość party (Law and Justice) came to power in 2015, activists have been busy organizing domestically, and joining broader opposition coalitions. With their attention focused internally, activists' may have to halt their transnational projects, potentially helping them in the long-run.

4. Lived Experience and Issue Framing:

Warsaw at the Crossroads of the National and the Global

Introduction

During the course of my research, and particularly in later contrast with fieldwork in Buenos Aires, a curiosity I at first took for granted, ended up of vital importance for understanding the LGBT movement in Poland. Every once in a while, it struck me that it wasn't necessarily (or at least not solely) the sexual identity aspect of the movement that was problematic for people to accept, but rather, the global character it sometimes projected, as it seemed to do so in direct relation/opposition to *the nation*.

The treatment of “the global” as it relates to the LGBT movement is a question of issue framing, or the process by which people produce shared meanings and definitions describing their situation. Competition over symbolic meaning and its relevance to the domestic sphere play out spatially and visibly in Warsaw, as it is simultaneously a local, a national, and a global site. This characteristic (explored in the previous chapter) has a huge impact on the way that residents, particularly activists, experience their day-to-day life. While most people feel a level of familiarity and comfort with their neighborhood, memorized bus routes, and regularly patronized cafes, this feeling of connection may be weaker to the less-tangible conception of nation, with its strict prescriptions implying inhospitality for some. Warsaw activists understand the fast-paced whirl of the cosmopolitan city, and through their work and political engagement, may feel a connection to people, places, and ideas not immediately accessible physically. Other residents may experience stronger feelings and positive identification with nation, while feeling distant

from global. The perceptions and conceptions of the former group may clash with those of the latter. This becomes evident in contests over LGBT issue framing, as various players identify “the global”, appropriate and deploy it, while others contest it. This happens in conjunction with the identification, deployment, and contestation of “the national”, as both proponents and activists rely on both tropes.

Whether or not the global character is truly set in opposition to the nation isn’t the issue, so much as the perception of this sentiment. This, of course, harks back to discussions of authenticity and “Polishness”, arguments that have often been lobbed at the movement from opponents seeking to gain leverage in the public sphere by challenging the genuineness of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans presence in Poland. This is not surprising, as any new discussions of identity always speak to questions of nation (Connolly, 1991). The LGBT intervention inherently reveals that which has previously been taken for granted, ignored, or erased, and challenges existing conceptions of nation and citizen in a more blatantly globalized environment.

Issue framing is critical to movement development, enabling the translation of individual grievances into collective action (McAdam et al, 5). Key stages in social movement development are often matched by shifts in how activists and opponents frame issues, including ‘framing contests’ between the two (McAdam et al, 17). Issues as contentious as LGBT and globalization, and especially the convergence of the two, are bound to polarize people. In turn, polarization has the potential to strengthen activist networks. They initially become denser as activists mobilize against a common threat, and then, as the media draws the attention of potential allies, the networks broaden.

With its simultaneous occupation and production of local, national, and global spaces, Warsaw allows us to observe particular moments of perceived “globalness” and the framing contests surrounding them. I call these moments “global spaces in local places” and relate them directly to the concept of the “lived experience”: “a reflexive or self-given awareness that inheres in the temporality of consciousness of life as we live it “ (Dilthy in van Manen, 39). The city’s central role for media means that it is also the site for struggles over symbolic meaning. This allows for an analysis on how LGBT related issues are framed, employed/deployed by activists and opponents and what those moments reveal about tensions within Poland. What follows is a discussion on the meaning of the global movement situated locally and nationally, and the tensions arising from such a convergence. The instances of global evocation explored further include the consumption and deployment of movement symbols (rainbow flags, Stonewall), strategies (parades), language (queer, gender), and transnational collaborations (EU).

I utilize Lefebvre’s triad model of space (discussed in an earlier chapter), to explore the relationship between the global city and its inhabitants (lived space, lived experience), the concept of nation (conceived space), and the various meanings people ascribe to symbols and events, as evidenced by issue framing (perceived space). After first outlining the process and importance of issue framing, this chapter will then explore the evolution of the main players of the LGBT debate, namely defenders of a (particular) conservative conception of national identity, and LGBT activists. The third section explores the global movement as a lived space or lived experience, and connects the relatively new LGBT political frame to Varsovians’ heightened sense of time-space compression. Using concrete examples, the last section explores

framing contests over different symbols, and how tensions inherent to what I call “global spaces in local places” manifest spatially in Warsaw.

Issue framing

On the day of the EuroPride parade I encountered two placards across the street from one another, separated by only a few meters, but worlds apart in sentiment. One read: “Equality and human rights for all” (Figure 4), and the other, “1410: Victory over the 1st Union. 2010: the beginning of the end of Euro-Sodom” (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4.



FIGURE 5.



The owner of the first poster was marching in an event representing a movement they felt was aiming to make Poland more inclusive. The purple placard included the logo and URL of ILGA Europe (the European chapter of the International Lesbian and Gay Association). The text on their sign referred to expansion of social rights to LGBT people, explicitly understanding the issue as a political one. The problem needing to be addressed was the discrimination and exclusion of LGBT individuals from the national body, and the solution being hinted at was to address existing limitations by revising policies. This explicitly political frame is relatively new for the Polish context, as the equation of gay rights with human rights occurred only after Poland's accession into the European Union.

The other banner, much larger in size, was held up by several counter-protesters and requires a bit more clarification. The text directly references one of the largest battles in Medieval Europe -

the historic Battle of Grunwald of 1410 – a turning point which altered the balance of power in Eastern Europe resulting in the rise of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It remains a source of national pride, and was evoked during Poland's partition when it encouraged resistance to the Germanization and Russification policies of the German and Russian Empires (a point to which I will also return). The Teutonic Knights are generally portrayed as bloodthirsty mercenaries and Grunwald as a morally just victory achieved by a small, oppressed nation. The protesters holding the banner were evoking the symbolism of the past and applying it the context of the EuroPride parade. By making the connection between past and present, they were framing the event, and by extension the LGBT movement, as a foreign invader, and therefore an affront to Polish sovereignty and cultural identity. The clear solution was to drive out the aggressors and restore rightful order, and their optimistic declaration that 2010 would be the beginning of the end of the European Union, was a clear indicator of their interpretation of movement's origins.

These two images, addressing the same topic, have come to interpret and define the problem and solution in drastically different ways. There is a “diversity of meaning inherent in every social problem, stemming from the range of concerns of different groups, each eager to pursue courses of action and call them solutions.” (Edelman,15). As the examples above illustrate, “in the process of framing social problems, different actors often attach oversimplified symbolic meanings to these problems (Hinze, 34).” Framing and problem definition are critical to agenda setting and policy making in general, but framing of public debates is a central process in creating clear and simple images through which social reality is presented to, and consumed by, the public. “Images, symbols, and narratives establish and position certain issues in such a way

that policy makers can then attach their own clear-cut solutions to them and thus further their own political agendas (Chong 1993; Brewer 2003)” (Hinze, 70).

Policy makers, social movement actors, and other interested parties, including opponents, actively attempt to frame the policy issue in a way that justifies their own proposed solutions (Kingdon 1995; Baumgartner and Jones 1993): “Conditions become defined as problems when we come to believe that we should do something about them. Problems are not simply the conditions or external events themselves; there is also a perceptual, interpretive element” (Kingdon, 109-10). This “interpretive element” is important to framing an issue in a way that requires policy makers to take certain actions. Baumgartner and Jones similarly argue that social conditions do not always automatically generate public concern justifying policy action (1993). The fact that in Poland homosexuality wasn’t considered an issue worth tackling prior to 2004 is a case in point. Someone had to stir the pot first.

A condition needs to be defined first as a *public* problem. No other case is better suited to illustrate this need to define issues as posing reasons for public concern than the LGBT case, where private identities are debated by the public. Policy entrepreneurs attempt to define problems and promote solutions that run parallel to the desired definition of the problem. On the one hand, by defining homosexuality as detrimental to the family unit, and equating homosexuality with pedophilia, opponents have been pursuing a moral tactic. On the other hand, in painting the movement as hailing from the West and a symptom of Western excess and depravity, opponents have signaled Poland’s resistance to LGBT acceptance as the last bastion of normalcy in the region, akin to staving off former enemies during war, thereby making it an

international relations issue. So ingrained is this idea in the Polish collective imagination that up until fairly recently it permeated all political parties¹⁰⁹.

Politicians from across the political spectrum (which still sways mostly right) depict everyday Polish citizens as victims of perverted homosexual agitation. Conservative politicians and Church leaders portray gay demands as anti-Polish, anti-family, and anti-Catholic. Most interestingly, anti-gay rhetoric in post-1989 Poland took on a reversed form (*odwrócona retoryka*). By this understanding, the majority assumes the role of the minority by manipulating its language and logic to reinforce its power. Following this logic, homosexuals oppress heterosexuals and not the other way around. Sexual minorities assume the role of an invisible vanguard attempting to subvert the vulnerable majority from within. Selfish gay activists are supposedly intent on imposing a foreign and immoral ideology on Poland. Their dogma of tolerance and inclusion is nothing less than an attempt to undermine national sovereignty (Mizielińska 2004). In response, the helpless majority must resist the dictatorial minority to restore the eternal Polish values of Catholicism and nation.

To be clear, there are two main framing themes surrounding the LGBT issue, which can be further broken down into four distinct frames (see Figure 6). Opponents and activists both use moral and political frames at various points in time, often in conjunction with one another. Opponents' moral frame consists of projecting LGBT identities as deviant and dangerous to society. While activists' moral frame presents LGBT individuals as victims of discrimination. Opponents' political frame has painted LGBT issues as threatening to national sovereignty,

¹⁰⁹ Robert Biedroń, in his book *Tęczowy Elementarz*, suggests that homophobia is a basic component of Polish national consciousness, in turn bolstered by cultural homogeneity.

while activists' political frame presents LGBT concerns as explicitly human rights issues. Given the currently available tools, the political/human rights frame is a direct response to the limitations of the politico-nationalist frame. Through its strict demarcation of us/them, this frame precludes the existence of LGBT *anything* (individuals, culture, art, discussion, sex), let alone reframing. As a contentious response, the political/human rights frame does offer the potential of carving out a more indigenous/local way of thinking about LGBT issues within a national framework by virtue of it taking place within the sphere of domestic politics. The very fact that this frame currently exists side-by-side with that of the oppositional frame, and is being discussed in the public sphere, means that it is susceptible to being shaped by the socio-politico-cultural elements that define "Polishness".

FIGURE 6.

	ACTIVISTS	OPPONENTS
MORAL FRAME	(pre-2000s): victims of discrimination but focus largely on self-help (moral frame largely dictated Catholic Church)	LGBT people deviant and perverted. Harmful to society
POLITICAL FRAME	LGBT rights are human rights. Issues worthy of concern, recognition, and visibility	“human rights” a foreign imposition, and therefore opposing LGBT rights is a matter of preserving national sovereignty

Media and public attention to the issue are integral to the issue framing process, and once the problem has reached a certain level of attention, the process of public attention and government activity on the issue becomes self-perpetuating. In the early 2000s, activists had a difficult time grasping media attention, partly because media outlets weren't ready to tackle something so taboo, and partly due to very bad timing – when KPH arranged a press conference to call attention to the organization's launching, the Twin Towers were in the process of crumbling. After that, the media forgot about LGBT issues, because other pertinent world events were occurring. For many years, despite attempts to bring attention to LGBT issues, politicians avoided the topic altogether – and this invisibility is what activists have come to mention as being more problematic than overt opposition or homophobia.

When the Kaczynski brothers were both in power, they introduced a decidedly oppositional stance towards LGBT visibility and were quite vocal about it (which was a bit of a contradiction). But it was precisely this new climate that catalyzed a lot of activism, and movement successes, because activists could point to specific instances of homophobia, and garner sympathy and support. According to Baumgartner and Jones, symbols are a key factor in the framing process, not only in order to promote a certain solution, but also to influence the allocation of attention to the problem. When politicians began to actually address the LGBT question, instead of ignoring it, the media followed suit, and along with it, public attention.

Scholars have argued that public policy discourse and the mass media are integral to the creation of symbolic meaning for physical space and spatialized identity (Gottdiener 1995; Richardson and Jensen 2003). “Spatial agents ‘appropriate’ space in terms of ascribing cultural and symbolic

attributes to their environment whilst their spatial practices are simultaneously enabled or restricted by the very quality of this spatiality. A discursive representation of space prescribes a domain of ‘meaningful’ actions and thus at the end of the day provides a regulatory power mechanism for the selection of appropriate and meaningful utterances and actions” (Richardson and Jensen, 12).

Due to the increased visibility of LGBT individuals post-transition, the LGBT debate has taken on a strong spatial dimension in Warsaw. Some Polish politicians, nationalist organizations and activists, and the Catholic Church frame the (visible) presence of LGBT individuals as not indigenous to Poland, and therefore an affront to Polish identity and a threat to the Polish nation. If Warsaw - a city ascribed with heavy national historical significance - is the cosmopolitan and progressive exception to Poland’s insular and conservative whole, and the city a welcoming space for LGBT people and the centralized home of the movement, then it is also a global space, and therefore by extension not exclusively Polish. Proposals for reclaiming the nation for “mainstream” society - as much as those on the Right can claim they represent the mainstream – play out spatially in the city of Warsaw through calls for closing establishments, protesting parades and marches, and destroying sculptures, along with the more policy-driven initiatives such as blocking the expansion of antidiscrimination legislation, voting down civil unions, and opposition to adoptions by same-sex couples.

What is interesting about the relationship between LGBT and national identity is that while national identity is frequently touted as threatened by things like supranational organizations, increased immigration, unassimilated foreign nationals, or ethnic and racial mixing, the presence

of LGBT individuals stems from *within* the nation, and can't be as easily attributed to a foreign threat. Despite this, opponents have managed to do precisely that, but this wasn't always the case. Attitudes towards LGBT issues has changed significantly since the 1990s, and framing of LGBT issues pre- and post- EU accession are markedly different as a direct result from said accession.

In trying to assert a Polish presence, but doing so using EU tools, and calling upon foreign symbols around which to rally, many people, including activists, wonder whether the movement already missed its "Stonewall moment" when people remained silent in response to 'Operation Hyacinth' in the late 1980s¹¹⁰. This was a secret mass operation carried out by the Polish communist police, between 1985–87, the purpose of which was to create a national database – known as the pink card index - of all Polish homosexuals and people associated with them. Files were generated for approximately 11,000 individuals (Queer.pl).

While homosexuality wasn't criminalized, the communist government followed the Stalinist approach to homosexuality developed in the 1930s. Regarded as an abnormality, since the 1960s homosexual groups were watched either by the Milicja Obywatelska (Civic Militia) or by the Służba Bezpieczeństwa (Security Service). These agencies began collecting files on homosexuals in the 1970s but were interrupted in the early 1980s due to martial law. In direct response to Operation Hyacinth, the short-lived Warsaw Gay Movement¹¹¹ was born. It was one of the first openly lesbian and gay organizations in Poland, operating between 1987 and 1988. This counter-reaction by Polish gays and lesbians, was surprisingly well-received by the

¹¹⁰ In Polish, *Akcja "Hiacynt"*

¹¹¹ Polish: *Warszawski Ruch Homoseksualny*, abbreviated: WRH

mainstream media, as some journalists openly supported them. WRH activists were able to publish in weekly newspapers, speak on radio, and appear on television. However, their application to formally register the group under the Associations Act was denied by City Hall, and the group fell apart (with some members later forming the Lambda Groups Association post-transition), and like all of Polish civil society, activists and non-activist LGBT individuals went back underground and even further into the closet.

This moment in history *could* have been Poland's Stonewall, and served an authenticating purpose whereby LGBT actions could indeed be interpreted as not only Polish, but also nationalist *and* anticommunist. As such, it would have acquired a greater legitimacy, particularly in its contest with the Catholic Church – the harbinger of Polishness.

One of the main shifts in activist strategies - that of issue framing - has come as a result of EU influence. In his analysis of the movement in Poland, O'Dwyer aptly conceptualizes EU conditionality in terms of political opportunity structure (337), and specifically how entrance into the EU reframed homosexuality in Poland from that of charity, HIV/AIDS, and Catholic teaching to rights and non-discrimination (O'Dwyer 2012).

In the 1990s, the dominant frame surrounding homosexuality was that of morality/charity, in which it was painted in terms of moral failing and individual weakness – reflecting both Catholic teachings and communist-era taboos. This frame provided no basis for conceiving of homosexuality in terms of political claims. What sporadic protests managed to take place, were poorly attended by LGBT individuals and largely ignored by mainstream society. In addition,

because this frame equated Polish national identity with the Church, symbolically, this frame cropped out LGBT people from full membership in the national community.

As long as LGBT people were merely tolerated, and this tolerance framed as Christian charity, there was no threat. The problem arose when it no longer sufficed for LGBT individuals to be mere victims, and instead began exerting agency. Following Poland's EU integration set the stage for a framing contest by way of opening up space for an alternative political rights frame. "Political rights" and "human rights" were adopted by activists, and LGBT issues became explicitly politicized, with activists formulating their goals, which became much more tangible. All the while this was happening, the stalwart of the Catholic Church has largely managed to maintain its monopoly over the meaning of national identity, which is a major roadblock for activists now frequently portrayed as anti-nationalist and/or foreign.

Polish national identity and the rise of Catholic Church

Contemporary conceptions of Polish nationalism and Polishness (such as strict Catholicism) - while often viewed as persistent markers having survived since the inception of "the nation" - are actually, in the grand scheme of things, quite recent phenomena, and need to be reevaluated as such. Oftentimes, they are essentialized as natural characteristics, as opposed to the social constructs that they are, arising from specific historical and political circumstances, and their usefulness as symbols for current social-cultural politics.

While Poland as a state has formally existed since 966 A.D. (Lukowski and Zawaszki 2001)¹¹², the earliest expressions of Polish nationalism and debates on what it means to be a citizen of the Polish nation can be traced to the 17th or 18th centuries (Davies 2005), and in some cases the 13th century (Auer 2004). Manifestations of early Polish (proto)nationalism, was related to Polish-Lithuanian identity and was multi-ethnic and multi-religious. It was also represented exclusively by the Polish nobility (*szlachta*), and their cultural and political values founded on civic, republican ideas. With the partition of the Polish state in the late 18th century, this early form of (elite) Polish nationalism began to fade (Zubrzycki 2009). The consequence of Polish statelessness due to the partition of the former Commonwealth territories in the years 1795-1918, would leave a lasting imprint on the further development of Polish nationalism, and carry on into the 21st century.

National identity tends to strengthen when the country or nation is threatened - or perceives itself to be threatened - militarily, economically or culturally, or when it has in fact been attacked. Poland is no exception. Modern Polish nationalism arose as a movement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Polish activists promoted a Polish national consciousness as a political strategy and deployed it in conjunction with the rejection of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian cultural assimilation (Davies 2005). While only the Russian Empire (and after the January Uprising of 1863) actively suppressed the Polish nation¹¹³, and other Empires ruled with the

¹¹² The establishment of a Polish state is frequently traced to 966, when Mieszko I, ruler of an area roughly located where present-day Poland exists, converted to Christianity.

¹¹³ The Russian Empire banned Polish language in schools, etc. In 1867, Austria, on the other hand, signed a compromise with Poles, similar to their agreement with Hungarians, that allowed complete autonomy for Galicia in exchange for political loyalty to the emperor. After that, one could speak of suppression of Ukrainian nationality by ruling Polish elites in Galicia, but not about the suppression of the Polish community.

cooperation of local Polish nobility, the trope of Polish national suppression would become an incredibly useful myth for contemporary actors.

In the years leading up to and after the partition, different narratives of Polish national identity competed with one another, but generally, there were two major strains. The goal of the first and dominant position, propagated by Chief of State Józef Piłsudski - who was primarily responsible for regaining independent statehood in 1918 - was to forge a political (not ethnic) concept of the nation, one that would embrace all the different ethnic groups that inhabited Poland at the time. Piłsudski had a vision of Poland as a multinational federation. The other, promoted by ideologue and “father of Polish nationalism”, Roman Dmowski, explicitly emphasized an ethnically and culturally Polish, and religiously Roman Catholic nation (Crago 1993). Dmowski subscribed to theories of Social Darwinism and early on rebuked romantic nationalism which he deemed foolish. Dmowski’s brand of nationalism was marginal until the Revolution of 1905, where it became popular among the middle-classes in urban centers, Catholic clergy, and petty nobility in the countryside. It wasn’t embraced by the ruling classes or society at large until the late 1930s (Wandycz 1990).

An important element of modern Polish nationalism has been its identification with the Roman Catholicism, though – despite current claims of its longevity - this is a fairly recent development, with roots in the 17th century counter-reformation, but established more solidly in the interwar period (Auer 2004; Zubrzycki 2009). Although the old Commonwealth was religiously diverse and highly tolerant (Friedrich and Pendzich 2009), the Roman Catholic religious narrative with became one of the defining characteristics of modern Polish identity.

Not until 1918 did Poland – now a free state after 150 years of partition – have the opportunity to define itself as a nation, and along with it, the burden of grappling with the details.

“The three powers which had divided Poland between themselves were in a state of disarray, and the Poles were free, for the first time in a century and a half, to forge their own destiny. What kind of state would Poland become? What would its boundaries be and who would be its citizens? The moment of independence forced these questions into relief – the Polish state had to be created and the Polish nation defined”. (Brykczynski, 2)

It is in this brief moment of peace and independence when vying conceptions of Polish nationalism really became visible. At the same time, cultural divisions between the urban and the rural were very pronounced, and Catholic values were heralded alongside relaxed morals and norms. Although public discussions of homosexuality were limited in the interwar era, evidence suggests that artistic and elite milieus provided a safe zone for homosexual expressions. In urban centers, most notably among the artistic and intellectual elites¹¹⁴, homosexuality was tolerated, and a modest (underground) gay and lesbian subculture existed. Members of the literary intelligentsia, prominent poets like Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, cultivated same-sex romances. Non-conventional sex lives of the privileged were neither necessarily hidden nor widely condemned (Shore 2006; Sierakowska 2006). At the same time, the urban population accounted for the minority of citizens, as 70% of the Polish interwar population lived in the countryside. As a result, homosexuality wasn't exactly accepted by society at large. Despite this, as a free state, Poland never criminalized homosexuality, and following its independence from partitioning powers, amended the imposed sodomy laws in 1932 to become (once again) the first country in 20th-century Europe to decriminalize homosexual activity. The 1932 law did not emancipate Polish gays and lesbians, however. On the contrary, it facilitated the erasure of homosexuality

¹¹⁴ Many of Poland's most important cultural figures during this period were homosexual, including novelists Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and Maria Dąbrowska, the composer Karol Szymanowski, the poet Bolesław Leśmian.

from public debates, and the onset of World War II gave rise to the reiteration of the heterosexual state.

Throughout history, nationalism's utility ebbed and flowed, rising following Poland's defeat in the 1864 January Uprising, the restoration of an independent Polish state in 1918 under the leadership of Józef Piłsudski, and the establishment of a homogenous ethnic Polish state in 1947 (Davies 2005). Additionally, the period of partition is heralded as a chapter in Polish history wherein the Polish nation survived. What is more, it became socially and culturally stronger *despite* the loss of independence (Kania-Lundholm 2012). The Polish national anthem itself is a testament to the continued significance of the partition (Appendix A).

Poland once again became victim to the onslaught of war and occupation. It was forced to table philosophical discussions, and instead resume its self-defense, only to be "liberated" by Soviet forces after troops watched from across the Vistula River as the capital city fell to the Germans. What followed was decades of communist rule, which many Poles still see as the selling-out of Poland by Western powers (USA, France, UK). Because of its long history of occupation and partition, Poles understandably remain highly attuned to issues of sovereignty, and balk at anything that smells remotely foreign. The glue - according to the nationalist narrative - managing to hold together a strong Polish national identity through all the strife, has been the Catholic Church.

The role of Warsaw in the political history of the country, not least of all its transition to democracy, is a complex one. When Poland transitioned from communism to liberal democracy

and a market economy, the exchange of power occurred under an initial cloud of secrecy between the communist coalition and the opposition (Solidarity) players, and later formalized through the Polish Round Table Agreement, divided into several different sessions. The exact events of the Round Table are not entirely known, but it is safe to say that a compromise between the power-brokers and the new opposition players had been reached on behalf of the nation. In a relatively short period of time, Poland had adopted a set of (re)new(ed) institutions, including: independent trade unions, reinstating the Senate, office of the President, National Court Council, adjusted powers of Sejm, thus altering the 1952 People's Republic Constitution several times to the current 1997 Constitution, a continuation of a much-longer history of constitutional changes¹¹⁵.

While the country was quick to adjust, it did not have the advantage of time, as its Western counterparts had had, in embracing changes social as well as political. While many LGBT citizens embraced democratization and attempted to exercise their freedom of assembly and expression, they were met with strong opposition from the moral authority of the Catholic Church – which also benefited from the transition, having remained intact following decades of communist governance¹¹⁶, and benefiting from workers' anger post-transition. While the anti-communist movement was never led by the Catholic Church, in the years following the transition it has managed to popularize the idea that it alone had kept the collective identity of the Polish nation intact. In reality, the Church – as an institution - had been cautious in its opposition to the communist government, and frequently preferred accommodation to open defiance. Instead, the

¹¹⁵ Nihil novi (1505), Henrician Articles (1573), May 3rd (1791), Duchy of Warsaw (1807), Kingdom of Poland (1815), Organic Statute (1832), Small (1919), March (1921), August Novelization (1926), April (1935), Small (1947), People's Republic (1952), April Novelization (1989), Small (1992), Current (1997).

¹¹⁶The Christianization of Poland occurred in 966 AD

anti-communist movement was led primarily by workers and intellectuals with the participation of some Catholic priests at the grass-roots level (Ost 2005). Nevertheless, the Church survived the transition with the legitimacy of being on the right side of history, not least of all thanks to public critiques from Polish Pope John Paul II, who had served as the spiritual inspiration for the Solidarity movement. In a 1979 home-coming pilgrimage to Warsaw, he proclaimed: “Do not be afraid”¹¹⁷, and later prayed: “Let your Spirit descend and change the image of the land... this land”¹¹⁸.

The Church - and the political right-wing - had benefited from the failure by Solidarity elites to deliver on their promises. Instead opting for political negotiations with reform oriented representatives of the regime, former leftist opposition activists had turned into economic liberals overnight, eschewing a "third way", and fully adopting economic liberalism – at the expense of workers. “Populist politicians cleverly seized their chance and offered workers another narrative to explain their anger: they were not suffering because wages were not high enough, but because the managers were communists and atheists” (Ost, 2, 87). This narrative was successful, and redirected workers' anger from economic to moral issues, strengthening the political base for the nationalist and religious political right.

It is within this context that contemporary Polish democracy has come into fruition. Alongside an amended constitution, newly-formed institutions, new political ideology, and new market system, an old, stable, familiar spiritual anchor in which citizens sought solace and strength in the face of uncertainty. It is also within this context that struggles for LGBT recognition must be

¹¹⁷ Interestingly, this quote was later used in promotional posters for the 2010 Europride.

¹¹⁸ <http://web.archive.org/web/20061214140137/http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3190110.stm>

understood, as the cultural climate has largely been influenced by the moral tone set by the Catholic Church as it rose to nationalist prominence during the latter half of the 20th century. It wasn't until the 1990s that LGBT visibility began to occur, but it wasn't until the 2000s that LGBT issues were actually politicized.

Global movement as lived space and the LGBT political frame

Through its role as a global city, connecting people, ideas, organizations, and market, Warsaw has allowed for a distinct lived experience which in turn have made the reframing of LGBT issues as explicitly political possible. Poland's transition to democracy and global market capitalism resulted in the social movement's gaining of steam. Occurring in parallel was Warsaw's rise in regional importance, joining the ranks of other cities around the world, that just began to rebound from the decline of the 1970s and 80s, markedly in the US and Western Europe. Changes happened quickly, and it wasn't long before Warsaw crept its way to being a second-tier global city. It has been in this context that the majority of Poland's LGBT movement has existed. Unlike other countries, most notably in the Scandinavian region, the Polish LGBT movement has never quite existed in national isolation. A movement never existed before the political transition, and post-transition, the movement was connected globally from the get-go.

As a result LGBT groups and activists in Warsaw remain connected to the global LGBT movement socially and symbolically. Activists simultaneously constitute a larger network, which lends itself to information-sharing, acquiring international funding, and other intellectual and human capital. This has been drastically accelerated with the growth of global capitalism (Harvey 1989). Activists also evoke important milestones (Stonewall Riots), offer moral support

(signing petitions circulating on facebook), use adopted language (“queer” and “gender”) and symbols (rainbow flag), and produce cultural capital. In this way, they incorporate global tropes in their local claims. They consciously think in terms of global as well as local contexts, which present both constraints and opportunities. As LGBT citizens adopt global trends and deploy them locally to change their immediate, local lifeworlds, they are giving rise to different forms of doing politics, and “the concrete practices of freedom are modifying the forms and loci of democratic citizenship in novel ways (Tully, 158).” One of those novel ways of practicing democratic citizenship is by participating in a global social movement.

Just as conceptions of nationalism resulted from the creation of the modern nation-state, so, too, did social movements. Once “modular collective action” was established, it was diffused through state expansion, print and association, and the diffusion of repertoires of contention across the globe. With relatively recent and fast shifts in state significance, and the increasing role that cities play – particularly at superseding many roles previously performed by states – it is important to recognize how the character of social movements has further changed, and what that can mean for movements - such as LGBT – locally.

In his work on the rise of the network society, Manuel Castells argues that space is “not a reflection of society, it is its expression. In other words: space is not a photocopy of society, it is society (1996, p. 410)”. For Castells, “space has a form, function, and social meaning that shapes, and is shaped by, individuals and groups engaged in historically determined social relationships (1978, p. 152)”. Similarly for Lefebvre, the production of different spaces shapes individual behavior, social action, and group formation. “Moreover, the consequent layers of

space – individual, local, metropolitan, national, global, and so on - interpenetrate and superimpose on one another, connecting global and local socio-economic processes with the production of fragmented and yet homogeneous spaces. As a 'brutal condensation of social relationships,' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 227), space reflects power relations while also being a 'site' for contesting relations of domination and subordination" (Gotham et al. 317). If space is an expression of society, what does this mean for the city as a global space? What kind of expression does it constitute, and to what relationships does it lend meaning? Melucci's theorizing of social movements as action systems begins to answer these questions. He stresses that the form a movement takes relays a message, as does the manner in which civil society actors organize that reveals the structures to which they respond and challenge. In plugging into global networks or adopting certain tropes, LGBT activists respond not only to the state's indifference, but also to the manner in which the world is organized – namely, no longer (if ever) in neat borders delineating one nation-state from another. Additionally, the adoption of global tools in Warsaw emphasizes the growing role of cities in the world system, and in this case membership in the EU. Calling upon regional/transnational/global networks and tropes may be desirable on both a functional and symbolic level, signaling that the existing tools and local spaces are deficient, and that operating within the confines of a strict nationalism is limiting. At the same time, however, there is a disjoint between the city and country, as all space is not created equal, and the differences between city and province become all the more heightened.

Precisely because the city is a distinct animal in that it harbors global spaces and opportunities with the greatest intensity, its expression is not extendable to the entire nation, and therefore not a reflection of an *entire* society. Time-space compression - refers to any phenomenon that alters

the qualities of and relationship between space and time (Harvey 1989) - has come to define the lived experiences of people in larger cities like Warsaw¹¹⁹. It is “brought about by productions of space and technological changes that make it possible for communication to be further flung and cheapened, so that "the time horizons" of decision making shrink, while the effects of these decisions ricochet across an ever widening and differentiated space (Katz, 147)”. Where else in Poland can activists call a press conference last-minute and grasp the national media’s attention? Or meet for a strategic power-lunch with politicians and lobbyists to strategize over an upcoming sejm vote on expanding antidiscrimination legislation? Or even hob-knob with foreign ambassadors who then promise to display a show of support by flying the rainbow flag outside their embassies? Because our world is "speeding up" and "spreading out", time-space compression is more prevalent than ever as internationalization takes place. Cultures and communities are merged during time-space compression due to rapid growth and change, as "layers upon layers" of histories fuse together to shift our ideas of what the identity of a "place" should be (Massey 1994). However, the fusing of ideas regarding what the identities of places should be, are not occurring uniformly: “While from the perspective of transnational capitalists and those living directly in their midst [large cities] the world may indeed be shrinking, on the grounds of [rural] places... ever more marooned by these processes - it seems to be getting bigger all the time. The two processes are of a piece. (Katz. 226).”

This is one more element that complicates the use of global symbols and resources for the movement. It poses a difficulty in that the rest of society cannot entirely relate, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas. Because space is a set of productive forces, it actively shapes social reality, a point frequently highlighted by Lefebvre (1984), Castells (1996, 1997), Harvey

¹¹⁹ Technological innovation drives time–space compression.

(1989), Soja (1996), and sociologists such as Mark Gottdiener (1995). As John Urry (1996, pp. 378-379) puts it, “space makes a clear difference to the degree to which . . . the causal powers of social entities (such as class, the state, capitalist relations, patriarchy) are realized.” In exploring the LGBT movement in Warsaw, we can begin to understand the causal powers and interdependent relationship between LGBT activism, globalization, urbanization, and nationalism.

According to Lefebvre’s analysis of space, people’s understandings of geographical space, landscape, and property are all cultural and are subject to change. He analyzed contests over the significance of space and considered how transterritorial relations were given cultural significance. In so doing, Lefebvre attempted to emphasize the importance of “lived” grassroots experiences and understandings of geographical space as intrinsically social. His approach is helpful for our purposes. We can look to the tensions inherent in the framing contests surrounding LGBT issues, and understand them as battles over cultural meaning, wherein the territorial “lived grassroots experiences” of participants come to influence their understanding of and between self, other, and nation. Drastically different lived experiences – particularly those affected unevenly by time-space compression – can lead to a clash in values. In shaping their understanding, lived experiences - or lived space - also come to shape their perceptions of space and conceptions of space, as evidenced through issue framing¹²⁰.

¹²⁰ “The third term of lived space is balanced carefully between the two poles of conceived space (purely idealism) and perceived space (pure materialism). It embodies both elements without being reducible to either. . . . In between of these two poles, there is the lived space, a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences (Watkins, 2005), of people’s sense-making, imagination, and feeling – that is, their local knowledge – of the organisational space as they encounter it. In so far that our experiences always take place in pre-fabricated physical spaces, and that what we think may not coincide with what we do, the lived space embodies both conceived and perceived spaces without being reducible to either. (Zhang, 221)”

It can be argued that the Warsaw-led LGBT political frame – one that adopts human rights language - is in essence an indigenous, Polish manifestation, in so much as one can understand Warsaw's position as a complex combination of local, national, and global space. If the lived experience influences issue framing, and if activists' lived experiences in Warsaw results in regularized contact with global forces, it is not surprising that Varsovian activists easily identify with the global movement. When asked what her relationship was to the global movement, Maja, a young female activist who also works in social media said enthusiastically, "Living and working in Warsaw it's easy to feel part of something larger, something that's happening all over the world. My network has grown exponentially, and keeping in touch with activists all over is just a regular part of my day". Prior to moving to Warsaw, she was not involved in activism at all, which is all the more impressive considering just how many pots she's has her hands in. Since 2009 she has been very involved in KPH, especially with the (now defunct) KPH Q(ueer) group, and the youth group, and was a board member of Fundacja Równości (Equality Foundation) – which was set up explicitly to organize pride parades and the like. She was one of the main organizers of EuroPride, and also maintains a popular Polish LGBT website. To Maja, global interconnectedness was a part of her life in Warsaw, and integral to her work, activism, and extracurricular activities.

Like Maja, activists already feel interconnected through their consumption of pop-culture, news, technological savvy, and international travel or exposure to international visitors. This cosmopolitan reality constitutes their concrete lived space. This global aspect to their lived experience is made all the more pronounced when one also considers national exclusion as part of the equation – they are dialectical. Feelings of exclusion from one prompt many people to

embrace the other¹²¹, but they need not be strictly oppositional. While both activists and opponents deploy political frames, they are both limited by the strictures of a conceived nationalism (conceived space). To experience the local is to a degree how one experiences the national. To experience struggle locally, one will oppose the national status quo, and vice versa. The local lived experience becomes a stand-in for that which one cannot experience on a larger scale.

It's important to recognize that activists' political framing of LGBT concerns as human rights are a direct response to the limitations of a nationalist frame, inasmuch as it has been conceived thus far. The closest possible use would simply resort back to the Catholic frame of moral weakness and Christian charity. Activists' responses are direct reactions to current state of affairs, and act both through national channels as well as with the help of "global" resources. To not do so within the context of Warsaw would be in and of itself inauthentic. For Varsovians, acting on/through all three planes *is the* indigenous or local way of expressing their political desires. Adopting the EU's human rights lingo and using it to expand the labor code and antidiscrimination legislation may be serving as a way to carve out Polish ways of thinking about LGBT issues. Adopting nationalist frames are not an option because they don't allow room for LGBT concerns. It should not be surprising that activists pursue different tactics. Since alternative avenues for national inclusion are well within reach in Warsaw, and people understand that they live in an interconnected world, adopting global strategies to create a different path to LGBT resistance need not be discounted as anti-nationalist.

¹²¹ In extreme but recent cases, we see disillusioned, young, US-born men returning to their immigrant parents' homeland in Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan to fight alongside Islamic militias.

Contesting symbols and framing issues

In a country whose contemporary nationalism - largely defined by Dmowski's conceptualization - stems from a keen wariness of foreign imposition and a culturally homogenous strategy for creating unity, as it was forged in those kinds of circumstances, and whose victor has been the staunchly conservative Catholic Church, the LGBT movement faces some considerable obstacles. Not least of all, the burden of proving an organic Polishness, but also the challenge of working within its limits. Up until fairly recently, LGBT activism in Poland largely followed an "essentialist/traditional" formula (Mizielińska 2005), but the social context of a homogenous culture is not conducive to the development of militant queer politics. As a result, gay activists stress the centrality of normality when discussing their sexual orientations, and compare homosexual experiences to heterosexual lives. They reassure society that lesbian and gay values are mainstream values, and that they are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and family. Most importantly, they are also Catholics and Poles, not outside infiltrators. Membership in the nation via integration into dominant social structures remains a key goal of the movement¹²². In stressing sameness, activists reinforce the traditional Polishness as defined by the particular link between national identity and Catholicism that ironically prompts many Poles to reject homosexuality.

On the other hand, activists must balance the abundant resources available from tapping into a global movement, with the repercussions of doing so. The paradox of the rich economy of ideas inherent to transnational movements seems to be the Achilles heel of Warsaw LGBT activists, as they may be reaching too far into the toolbox of global strategies and symbols. At the same time,

¹²² Mizielińska, Joanna. 2005. "Poland meets queer theory," 122-124.

this is their reality and the environment in which they live and experience the movement, so to participate politically in any other way would be in itself inauthentic, for lack of a better term.

Generally speaking, the movement, along with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans identities have been conceived as a foreign imposition, and an affront to Polish-Catholic national identity. What symbols are deployed where, and by whom clearly determine their appropriateness within the larger spatial economy. However, the utilization of “the global” component isn’t always treated as intrinsically evil, nor intrinsically desirable. For Catholic nationalist groups - the most vocal opponents of LGBT rights in Poland - the very global institution of the Church is never questioned. The dictates of the (Roman) Vatican are treated as an a priori, because the passage of time has allowed for internalization and reframing of doctrine and ideology for national purposes. As long as the rules of the framing game were dominated by the Church, the “homosexual problem” didn’t exist. However, once the framework and language set forth by the EU was adopted, the problem began to exist. The question remains whether invoking global conceptions for local purposes gets in the way of ultimately performing the lived experience, or whether its use is a reflection of the lived experience of Warsaw activists.

Activists in Warsaw seem to be placing the idea before (or in conjunction with) the lived experience, which as Lefebvre states, can cause the lived to disappear even before it’s had a chance to thrive. “So much is intimated by myths... but it is only actualized in and through (religio-political) space. Like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized; but the speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to

disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the ‘unconscious’ level of lived experience per se (Lefebvre, 34)”.

In part because the Warsaw contingent is so immersed in the global sphere, and in touch with what is happening around the world in terms of ideas and tactics, they sometimes seem to lose grip on applicability to the Polish context, outside of the capital, and particularly in terms of its reception in the national sphere. Certain ideas have not had time to “live” before being conceived, and the use of non-native language has only intensified the foreignness, rather than serving as fillers for linguistic limitations. A few instances of global evocation explored below include the consumption and deployment of images and symbols (flags), language (gender), as well as international influence (EU directives).

EU directives and human rights discourse

One would be hard-pressed to deny the role of the European Union in the unfolding of the LGBT movement in member states. The EU and related institutions have promoted non-discrimination norms in post-communist states. Enshrined in the EU labor law as a core norm is non-discrimination of minority groups. What is more, LGBT people are mentioned explicitly. It is also a requirement for accession¹²³. At the same time, the EU’s role has also catalyzed and shaped opposition. In his study of the role of the EU on the Polish LGBT movement, O’Dwyer aptly describes the situation: “Nascent gay-rights organizations across the region have come to

¹²³ Until 2010, the Labor Code constituted the main element of Polish antidiscrimination legislation. By applying the equality directives mainly in the field of employment, proponents of antidiscrimination reform were able to pinpoint remaining gaps and weaknesses of the legislation and bring them to the attention of the European Court of Justice. In a manner This mobilized the Polish Government to approve of the “Act on the Implementation of Certain Provisions of the European Union in the Field of Equal Treatment” (Act on Equal Treatment, AET) implemented on January 1st, 2011.

frame their demands within the model of EU norms promoting diversity and non-discrimination. Equally importantly, the opponents of gay rights also framed the debate in EU terms – though, obviously, they constructed the language of EU norms as a threat to national identity. Thus, gay rights in Eastern Europe have the flavor of a European project...” (O’Dwyer, 334).

It is precisely the European flavor that many opponents (as well as many LGBT individuals), object to, as Polish palates are sensitive to overbearing ladling of directives from the EU chefs stirring the pot¹²⁴. “Given the political role of the Polish Catholic church and the common identification of Polishness with Catholicism, EU norms regarding homosexuality clearly clash with domestic ones” (O’Dwyer 336). While this statement may be true, it doesn’t completely explain the seeming incommensurability between Catholicism and homosexuality. Poland is hardly the only predominantly-Catholic country in the EU, so the reluctance to adopt certain provisions lends credence to the idea that it is based on something other than moral objection, and instead based on a Polishness, narrowly-defined.

But how is a movement to unfold organically, in a country whose only form of contemporary “acceptance” has been based on the stipulation of invisibility? There also exists a logical leap, where LGBT individuals are presumed to be un-patriotic and not in the least bit nationalist. Because the movement is global, and activists adopt some tactics from the West, as individuals, they are perceived to be outsiders as well. One friend recently told me about a colleague from his patriotic/nationalist university korporacja (“corporation”, akin to a fraternity) who recently had

¹²⁴ In the aftermath of WWII, Poland became ethnically and religiously homogenous. The lack of antidiscrimination legislation was reflective of society's general sentiment that there wasn't a need for it, especially amid communist party-propaganda extolling the existence and virtues of citizen-comrade equality. Following Poland's transition from Communist rule, and eventual entrance into the EU, anti-discrimination legislation began appearing incrementally as Poland began to codify international laws, beginning with tweaking the Labor Code.

his membership revoked, largely due to his recent coming out¹²⁵. This friend was a leader in the organization, and was a dynamic and charming character. He made the mistake of bringing his boyfriend to a party. After that, other reasons for his excommunication were amassed, and his removal put to an emergency vote. This was a man who identified, first and foremost, as a nationalist patriot, and while closer friends knew about his orientation and many more suspected, it was not a public topic of conversation. If LGBT individuals, who also happen to harbor feelings of nationalist pride, are excluded from such groups, where are they to go, particularly if they are not inclined to join the LGBT movement (because of its global flavor)? Can the two ever be reconciled?

“Gender/Dzender”

Activists fully comprehend the delicate nature that adopting symbols into the Polish context entails, and understand that there is a potential danger in doing so. The most notable examples that simultaneously help and hinder the movement have included: the rainbow flag, framing the issues using human rights language, pride parades, and the using terminology like “queer”, “gender”, and “coming out”. There is a delicate politics of language at play within the movement itself.

Discussions frequently centered on the appropriateness of adopting English language, and by doing so, who it risks isolating. One panel discussion during EuroPride - with the editorial staff

¹²⁵ In interwar Poland (1918-1939), there existed more than one hundred corporations. During the communist period (1944-1989), they were forbidden. Today about fifteen corporations are active in Poland, at universities in Warsaw and other larger cities. Members commemorate founding and past members who died in war, and otherwise take part in patriotic causes. Many current members are legacy members, following in their fathers’ and grandfathers’ footsteps. An archive of university corporations available at: <http://www.archiwumkorporacyjne.pl/>

of *Furia*¹²⁶ - addressed this precise question, and the ensuing debate was a thoughtfully interactive one, where panelists and audience members both recognized the exclusionary power of language and how using English ostracizes older generations¹²⁷, as well as those with lower levels of education, or of the working class. The use of non-Polish language is problematic also because it distances the movement from the context within which it is located. This became evident during a Queer Studies session hosted by KPH. The aim of this was to educate people about gay history, culture and identity, and the instructor leading the course would often take a critical stance towards using too much English terminology. For example, the phrase “coming out”: it is esoteric for Polish people in that many would not understand it, and so it creates a sense of estrangement. Again, a discussion arose around whether there was not a better phrase in Polish, something non-LGBT people (or those not engaged in the movement) could better understand. The attempt to make homosexuality congruent with being Polish is on the political agenda of the movement, and language and symbols help do this. On occasion, Polish is used: “Wychodzić z szafy” (literally, “coming out of the closet”), or “zadeklarowany gej” (literally, “declared gay” meaning “out”), but this is done more in an outside-group setting, such as by the media, politicians, public, while English remains widely used by activists.

Possible exclusion from the debate is not the only negative consequence of using English terms. A much more devastating side-effect are the potential misunderstandings associated with ambiguous concepts (as ambiguity provides fertile ground for the battle over symbolic meaning and framing), as exemplified by the recent hubbub surrounding the word “gender”, or it’s

¹²⁶A Polish lesbian-feminist publication

¹²⁷While younger generations in Poland are quite comfortable with English, the baby-boomer generation was required to learn Russian and is not as familiar with English.

Polishized spelling, *dżender*. Although not new to academics in the West, the term and concept of “gender” has recently sparked controversy and very lively (and imaginative) public debate.

In Polish, the literal translation of the word *gender* is *pleć*, which also encapsulates biological sex. There is no conscious distinction between biological sex and the social roles we perform in our daily lives. With academics and activists employing the English word, without appropriate clarification before it hits the mainstream, the word has been received – particularly by the Church – as a threat. Opponents (of the concept!?) treat and present it as an ideology, not as a critical perspective.

Sixteen MPs from the ultraconservative "United Poland" party formed a "Stop gender ideology" parliamentary committee. The group's aim is to fight the "negative impact of gender ideology on the Polish family and the education of the youth," according to the committee's head, initiator, and only female member, MP Beata Kempa. The MPs readily use the English word "gender" and argue that it refers to an amalgamation of all the social changes the church finds objectionable, including gay marriage and contraception, to name but a couple. The Church and commentators have been pushing the concept of "gender ideology" in the Polish media, and the bishops of Poland all signed and issued a letter entitled "The Dangers Stemming From Gender Ideology" to be read in churches the Sunday after Christmas in 2013. Linguists in Poland declared “gender” the word of the year, due to all the traction the debate has received¹²⁸.

In describing “gender ideology” [sic], church officials have referenced the central argument of gender theory: that gender is a social and cultural construct, and not innate to human nature. This

¹²⁸ <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/gender-slowem-roku-2013/mkkf5>

concept has long been problematic for the church, and in its attack on this “ideology”, it now argues that just about every hot-button social issue that it can’t quite get its head around is a result of this troubling concept, including homosexuality, trans issues, abortion, non-traditional family models, IVF, and contraception. Because the public doesn’t have a clear understanding of what gender studies or gender theory is, the concept lends itself well for purposes of fear-mongering. Another extension of the dangers of “gender ideology” is its “aim of... sexualization of children and youth.” At the same time, the Church has been losing its moral authority, as more sexual abuse scandals are uncovered – which is quite ironic for an institution that has repeatedly equated homosexuality with pedophilia (Economist 2014), and explains that “genderism” is to blame for a whole slew of social ills.

Scholars of gender theory, activists, and other observers, including some educated Catholic commentators, have repeatedly emphasized that there is no such thing as a “gender *ideology*.” The definition of this “ideology” that the Polish church offers is so broad and vague that it encompasses most liberal social politics, with enemy ranks including feminists, gays, journalists, educators, politicians, scholars, and even the prime minister. Somewhat amusingly, this has been furthered to include bicyclists, runners/joggers, vegans and vegetarians, coffee connoisseurs, hipster and youth culture in general. Proponents of gender - those who understand the concept to be a social construct describing the social roles that people perform, and not a natural phenomenon like sex based simply on one’s category of reproductive organs.- have been labeled as “dżenderyści” or “genderists”. To be clear, “gender” is a dirty word in Poland, much like “feminist”.

Whatever it is called, the fact that deployment of the concept has been dominated by English language, poses a problem because it places it directly outside of an appropriately authentic Polish context. Attempts at Polishizing the word as *dzender* have not helped, either, because the idea itself has already been proposed as alien, despite endless expressions and gender critiques available from both the present and past. However, instances of the use of the word in regular, mainstream, unpoliticized ways do occur, and to my pleasure, used correctly and without the hint of conspiracy. For example, friends of mine who recently had a child – a boy – commented on the fact that everything purchased for the baby by friends and family was blue, despite their own efforts to avoid that. They laughed, shrugged their shoulders, and said, “yeah, his wardrobe is very [male] gendered”. And that was that, we then moved on to the next topic of conversation.

Flags: technicolor and/or two-tone

Unfortunately, activists may also be contributing to their own undoing, as they fall into the nationalism trap, and one day a year exemplifies this on an annual basis. Leading up to the November 11th Commemoration of the 2nd Republic, I had an interesting discussion with an activist friend, regarding the use of flags. First a little background: On what should be a beautiful, patriotic holiday – and is in other towns across Poland – in Warsaw manifests as an exercise in extremes¹²⁹. Extreme emotions, extreme reactions, extreme accusations, and extreme violence. Organizing of the events has become the purview of far-right political parties and organizations¹³⁰.

¹²⁹ “Fascism Will Not Pass” counter-manifestation (<http://11listopada.org/mapa>) http://warszawa.gazeta.pl/warszawa/1,95190,8616064,Przeciw_marszowi_faszystow__Wygwizdzy_ich_z_miasta.html

¹³⁰ Młodzież Wszechpolska (MW), Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (ONR), and the “support committee” included prominent right-wing politicians and figures including Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Artur Zawisza, Rafał Ziemkiewicz, prof. Jan Żaryn, prof. Jacek Bartyzel, prof. Ryszard Bender, prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak, prof. Anna Rażny, Paweł Kukiz, Adam „Pih” Piechocki, among others.

The first parade (in 2010) was organized by Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth) in conjunction with the Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (Radical Nationalist Camp). As such, participation in the events has been closed off to more left-leaning, or even centrist groups, who in turn have come to organize their own counter-manifestation declaring the organizing groups as “fascist”. These accusations are not on account of the commemorations, but rather the manifestos of the groups themselves, which lean towards the exclusionary, largely influenced by the late Dmowski’s ideology. This, however, has empowered the right to label the protesters as unpatriotic, and therefore foreign and invasive – the elimination of which the commemoration is indented to celebrate. Basically, the entire thing is a huge spectacle, and citizens of Warsaw now gather to watch the fury unfold rather than to wave their flags and celebrate a resilient history together.

So in the days leading up to this spectacle, knowing that several people were going to join the counter-manifestation, I asked an activist friend, Adam, whether people should bring Polish flags along with their rainbow flags and other paraphernalia. My sentiment was to bring either none or both, as a way to emphasize the diversity of the nation, whereas Adam felt that doing so would only strengthen discourse around the concept and importance of nation instead of eradicating the concept entirely - which he feels should be all people’s ultimate goal, as the moment a nation is defined or even expanded it still remains exclusive to other groups, and therefore never fully socially just¹³¹.

¹³¹ I would again argue that this is a very a Polish thing to do – jump the gun before everyone else, in terms of Political conceptions. Ex. – Poland’s forays into democracy whilst all surrounding still centralized authority (leading to easy partition on Poland).

I countered that in order to redefine nation, it must first be defined, and as the concept is expanded, it has the potential to become more inclusive. In the meantime, we must therefore work within its confines before we can redefine it and work outside of it, and lastly, without it. This went on for a while, but finally concluded with my asking whether not the LGBT “community” category/label can also be construed as nation. Here Adam acquiesced and expressed his conflicting feelings regarding the “lgbt nation” – that it works within the same confines as nation in its power to exclude, but ultimately it also ghettoizes itself. He’s an idealist and wants to live in a world where barriers (even ones he belongs to/in) do not exist. What is even more interesting is that as a fellow Polish-American, he is proud of his Polish heritage, and does not rebuke it.

In terms of symbolic use, several LGBT friends, some of whom are also hyphenated Poles – myself included - wholeheartedly identify with love of country. We have danced in Polish folk groups, attended Polish Saturday schools, donned red and white on national holidays and recited patriotic poems to our parishes. We dress up in folkloric costumes, and wave our little flags – all on non-Polish soil. To do so in Minnesota, New Hampshire, or London is fine, somehow our complex identities are commensurable there, but to do so in Poland, is to draw a line firmly in the sand. There is very little wiggle room for accommodating complex identities. To be a “patriotic nationalist” in Poland, one cannot also be LGBT. Or rather, one’s sexual identity suffers at the expense of being a “good Pole”.

However, there are two annual patriotic, nationalist events that play out very differently in the same city. What is more, the difference between the two events may have more to do with

organizers, rather than what the events commemorate. The first, the November 11th Commemoration is a case in point. The participants of the counter manifestation weren't protesting the holiday, but rather the political parties and organizations that have claimed a monopoly on the holiday. Targeting of the parade should not be read as anti-nationalist or anti-Polish.

In stark contrast to the flag day debacle, on "W hour", every year on August 1st at 5pm sirens blare throughout the city of Warsaw, and the entire city stops for one silent minute. In every neighborhood, on every intersection, no matter the urgency, pedestrians halt, drivers step out of their cars, people seated at cafes stand up, conversations cease. This is a moment in which all citizens of Warsaw commemorate the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising. Despite differing opinions regarding the efficacy of the Uprising itself, the event still maintains to ability to briefly unite a fractured nation, as people old and young, conservative and liberal, male and female, heterosexual and homosexual all pay their respects to fallen heroes. While it may seem obvious and possible in other country contexts that people of all political stripes can harbor nationalist sentiments, Poland's strict dichotomy of either nationalist or anti-nationalist makes this yearly event surprising. Despite what the Nov. 11 holiday may suggest, people can rally around a nationalist sentiment, honoring the city and its past inhabitants, who fell victim to the casualties of global circumstances when Poland was once again in the trenches of war – as long as no single political contingent attempts to own it. This brief moment harbors much hope. It is a concrete example of a patriotic and nationalism expression not completely subsumed by political branding. It is not exclusionary. Instead, the moment - the space - belongs to everyone. It is a living example of the commensurability of pluralism and nationalism.

Instead of only interrogating the notion of LGBT spaces within nationalism, we can turn our attention to pride parades and examine whether the movement makes spaces for nationalist expressions, or, whether the excluded exclude the excluders, so to speak. Despite what the Nov. 11 manifestation may suggest, activists consciously deploy nationalist images in otherwise “global” LGBT spaces, like the EuroPride parade. Instances of flag-fetishism occur during these events, and rainbow flags coexist alongside red and white polish flags (see Figure 7). Conscious reassertion of Polish national identity is visible, and even expressed with affection, and not just as a matter of fact (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 7.



FIGURE 8.



It may seem contradictory to express nationalist sentiments alongside LGBT ones, given the incommensurability between the two frames discussed earlier, but herein lies the rub. Redefining Polishness within LGBT spaces, instead of outright rejecting them, may be what allows for an authentically Polish LGBT character to bloom. Since working within the confines of nationalism to reveal Polish LGBT life is not an option, reversing the model and reaffirming Polishness within LGBT spaces actually creates the home-grown expressions by virtue of redefining what Polish means in the process. The burden of proving legitimate Polishness falls on activists, who oftentimes must reassert their family's legacy of patriotism. They extend their family's tradition of patriotism to their own LGBT work.

Aside from the various symbolic marking that occurs at pride parades, the strategy itself is frequently criticized by activists themselves. This celebratory performativity of sexual identity is directly ripped from the Western playbook, and many movement actors wonder: what exactly is being celebrated in the Polish context? Granted, many parades actually take on a more somber, march-like quality than in the West, but the colors, banners, and music hint at a reason to rejoice. This case illustrates the confusion, even among activists, when the conception is placed before the lived experience: what exactly has the movement in Poland achieved that would warrant a party? As one cynical activist put it, “I don’t actually think the parades are wise. What are people so happy about, exactly? Is living vicariously through the West supposed to suffice? Fuck no”. While this activist took part in the parade, he did so by holding up a huge banner with several other people that read “we demand civil partnerships law”, thereby emphasizing the political frame. While there were a few floats blaring dance music, for the most part, the parade took the form and tone of a march. It was not as much of a jubilant affair as pride parades in the West.

FIGURE 10¹³².



¹³² Fot. Bartosz Bobkowski / Agencja Gazeta

Conclusion

Through their efforts, many activists propose a competing understanding of Polish national identity that harks back to the pre-Dmowskian conception, one that allows room for a diverse citizenry, in a Poland which has taken an increasingly defensive turn in the last several decades. Opponents, largely comprised of the religiously conservative political right, rely on a narrowly-defined Dmowskian nationalism to portray the movement as a threat to Polish sovereignty. Activists, comprised largely of the progressive left have relied heavily on global tropes, including EU directives in order to politicize their claims for recognition, something which was not possible prior to Poland's entrance into the EU.

However, relying on global actors and resources may also be fueling the fire of opposition, as proponents of nationalism see the movement as an imposition, yet another example of foreign intervention and a threat to Poland's hard-earned sovereignty. As O'Dwyer points out with the case of EU directives, in terms of know-how and strategies, the EU influence has helped. However, I have argued that its actual reception on the ground, has been a different matter. But is there another alternative? When nationalist spaces themselves reject LGBT identities – those who see themselves first and foremost as nationalist – where else can an authentic, Polish, LGBT presence originate if the only options left are forever perceived as imposed? If an organic Polish LGBT movement is an invisible one, it is not much of a movement. It is also neither reflective of an actual Polish lived experience, as LGBT bodies do in indeed comprise the nation and experience the national much differently than heteronormative citizens. Calls for exclusion or invisibility (the oft proclaimed: “as long as I don't have to see it”) are themselves normative prescriptions that deny a concrete reality.

Then again, the solution might be to use a completely different tactic and abstract the approach to address the state of democracy in Poland more broadly. Rallying under a larger banner has the potential to unite sectors of society that otherwise would not rub shoulders. In fact, this might already be happening in the form of the colorful coalition of opposition to PiS. Civil society is once again mobilizing to challenge and protest the conservative government. People from all walks of life and across generational lines are participating in opposition events. What is more, determining whether anything concrete comes of it soon may not even be the right question. Instead, civil society finds itself in a sort of inverse do-over of Solidarity. The question to ask now is, will actors take advantage of the current anti-government momentum and build the necessary networks *domestically* to implement change in the future?

5. Activism in Buenos Aires: Sowing Seeds of Collaboration Across Time and Space

Introduction

In the wee morning hours of July 15, 2010, a large crowd of LGBT activists and protesters stood gathered in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires to hear the official decision on equal marriage legislation. After a long, 14 hour debate, the Senate announced the final vote of 33 to 27 in favor of the law¹³³. In doing so, Argentina became the first Latin American country to allow same-sex marriage, along with the critically important benefits that typically accompany the institution. A week later on July 21, the expansion of the law was acknowledged in an orchestrated ceremony at the Casa Rosada (President's Palace). Flanked by activists, artists, legislators, governors, judges, the iconic mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, President Fernandez de Kirchner signed the bill into law, and delivered her reflection on the recent victory: "We haven't just enacted a law, but rather a social, transversal, diverse, plural, all-encompassing construction, which doesn't belong to anyone but society."¹³⁴

People all over the world were surprised not only by the movement's success, but also by the supposed swiftness with which it was achieved. I was in Warsaw at the time of the law's passage, and recall one activist exclaiming in exasperation that "even Argentina's more progressive than Poland!" To the casual observer, this well may have been surprising, but the recent victory was a logical conclusion to a process whose foundation had been set in place decades prior. The unfolding of recent developments in Argentina bears a striking resemblance to what occurred a few years earlier in Spain. What the former accomplished in legal changes

¹³³ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/18/argentina-gay-marriage_n_1018536.html

¹³⁴ Buenos Aires Herald, July 21, 2010. URL: <http://buenosairesherald.com/BreakingNews/View/39943>

and policies is uncoincidentally similar to the latter, as Spain served as a blueprint for activists in Argentina¹³⁵.

Argentina has been able to accomplish something very few states have achieved, and even fewer non-Western European countries. In a relatively short amount of time, within a relatively new democratic environment, LGBT activists – operating largely out of Buenos Aires - were able to pass a body of legislation bringing LGBT citizens that much closer to equal status as their heteronormative peers. The country’s ability to do so is all the more impressive because Latin America has not been known to be particularly gay-friendly. And yet, Argentina’s capital passed same-sex civil union legislation in 2002, same-sex marriage and adoption in 2010, and gender-recognition legislation in 2012. This has been made possible by a combination of several factors: Argentine’s particular national identity as propagated by Buenos Aires, foreign intervention limited to Spain, a domestically-forged precedent for human rights, and LGBT activists’ ability to build broad coalitions and make alliances across civil society. All four elements allowed activists to harness particular political opportunities that were key to making LGBT advancements nationally.

¹³⁵ In 2005, after years of build up and the passage of various antidiscrimination legislations in 1996, Spain approved equal marriage and joint-adoption in 2005 in the slogan “the same rights with the same name”. The Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales (FELGTB; English: National Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals) is the leading organizing body and activist organization in the country. Comprised of member organizations from all over the country, the Federation has been instrumental in passing Spain’s comprehensive reforms, and was also adopted by Argentine activists, in so far as even using almost the same name. The “Federación Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, y Trans” (FALGBT) was formed in 2006 with the express purpose of uniting LGBT organizations from across the country, and focusing efforts on specific issues, starting with equal marriage and adoption, which became legal in 2010.

*The Push for Equal Marriage*¹³⁶

The equal marriage victory followed an established pattern of strategies undertaken by LGBT activists since the 1990s, when they began to coalesce around rights-based claims (antidiscrimination legislation, partner benefits, and civil unions). Following the country's transition to democratic rule, organizations – some with roots in the 60s like Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA) – were finally formally recognized by the state. This new phase marked the beginning of a two-pronged strategy that has become central to the interaction between the movement and the state in Argentina: the identification of state allies that would be sympathetic to their demands, and interacting directly with lawmakers while mobilizing broader social support through public visibility (demonstrations and activities) (Diez 2015).

While the early institution of choice - civil unions - was made legal in four jurisdictions in Argentina in the early 2000s¹³⁷, and activists were still debating the merits of pursuing country-wide civil unions vs. marriage¹³⁸, Spain passed equal marriage legislation in 2005. This was the motivational push the movement needed. Activists believed that if gay marriage had been approved in Spain it could be done in Argentina, and that the debate should at least begin. Two prominent lesbian activists, Maria Rachid and Claudia Castro¹³⁹ held a meeting with other

¹³⁶ What follows below is a very concise synopsis of the process. For more in-depth coverage of the same-sex marriage bill, see Bruno Bimbi's *Matrimonio Igualitario: Intrigas, tensiones y secretos en el camino hacia la ley* (2010), and Jordi Diez's *The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, and Mexico* (2015).

¹³⁷ the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (2002), the province of Río Negro (2003), the city of Villa Carlos Paz (2007), and the city of Río Cuarto (2009).

¹³⁸ For many activists, the idea of complete equality was central to the struggle for sexual rights and the recognition of any form of unions other than gay marriage would not produce equality but rather "second-class citizenship". Many believed that the enactment of gay marriage could have a powerful symbolic effect as it would bring radical social change challenging established ideas regarding gender, sexual equality, and citizenship.

¹³⁹ Both activists were very involved in the passage of civil unions in Buenos Aires, and had also supported civil unions nationally.

activists¹⁴⁰ in September of 2005 to discuss the marriage option¹⁴¹. Participants walked away convinced that they should attempt to place the debate of gay marriage on the national agenda. This caused a bit of a schism within the movement – namely between CHA members and those that would later form the Federacion Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales in Trans (FALGBT) - as opinions differed as to which same-sex union should be given priority. FALGBT would eventually make marriage their top priority, while for CHA civil unions and gay marriage were both legitimate models for same-sex recognition, but they skewed towards preferring unions since they could offer the same rights that marriage extended, without the perpetuation of a religious concept in civic life¹⁴². In turn, CHA formulated a (temporary) dual strategy that prioritized civil unions and pursued them via a legislative route, and tackled gay marriage through the courts. By 2009, CHA joined the larger movement led by FALGBT and made marriage a policy priority.

Once a united front was established, activists turned to the same, effective strategies that had worked to pass antidiscrimination legislation. Namely, identifying supportive members of Senate and Congress and civil society (academics, legal scholars, labor unions, journalists, NGOs), lobbying those opposed or undecided, mobilizing media contacts and shining light on opposition, and pursuing equal marriage through both the legislative process and the courts. Within a very narrow time frame (all between 2007-2009), allies in government introduced variations on the

¹⁴⁰ Many in attendance, like Guillermo Lovagnini and Esteban Paulon had both worked closely with the Socialist Party or were active members in Rosario

¹⁴¹ This group would go on to form the FALGBT the following year.

¹⁴² "...CHA leaders, were deeply steeped in feminist thought and marriage for them had profound patriarchal roots; they therefore considered civil unions a superior relationship given their liberating component..." (Diez, 128)

marriage bill in an attempt to place it on the national agenda¹⁴³. Media began to take notice, and activists did not limit their efforts to attain policy change to the parliamentary route. The legislative strategy also involved pressing for reform through the other two branches of government. While President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner voiced her support of civil unions back in 2005, the Executive remained noncommittal well into 2009. Instead, the government (via Minister of Justice Aníbal Fernández) informed activists that the burden was on them to create the conditions (broad societal support complete with statistics) so that the acting government would be able to support the enactment of gay marriage. Fernández became Head of Cabinet after the election of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in 2007, and proved to be an LGBT ally as he provided activists an access point to the cabinet.

A carefully-coordinated litigation strategy was also deployed in 2007. “Continuing a tradition of casework, activists decided to press for gay marriage through the courts and to deploy what they commonly refer to as ‘strategic litigation’. That is, the active pursuit of *writs of amparo*¹⁴⁴, after the denial of marriage certificates to same-sex couples by *registros civiles* [civil registry offices]... to push the issue up the judiciary hierarchy through appeals (Díez, 131). The plan was to have several same-sex couples request marriage certificates, and once denied, file *amparos* to appellate courts. In order to do this, activists worked closely with numerous national and international lawyers, legal scholars, and law students, who helped strategize the best course of action. Many had been involved in passage of civil unions in Buenos Aires six years prior. By

¹⁴³ Socialist representative Eduardo di Pollina introduced a bill in 2007 but lost in parliament, and reintroduced it later in May of the same year to greater support in Congress, including President Kirchner’s parliamentary group and a few smaller parties; later in 2007, Peronist Senator Vilma Ibarra submitted a similar version, and reintroduced again a year later upon becoming deputy; President of INADI, Maria Jose Lubertino, introduced another bill to the Senate; Socialist Deputy from Rosario, Silvia Augsburger, also presented a bill (Díez, 130)

¹⁴⁴ judiciary remedies available in civil-law systems that give citizens the opportunity to redress violations to constitutional law

late 2009, approximately sixty cases were in the process of making their way to the Supreme Court.

The media was mobilized, particularly by the participation of famous personalities (either filing for marriage themselves, or attending in support of). Organizing highly visible events like this was a deliberate strategy on the part of activists to garner as much media attention as possible. The goal was to make the issue a media topic worthy of public consciousness and debate. Activists called upon their allies and expanded their networks to journalists who worked in established periodicals (ex. Bruno Bimbi, who would later publish a book detailing the struggle). The issue was given extensive media coverage, much of it favorable. Activists succeeded in placing the issue on the public agenda by late 2009, and the national discussion continued well into 2010.

Conditions looked more and more favorable for activists, particularly given a seeming solidification of support from the Executive. The Kirchner's support for policy reform was based partly on the perceived need to strengthen the governing party's model, following its underperformance in the 2009 elections. As such, a human rights approach proved key, particularly because their drop in support in urban areas of Buenos Aires Province. Due to the resonance of human rights in those areas, a reinforcement of attention to human rights was logical. All the while, the government did not take a formal position on the issue, fearing the opposition majority in the lower house would retaliate and automatically oppose the Executive's decision. However, if the bill passed in Congress, the Executive would officially throw their hat

into the ring. As such, the burden once again fell on activists to lobby lawmakers in an effort to get the bill on the legislative agenda.

Activists again relied on a tried-but-true tactic in lobbying hesitant legislators. Well aware of the cultural and political currency of human rights in Argentina, they would frame the issue in these terms and force legislators to take public positions. "They strategically framed their demand as an issue of equality, human rights, and democracy, captured by the slogan they used: 'equal rights,' 'equal marriage,' and 'the same rights with the same names.'" (Díez, 137). Supporters also put pressure on their colleagues. The bill managed to progress to the debate floor of the chamber.

At this stage, opposition to the bill came mainly from evangelical groups¹⁴⁵. Some Catholic Church representatives also met with committee members, but for the most part, opposition was expressed through public declarations caught by the media and much later. Religious groups had very little direct access to the political process. Only one legislator, Cynthi Hotton, served as an access point into the discussions and deliberations. None of the political party leadership in the lower chamber served as mechanisms of representation for evangelical groups (Diez 2015). The main opposition to the bill resulted from political calculations made by legislators who opposed what they perceived was policy pursued by the government (Bimbi 2010, 325-34). Catholic opposition was surprisingly absent at this point, and when it was present, it came only from a few Catholic lawyers who spoke out during hearings. There are two explanations for the Catholic Church's weak pressure: their underestimation of the bill's support, and the preoccupation with

¹⁴⁵ The Christian Alliance of Evangelical Organizations, and the Evangelical Pentecostal Confraternity Federation met with various committee members to express their opposition on religious grounds (*Parlamentario*, April 9, 2011)

keeping a low-profile due to some high-profile sex abuse scandal that came to light at the same time.

With virtually no push-back, the bill moved onto the floor of the Chamber of Deputies, with a vote scheduled for May 4. Activists continued with their strategy of applying pressure, and encouraging supporters to do the same, as well as getting allies to make public proclamations of support. Due to extensive network-building over the years, public support came from prominent human rights activists, well-respected academics and deans of universities, and labor unions. A Facebook page for supporters of the bill was created, titled “I am in favor of the legalization of equal marriage¹⁴⁶”, and quickly garnered thousands of members. Support begot support, as more allies came out of the woodwork. It was at this point that the Catholic Church entered the debate, as their opposition intensified immediately after the vote took place at the committee level. Public declarations were framed in terms of children’s rights, illustrating the dominance of the human rights frame. The Church also began lobbying legislators directly, and pressure was particularly intense on those whose jurisdictions were located in the provinces.

After debating for twelve hours, the progay marriage contingent won the debate¹⁴⁷. Despite this victory, a great amount of uncertainty remained, as the bill moved from the Chamber of Deputies to the Senate. The uncertainty had largely to do with the make-up of representatives of each house and the inherently different characteristics that define them, namely the Chamber of Deputies being less conservative, and the Senate more conservative¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/matrimonioigualitario/>

¹⁴⁷ w126 votes in favor, 110 against, and 4 abstentions.

¹⁴⁸ Chamber of Deputies (lower house): tends to be proportionally more represented by less conservative Members of Congress because these jurisdictions generally have a more liberal electorate (the majority of Argentines live in

After the unexpected defeat in the lower house, opponents intensified efforts. Religious groups began to support civil unions as way to avoid changes to their heteronormative understanding of the institution of marriage, and also called for a referendum, believing the majority of Argentines would vote against the bill. Street mobilizations were regularly organized by groups. Evangelicals rallied in front of Congress, and Catholic leaders upped their attacks via vitriolic sermons, letters, and announcements. This had the adverse effect, as it reminded citizens of the Church's role during the country's authoritarian past. The efforts proved not only the wrong course of action, but also too little too late. Religious groups' problem had to do with more than just framing or message. Opposition groups were unable to expand their constituency - aside from support from lawyers and academics from denominational institutions, opposition groups were unable to establish alliances with unions, cultural groups, or other sectors of society (Hiller 2012, 146). What is more, religious institutions did not advance a united front¹⁴⁹.

Activists took up the same tactics to win the Senate as they did the lower house. They gauged how senators would vote, urging those in favor to vocalize their support, pressuring those against to justify their statements publicly, and making their case to those on the fence. Additionally, activists had to take their arguments to the provinces. Because Senate members were more accountable to the rural provinces than cities, the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee - and member of Opus Dei - Liliana Negre de Alonso, decided to hold public hearings across six,

cities and almost have the population lives in the city of BsAs and the Province of BsAs). The Senate (upper house) is overrepresented by conservative forces. Proportionally, rural and more conservative areas have greater representation (after constitutional reforms, implemented in 2001, every province in Argentina elects directly three senators, total of 72. Result: social conservatives from rural Argentina tend to have a disproportionately higher representation, and influence policy more inordinately than liberal forces. Moreover, senators generally have very close relationships with provincial governors who tend to have a great deal of sway over how senators vote. Additionally, the presence of the Catholic Church is felt more strongly in rural areas, some governors have close relationships with provincial religious leaders, and thus, the ability of religious groups to influence votes is stronger.

¹⁴⁹ Several Protestant churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist), as well as Jewish leaders announced their support for marriage reform to include same-sex couples.

mostly conservative, provinces (Diez, 148). Activists' broad network of allies proved vital in presenting arguments in support. "The vote at the committee level took place on July 6, and while a majority voted against gay marriage in principle, they voted to allow for a vote on the Senate floor" (Diez, 149). All the while, both sides increased their lobbying efforts to full throttle, until the day of the Senate vote. At this point, the Executive finally played its hand, with officials lobbying their colleagues, and President Fernandez de Kirchner even going so far as taking along several opposing senators on an official trip to China that coincided with the vote in the Senate. This was a wise move on the part of the President, as the final vote resulted in 33 in favor to 27 opposed.

However, before any victories could be won (legislative or otherwise), alliances had to be made, societal relevance achieved, and smaller victories attained. It is no small detail that the LGBT movement was forged alongside the country's struggle for human rights, lending it the necessary historical legitimacy to later translate into political capital.

Forging human rights and building coalitions

The arc of gay rights in Argentina is a familiar story: negative rights¹⁵⁰, positive rights¹⁵¹, equal rights¹⁵² (Encarnación, 690). But how the transition from negative to positive to equal came about is a uniquely Argentine story, predating the legalization of same-sex marriage by four decades. Since the 1960s, the Argentine gay rights movement has functioned as a filter for international gay rights trends, a role which intensified in the post-transition period, as international connections were forged through activists' exile during the most recent military

¹⁵⁰ Antidiscrimination policy reform

¹⁵¹ Civil unions

¹⁵² Marriage equality

rule. Argentina's oldest (still) operating LGBT organization, Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA) was central to constructing first (negative) rights claims by connecting LGB issues with human rights issues.

As an idea and political cause long rallied-around domestically, *human rights* - a concept so central to the LGBT movement across the globe - does not reek of Western imposition in Argentina. While a global phenomenon, popularly ascribed to the West, human rights is very much a domestically-forged concept in Argentina as a legacy of numerous military coups and particular resonance with the last military junta. In what is probably the most defining moment in Argentine history, from 1976-1983, approximately 30,000 Argentines were captured and "disappeared" by the governing junta during the Process of National Reorganization (Junta Militar, 1983), or the Dirty War (CONADEP 1984). Many citizens were tortured, raped, and killed in a network of secret prisons, and untold others thrown out of airplanes during infamous death flights (CONADEP 1984; Da Silva Catela and Jelin 2002). Intellectuals, students, dissidents, leftists, union leaders (Rohter 2002), journalists, and of course, those who deviated from the heterosexual matrix, were heavily targeted, and about 400 *desaparecidos* were gay (Jáuregui, 1987; Brown 2002).

While the Dirty War had long-standing roots going back almost a century, with frequent guerilla uprisings and protests and acts of violence, as well as state suppression (Walsh 1957), the Dirty War was unique in its intensity and ruthlessness. Fear tactics were applied generously, and civil society was crushed. An exception to this was what is now the best-known Argentine human rights organization, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, an association of Argentine mothers

whose children were "disappeared" during the Dirty War (Bouvard 1994; Navarro 1989). They met and organized while searching for information about their missing children (Rabotnikof 1976). In 1977, in public defiance of the government's state terrorism intended to silence all opposition (Bouvard 1994), the women began to regularly congregate in front of the presidential palace, and march at the Plaza de Mayo. They inspired others to join them, and garnered hundreds of participants within a year (Brysk 1994). The government tried to marginalize and trivialize their work by calling them "*las locas*" - the madwomen - (Navarro 1989, Taylor 1997). Despite this, they inspired other segments of the population to shake off their fear and oppose the government.

Through their struggle against authoritarianism, human rights activists established vital links with international allies, bringing them "into their human rights work at home" (Sikkink 2008, 23; Brysk 1994). Civil society groups were able to utilize high-profile international events like the 1978 World Cup to publicize human rights abuses that the state wanted hushed. International media outlets, otherwise unavailable to local groups, took notice, and the international community's disapproval added to the military-led government's eventual termination. As the political center of the country, and supplying the greatest concentration of dissent, Buenos Aires was hit hard by state-sponsored terrorism. However, those affected were largely centralized in the capital city, which, as the Madres illustrate, eventually led to organized political collaboration and a social movement resulting in a peaceful democratic transition (Rabotnikof 1976). These same resources – know-how and bonds and bridges - would later be utilized in post-transition mobilizations. As LGBT groups became visible post-transition, the eventual support of the Madres for LGBT groups lent them considerable legitimacy and acceptance.

After a humiliating defeat by the British over the Falkland Islands/Malvinas, the junta relinquished control of the government in 1983. In the year leading up to the Falklands conflict, the country had been in the midst of a severe economic stagnation and broad civil unrest against the military *junta* (Pion-Berlin 1994). In a last-ditch effort to garner popular support through waging a nationalist-inspired takeover of the Falklands/Malvinas, the government hoped to mobilize patriotic sentiments of Argentines and orient them towards the islands, thus diverting public attention from the country's economic woes and the regime's human rights violations (Taylor 1997). After a little over two months, on June 14, 1982, the British defeated Argentina, and in 1983, the Argentine military government was replaced with a democratic government in October 1983.

For many years following the abductions, relatives of the “disappeared” demanded the truth about the fate of their loved ones (Navarro 1989). Over 5,000 reports were filed from Argentina to the La Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos¹⁵³ (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, APDH) as well as thousands of complaints submitted to international organizations, including the Organization of American States, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Human Rights Division, Amnesty International, and religious groups. While these reports prompted inquiries from both Amnesty International and IACHR, the junta succeeded in denying charges until Argentina’s defeat in the Falklands. Soon, coverage of the charges against the dictatorship spread widely through the press empowering civil society organizations to demand that those responsible for the disappearances be brought forth and charged, utilizing a popular slogan: “juicio y castigo a los culpable” (trial and punishment for the perpetrators) (Hayner 2010 [2001], Minow 1998).

¹⁵³ an Argentine non-governmental human rights organization; founded in 1975.

Following a decree by President Alfonsín calling for the prosecution of the leaders of the *Proceso* for acts committed during the dictatorship, they were tried and convicted in 1985. In a highly controversial move, President Carlos Menem pardoned them during his first year in office (1989), stating that the pardons were part of the country's healing process (Acuña and Smulovitz 1995; Sikkink 2008). In 2005, the Argentine Supreme Court declared amnesty laws unconstitutional, and the government resumed trials (ECCHR 2014; Minow 1998; Telam 2014).

The Dirty War and its aftermath affected the development of human rights in Argentina (Brysk, 1994; Sikkink 2008). While civil society suffered during the Argentina's period of dictatorship, following the restoration of democracy in 1983, political organizations and other aspects of civil society re-emerged with new energy, demanding a renewed respect for human rights. The same applies to gay rights groups. The call united Argentines from across the fragmented political spectrum, giving common cause to women's groups, labor unions, political parties, and civic organizations. While the first LGBT organizations were established in the late 60s and early 70s - *Nuestro Mundo* (1969) and *Safo* (1972) – and sought alliances with the political left in order to advance civil rights, the 1976 coup quickly put an end to any hints of a gay movement. Many of its members were among the thousands of *disappeared*. Political and social dissidence was not tolerated and diversion from the heteronormative ideal was grounds for arrest based on leftist subversion: gay rights organizations were crushed during the dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 (Encarnación 2016). The return to democracy in 1983 allowed for the reemergence of a visible LGBT rights movement, with Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA) at the helm. Along with this initial era of democratization, the first gay establishments opened, and the LGBT community became more visible, with pride parades, festivals, publications, and political

participation. Buenos Aires and Rosario formally implemented legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Although the intervening 30 years have taken their course on broad collaboration, “the human rights discourse continues to build bridges on the Left, as it provides a larger theoretical and historical framework within which to situate the rights of queer citizens (Redburn 2013)”. As such, Argentina deviates from the Western-centric idea of movement flows and ideas originating in the West. Argentina forged its own path, preceding many Western trends.

Civil society groups that began to resurface after the transition joined in the demands for justice for victims of the military junta, but also extended the lessons to the recent past to extend human rights more broadly, to more sectors of the population, including LGBT people. LGBT activists have relied on the legitimacy of human rights norms and the support of organizations that endorse them (ex. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) for decades (Encarnación 2011, 106–9). Once democratic constitutional order was restored in the region in the 1980s, judiciaries warmed to the idea of human rights protection for LGBT people.

Internationally, legal equality for LGBT people still remains in the “pre-cascade” period of norm diffusion, when a norm has not yet become accepted globally. This is a fertile moment during which norms that may go on to change practices from local to international arenas are created, not abstractly by elites at closed-door negotiations, but out of the lived experience of dedicated individuals seeking social change. Meaning that while “international “International norms on sexual orientation remain contested and in flux, [political] leaders do not yet feel international pressure to pass legislation related to LGBT rights (Friedman 2012)”. Despite the fact that the

norm of LGBT equality remains “under construction” globally, Argentina was able to pass a body of legislation in support of LGBT rights, beginning with civil unions in Buenos Aires. This is made possible by the work of “norm entrepreneurs,” who “attempt to frame relevant issues in ways that resonate with broader public understandings” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 897), in order to encourage norm adoption¹⁵⁴.

In this way, Argentina has been an active protagonist in “human rights innovation” regionally and globally (Sikkink 2008, 2), and “Conjoining gay rights and human rights as a means to gain social acceptance of gays put Argentine gay activists at the cutting edge of international gay rights politics” (Encarnación, 697). Basically, Argentina was claiming that “gay rights are human rights” before it was mainstream. However, rather than international influence, it was domestic opportunities that made organizations’ (most notably CHA) human rights strategy so effective.

LGBT organizations have been most active in Buenos Aires, and over time acquired more political savvy and sway. Activists in Buenos Aires have been more successful at connecting LGBT grievances to others and “constructing larger frames of meaning that resonate with a population’s cultural predispositions” (Ippolito-O’Donnell, 27). Activists were able to “connect themselves to the influential human rights movement born with democratic transition... the prosecution and eventual conviction of eight generals on human rights charges allowed gay activists to portray acts of discrimination and violence against gays as part of a larger narrative of human rights abuses by the old regime” (Encarnación, 697).

¹⁵⁴ Finnemore and Sikkink’s foundational analysis finds the early stage of “norm building” to be one where individual agency is paramount: diffusion depends on “norm entrepreneurs” situated in or drawing on established organizations (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896). These entrepreneurs are motivated by their belief in the norm, regardless of whether it will affect them personally (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 898).

In the context of Buenos Aires and its political diversity, while not all agree on ideology or policy, no one is easily discounted from the political body. In the context of the LGBT political battle, political opponents have not delegitimized each others' claims on the grounds of not being Argentine enough. Instead, the national body has come to be understood as diverse and anything but static. The political activism in the city of Buenos Aires highlights controversies, tensions, and discourse taking place all over the country. And with political activism among youth growing¹⁵⁵, the culture of political engagement is a healthy one. Buenos Aires' political role should not be surprising. "Well before becoming the capital of the republic in 1880, this city emerged as the main place of popular contention and participation in Argentina. In the two decades that preceded the federalization of the city, Buenos Aires' inhabitants – porteños – acted collectively, joined civic organizations, and used the print media to voice their discontent about the country, the city, and their own living conditions" (Ippolito-O'Donnell, 37).

Of detractors and supporters: LGBT as a politically legitimate force

Another factor that has been crucial is the political legitimacy of LGBT despite opposition that has been far more powerful in other countries in the region (and in Warsaw). Argentina's recent LGBT advancement has not been without its detractors. In a country where over 90 percent of citizens still identify as at least nominally Catholic¹⁵⁶, the Roman Catholic Church has served as the movement's most vocal opponent. Church opinion still carries cultural weight in Argentina, and it remains the state's official religion¹⁵⁷. It also holds decidedly more sway in rural areas than in larger cities. However, the obstructive stance on LGBT issues wasn't really solidified until fairly recently, in conjunction with the movement picking up steam. In line with the rest of

¹⁵⁵ <http://globalpressjournal.com/americas/argentina/political-activism-surges-among-youth-argentina>

¹⁵⁶ But only 20% practicing

¹⁵⁷ Until 1994, Argentine presidents were required to be married and to be members of the Catholic Church.

the region, “the Catholic and Protestant Churches play a complicated role. On the one hand, Catholic charities tend to offer assistance to AIDS patients and victims of domestic abuse-groups that often include members of the LGBT community. On the other hand, factions within the clergy are today the most unabashed exponents of anti-LGBT speech (Corrales 2012).” At the same time, many Catholic leaders were supportive of same-sex couples seeking *civil unions* and the extension of some rights. However, their tune quickly changed when the conversation turned to *marriage* for same-sex couples and the full bundle of rights it entails. A prime example of this being Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio (the current Pope Francis) who said that gay marriage “is a serious detachment from the laws that govern us.”

After their attempt to file for a marriage license was denied, José María Di Bello and Alex Freyre took their case to the courts. On November 13th, 2009, in Buenos Aires, Judge Gabriela Seijas ruled that the Argentine government must recognize the marriage of the same-sex couple¹⁵⁸. This resulted in a temporary block of the decision by a national judge a few weeks later, but passed in the Supreme Court. The city of Buenos Aires did not seek to challenge the ruling. More surprisingly, then-mayor and social conservative, (current President) Mauricio Macri publicly stated that Argentines must come to terms with the ruling, because “we have to live together and accept reality...The world is headed in that direction.” Religious leaders, on the other hand, were among the first to voice their discontent. Around the country, priests and bishops lamented the ruling as a “threat to the natural order of life,” and “a destruction of the family as an institution,” as well as “the promotion of perversions.” Despite his current reputation as a “progressive” Pope

¹⁵⁸ Judge Seijas ruled in favor of the couple primarily because of the legal limitations of civil unions: while they did provide same-sex couples with health and other insurance benefits, and hospital visitation rights, they excluded other rights such as inheritance rights and adoption (where only one parent is recognized while the other possesses no legal rights or formal relationship to the child).

(Francis), as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio followed the orders of a conservative Pope Benedict XVI and the Vatican status quo, and staunchly opposed the same-sex marriage bill, repeating the Church's well-known arguments. In the days leading up the vote, he called it a “‘destructive attack on God's plan’ and drew 60,000 people - including students in parochial schools who were let out early to attend - to the same plaza where celebrations of the new law would later occur” (Corrales and Pecheny 2010). Overall, Argentineans didn't respond well to the message. The marriage debate revealed a glaring chasm between Church leaders and the majority of Argentinians.

It is important to note, that while culturally relevant, the Catholic Church in Argentina no longer carries much political weight – a consequence of the institution's complicity with the military junta during the Dirty War (Mignone, 1988). As a result, not only does the separation of church and state exist in Argentina, but more importantly, a separation of church and party. This is reflected in the relatively minor role that religion plays in national party politics (Corrales and Pecheny 2010, Diez 2015).

There are no major Catholic-backed parties in Argentina, as the country has not really had an influential religious party for the better part of the century¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁹ “Despite the fact that Argentina is officially a Catholic country, as stated in its Constitution, the Church plays a minor role in party politics... First, Catholics don't go to Church and Evangelicals are (still) small in number. Much has been said about the fact that a Catholic country such as Argentina has approved gay marriage. This is a point worth making because the Catholic Church since 2007, especially under this pope, has become more obsessed with blocking same-sex marriage. In Argentina specifically, the Church actually launched a crusade against this bill, even releasing kids from schools so that they could pressure parents to go protest against the law. Yet, the key statistic to know about Argentina is not so much that it is predominantly Catholic (it is), but rather that church attendance is low - approximately 22 percent of the population attends church services weekly - and secondly, that the Evangelical population is tiny (only 2 percent)... Low church attendance and low Evangelicalism helps predict pro-LGBT legislation because it reveals the extent of societal secularism as well as the mobilizational weakness of the churches. Argentina is distinctive on both counts. Second, separation of church and party. It is not enough to have

So while Catholicism remains a cultural pillar in Argentina, it has not been able to maintain a stronghold on public opinion, especially as LGBT struggles and the quest for human rights became more entwined. This is one reason why so many legislators, from across the political spectrum, risked voting against the pulpit (Corrales and Pecheny 2010). The Church's complicity with the military during the dirty war largely delegitimized its claim as the harbinger of morality and justice (Barrionuevo 2007; Mignone, 1988), while LGBT persons suffered alongside large sectors of civil society and later joined the demands for truth and justice for victims (Bimbi 2010; Corrales and Pecheny 2010; Jáuregui, 1987).

And while it is true overall that “few prodemocracy movements in the past 30 years have had to face such a complicated dilemma: fighting a moral authority in order to make a democratic point. With certain religious leaders deciding to become unabashedly outspoken against homosexuality, the LGBT movement finds itself battling a widely esteemed institution in its campaign to win rights (Corrales 2012).” Argentine activists have been spared having to fight their battle on two fronts, partly because it has been largely centered in the capital which is home to over 40% of the country's population. In fact, avoiding unnecessary clashes with the church altogether has been an intentional approach of many activists, as they recognize that culturally, it remains an important institution. One activist, a journalist named Max who is also part of the Worker's Socialist Movement, said: “our strategy is just not fighting with the church. We are very respectful. Our tactic is to not confront beliefs, but if one does confront beliefs, not the Catholic Church, only confront the state”. His reasoning was that the issues they are dealing with are questions for the state not the church, and a separation exists for a reason.

separation of church and state, as do most countries in the region. It is vital to have separation of church and party.” (Corrales and Pecheny 2010).

In their quest for equal marriage legislation, one of the most crucial victories by pro-LGBT groups was to avoid the referendum trap. Opponents of the legislation, largely the Catholic Church and Evangelicals, suggested submitting the issue to popular vote as a populist compromise. And while participatory democracy is a growing trend in the region, LGBT groups and allies recognized the problems with this form of populism. Namely, that submitting questions of minority rights to a majority vote is an inherently biased process, making it undemocratic despite its reliance on a democratic tool (Corrales).

It is also possible that a referendum would not have been disastrous, as public opinion polls showed the majority of citizens in favor of equal marriage¹⁶⁰. Given the leg-work LGBT groups have done in building relationships and alliances across sectors of society, it shouldn't be surprising. As one of many spokes in the human rights umbrella, LGBT concerns have been connected to broader issues, making alliances possible across the civil society spectrum. This fact has been vital for the resilience of the movement. As the case in any country, the proportion of the population comprised by LGBT citizens is typically a minority, representing a fundamental structural impediment to LGBT groups' bargaining power in any political struggle. "As an interest group participating in democratic politics, LGBT groups will never constitute a large group, and thus, will never achieve sufficient influence unless they acquire allies within other societal groups (Brown 2002; Green 1998)." Furthermore, minority status means not only limited numbers, but also "relegation to 'minoritization' or subordinate status through some type of political process (Corrales and Pecheny, 9)." As such, alliances are crucial.

¹⁶⁰ By the time Argentina's Congress took up the issue for debate in November 2009, public opinion polls showed support for same-sex marriage at 70 percent.

CHA's initial strategy (in the 1980s) of advancing the idea of gays as ordinary people proved successful, and it also succeeded in "extending recognition of gays as a legitimate part of the political community" (Encarnación, 698). This did not occur without internal struggle, as CHA wasn't initially accepted by the human rights community as a whole (although some individual activists like members of Las Madres de la Plaza did embrace CHA on a personal level). Slowly, by taking part and being visible in political events, the organization – and its cause – was accepted into the fold. By the time the same-sex marriage bill was voted on, virtually the entirety of Argentina's large network of human rights organizations supported the bill, a reflection of just how intertwined LGBT and human rights activists were, and how the latter had come to embrace LGBT issues as synonymous with their own. The sentiment was also reflected in civil society at large, as public opinion polls showed a 70 percent approval rating of same-sex marriage.¹⁶¹

Illustrating how embedded LGBT issues are into broader politico-cultural issues, is the case of Casa Brandon. I spoke with two young women who run Casa Brandon – an eclectic cultural space/bar/café/event space all rolled into one, that hosts art exhibitions, film screenings, festivals, panels, workshops, parties, etc. While it isn't exclusively a lesbian space, it is unique in that it doesn't follow a simple model of "gay bar" or "lesbian café". Instead, it was born out of a need felt by its founders to promote art in the context of sexual diversity. It is also unique in that it is connected to a larger network of cultural spaces and part of the Movimiento MECA (Movement of Cultural and Artistic Spaces)¹⁶². As a queer space, Casa Brandon has been able to connect its mission to that of other cultural spaces within the city, and together unite for legal protections,

¹⁶¹ <http://ilga.org/argentina-congress-begins-to-debate-gay-marriage/>

¹⁶² <http://www.movimientomeca.com.ar/>

under the auspices of the Ley de Centros Culturales (Law of Cultural Centers)¹⁶³. Casa Brandon illustrates the legitimacy that such a space has in that any issues related to it aren't simply marginalized as LGBT, but rather understood as serving a cultural, social, and artistic function which it shares with all other cultural centers.

While cultural sites help promote social and political networks, more formal alliances can occur between LGBT organizations and sectors on the left, namely labor unions and leftist parties.

Prior to the support of the governing party, the LGBT movement has been strengthened by bonds forged within the labor movement. While union membership is declining in Argentina, it still remains around three times higher than that of the United States, and is protected by the constitution. Powerful worker organizations provide a foundation for coordination across left constituencies because members know each other, and share class concerns providing a basis for cohesion.

Similarly, despite marginal electoral power, the presence of smaller socialist parties like the Socialist Party (PS) and Socialist Workers Movement (MST) has provided critical infrastructure for building national momentum for legislative reform. Kate Redburn, in describing the relationship between organizational longevity and political alliance in Salta, illustrates a common story, applicable to Buenos Aires as well: "The first LGBT political organization in Salta, Asociación en Lucha por la Diversidad Sexual en Salta (ALuDis) struggled in isolation until 2008, when connections in the Socialist Party brought them into the newly formed Argentine LGBT Federation. Indeed, the first president of FALGBT, Esteban Paolón, who later ran the nation's first Secretaría de la Diversidad Sexual in the city of Rosario, was an activist in the PS,

¹⁶³ <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1753598-se-aprobo-la-ley-de-centros-culturales>

and knew ALuDis members through the party. When the fledgling NGO had no meeting space, they used the Socialist Party headquarters in Salta (Redburn 2013)”.

These close connections between LGBT activists and political parties or labor unions still exist. During my field research in Buenos Aires, I attended a meeting organized by a loose network of activists, which took place at a worker’s union headquarters - a large, bare, industrial building with blank, white walls and concrete. Unbeknownst to me, there were several gatherings taking place in the building at the time. I accidentally stumbled into the wrong one, eventually realized my mistake, and then snuck out to join the appropriate meeting. By this point the crowd had swollen and was spilling out into the corridor. On two other occasions, at the suggestion of informants, I met in the offices of the leftist political parties for which they worked. Another time, during an interview with then-President of FALGBT, Esteban Paulon, I was invited to attend a rally organized by the Socialist Party later that evening. The relationship between the Left and the LGBT movement in Argentina is not an ambiguous one, but rather, one wherein both elements have firmly staked a claim in the advancement and success of the other.

The most obvious candidates for political alliances would be political parties, what with over 500 registered political parties in the country. While parties on the right, across most democracies, are typically unwilling to serve as allies to LGBT causes, most LGBT movements gravitate toward leftist parties (Escobar and Alvarez 1992). But even this isn’t a given, as cooperation between LGBT movements and leftist parties – while it exists - has not been easy to accomplish in Latin America (Corrales and Pecheny 2010). It is because of this, that the movement has come to rely

heavily on forming alliances with other social movements or small and new parties (Corrales and Pecheny 2010).

The case of the Kirchner presidencies has been an exception. As a mainstream player of the political spectacle, the Kirchner Presidential couple's metamorphosis into crusading gay-rights activists is actually pretty recent. While lawmakers repeatedly put forth the subject [in 2009], it received little presidential attention. However, "the politics of the issue changed once the ruling couple's Front for Victory party lost its congressional majorities [and porteño support] (The Economist 2010)". Critics contend that in response, the Kirchners sought a "controversial bill they could force through the legislature to prove the government could still get its way, and they settled on gay marriage as the best candidate (Ibid)"¹⁶⁴. The cause would unite their leftist base, woo back support from a more socially-liberal Buenos Aires contingent, and enable them to demonize opponents of the measure – namely the Church, with whom they frequently sparred. "Although several opposition senators pushed for a civil-union law instead, which would not include adoption rights, the Kirchners made it clear the battle would be all-or-nothing. (Ibid)"

Herein lays the strength of the movement in Argentina. Many activists stated that broad societal networking is something that other countries (particularly Latin American) can take away from the Argentine experience. One activist, when referring to equal marriage legislation, stated

"we won in a short period of time, within 4 years... we secured equal marriage with a broad social consensus which allowed us to win over the Catholic Church hierarchy, and that is no small feat. [On our side] we had the sciences in favor, the arts, culture, musicians, journalists, politicians, student centers at universities, the

¹⁶⁴ This was an interesting calculus on the part of the Kirchners: the issue did manage to endear them to voters in the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires, which had grown hostile to them. Meanwhile, the church remains influential in the provinces, which have tended to support the Kirchners, and are over-represented in the Senate in comparison to their population. So there was a risk of backlash from the provinces on this social issue.

CGT [Confederacion General del Trabajo] and the... Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina. We achieved such a strong consensus across many sectors that said ‘you should go for this’... At a pragmatic level, this was a vindication of the port... as the Federation, Argentina managed to contain all of these sectors, all political parties, because within the Federation were activists who were active in other political parties and didn’t always get along or belong to the same side”.

“We import more than just ham”

In addition to building coalitions domestically, another very important collaboration for the movement has been between activists in (mostly) Buenos Aires and allies in Spain. Buenos Aires is a powerful force within the context of Argentina. As a global city and the nation’s capital it also plays a crucial role in shaping national politics. Argentina - via Buenos Aires - has been a receptor for Spain, as the latter has been the driving external force in the advancement of LGBT rights in Latin America, with mixed results. While Spain’s influence has been spotty regionally, it has been acutely well-received in Argentina, illustrating the latter’s particularity within Latin America as having a close affinity to Spain.

After the 2005 passage of same-sex marriage in Spain, the Spanish government made LGBT rights a priority in its foreign policy toward Latin America¹⁶⁵. Utilizing almost exclusively

¹⁶⁵ Some scholars have argued that neither economic nor geopolitical interests (counterbalancing US dominance) entirely explain the relationship, and that instead we must look to more sentimental or even nostalgic explanations (Baklanoff 1996; Brysk et al. 2002, 271; Escudero 1994; Gooch 1992;) where: “historically conditioned notions of collective, familial relations motivate” Spain to stress relations with former colonies. Their interconnected history has led Spain to consider the “Iberoamerican” world as a community, even as a family based on shared norms. The former head of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation Fernando Valenzuela, himself has stated : “[Latin American countries] are family in a real sense because of the many millions of Spanish emigrants and cultural ties that unite us” (quoted in Aviel 1997, 181). Spain’s special relationship with Latin America has been long-lived, spanning over two centuries since colonies’ independence in the 1810s. The relationship has been rooted in and constitutive of an ideology of *Hispanidad* (Iberian cultural reproduction). This perspective helps explain why diplomacy and aid are targeted even to areas of low capital investment like in Central America (Brysk et al. 2002). A shared interest in constructing democracy has also fortified the bond. Latin American countries sought Spanish support for their respective regime changes (Brysk et al. 2002). Shortly after its own transition to democracy, Spain’s support of Latin America lent international credentials to its “new democratic elite” while simultaneously bolstering the regime choice at home (Grugel 1997, 141). Additionally, public opinion and civil society engagement have also reinforced Spain’s interest (Brysk et al. 2002, 288; Grugel 1997, 142). And while other European states

Spanish government sources, the Triangle Foundation (FT)¹⁶⁶ has provided important financial assistance to Latin American LGBT organizations, including Argentine groups as recipients. In the ten-year span between 2000 and 2011, FT raised nearly \$2 million. Support has ranged from facilitating the production and purchase of a group's T-shirts, to ensuring the start up of a regional network. While FT's commitment to respect local activists' priorities is illustrated by its funding of various organizations in Argentina, it has prioritized those focused on marriage. Interestingly, the largest recipient of FT grants in Argentina has been an organization located outside of Buenos Aires: "Vox, the most prominent LGBT organization in Rosario and one of the founding members of the FALGBT. Funds were first used to cover Vox's rent and then to purchase the entire building. Besides generous financing for Vox (US\$130,000), FT has raised \$15,900 for CHA's documentation center; \$280 for Las Fulanas' brochure; funding of FALGBT's organizational hub, with \$3,180; \$1,590 to create a key lobbying document" for equal marriage which was shared with senators leading up to the 2010 vote (Friedman, 47). The sociocultural linkages between Spain and Argentina have made the exchanges particularly fruitful. This is not a generalizable fact, and the same cannot be said of other Latin American countries¹⁶⁷. To be clear, the sowing of Spanish ideas have only been possible due to Argentina's preexisting fertile grounds, in conjunction with its separation of religion and party politics.

(Britain and France) also maintain special relationships with their former colonies, "civil society seems to play a more important role in the contemporary Spain relationship with Latin America" (Brysk et al 2002). In the case of Argentina, supporting LGBT civil society has been of particular focus.

¹⁶⁶ The Triangle Foundation, founded in 1996, is a Spanish NGO whose focus lies in LGBT issues, civil rights, and health. It contains a task force whose goal it is to establish relationship and collaborate internationally, particularly with Latin American countries.

¹⁶⁷ While most countries in the region have a separation of church and state, Argentina goes a step further, and has a separation of church and party. "There is no strong Christian Democratic party as in Chile and Venezuela. There is no party with strong connections with the Opus Dei as the ruling party in Colombia and Mexico. There is no party with strong connections with Evangelical groups as the Republicans in the United States (and arguably, the Labor Party in Brazil and most parties in Central America and the Anglo-Caribbean)." (<http://www.americasquarterly.org/node/1753>)

“Not by accident, in both Spain and Argentina the campaign for ‘gay marriage’ shared the same slogan: ‘We want the same rights with the same name’ (Encarnación, 689)” – a reference to demands for equal treatment under the law, but also the same rights and names as the policies passed in Spain. Argentine activists found the Spanish model to provide “a potent source of domestic legitimation (Friedman 31)”. The recent shifts in European countries’ policies - most notably Spain’s legalization of same-sex marriage in 2005¹⁶⁸ - provide a visible connection between the LGBT movement and the influence of porteño collective identity. Many activists with whom I spoke directly connected the move for equal marriage legislation in Argentina with the Spanish model, designated the latter as the guiding influence for their push, and their success in following-through as merely an obvious legacy bequeathed to them by their Spanish (or not) distant cousins.

“These countries’ ‘special relationship,’ deeply rooted in the large population of Spanish-descendant immigrants living in Argentina, was reinforced by democratization. The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) backed the first democratic president, Raúl Alfonsín, and served as a model for his ‘moderate left’; Spain was also a prime investor in the privatization plans of his successor, Carlos Menem (Serbin 1997, 142, 144, 129). This relationship has led to the diffusion of human rights norms, given Argentina’s particular openness to adopting them... Argentine individuals and organizations have been very receptive to transnational organizing and norm promotion. (Friedman, 41).”

The fondness with which Argentines gaze upon Spain is reciprocated by the former empire. Spanish support for marriage equality may seem unusual. Human rights, least of all LGBT, is not what comes to mind when thinking about Spanish involvement in Latin American development. Becoming the largest source of FDI, Spain spent billions of dollars in Latin America in the

¹⁶⁸ Unregistered cohabitation between same-sex couples was recognized countrywide since 1994, and registered partnerships in certain cities since 1997, same-sex marriage and adoption between same-sex couples were legalized in 2005.

1990s, and has maintained its place as a top investor in the region¹⁶⁹. At first glance, this strategy paints relations purely in an economic light given Spanish involvement in everything from telecommunications to energy (Mulligan and Warn 1999).

The particularity of Buenos Aires and its relationship to the global movement needs to be understood within the broader historical context of porteño collective imaginary, by which I mean the cosmopolitan and European image that the city and its inhabitants – including LGBT activists – are intent on projecting and invoking. Historically, “through its consumption of imported goods and images, the porteño elite strove to establish the city as a ‘civilized’ enclave surrounded by the disenfranchised masses of gauchos, *indigenas*, Afro-Argentines, and immigrant workers (Svampa 1992)” (Guano, 183).

As a country composed in large part of European immigrants, its ability to reflect a European identity onto itself (Italian and Spanish settler-ancestors) and project one to the outside world (Buenos Aires as the “Paris of South America”) is not all that unusual. The national imaginary paints the Argentine nation as descendants of hard-working Spanish and Italian immigrants (and a *mélange* of other European countries), thereby forging a romanticized kinship with its former Iberian colonizer, and Mediterranean boot. The process of reterritorialization of the metropole in Buenos Aires was the product of very much a local hegemonic imagination - one that actively utilized the discourse of modernization to legitimize various inequalities. Since the 19th century, the cityscape of Buenos Aires became a medium of hegemonic attempts to mold porteño citizenship into the cast of respectable, modern, Europeans. For white elites with direct connections to Europe, this wasn’t a difficult leap. The working classes also constructed images

¹⁶⁹ Contributing 35 percent of investment in services (Oxford Analytica 2010)

and narratives justifying their European connection. The resulting exclusions from the national body were largely race-based, historically consisting of “othering” native peoples, and darker-skinned immigrants from surrounding countries (Guano 2003).

Just as in much of Latin America, the idea of importing metropolitan modernity in Buenos Aires has its illustrious antecedent in the reterritorialization of Europe enacted by the elite of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. ‘European’ Buenos Aires is the historical and ideological product of what the porteño ruling class planned as the modernization of Argentina. An economic, political, cultural, racial, and social project, this first modernization project (Tulchin 1998) aimed to “insert the country into the international capitalist market at the turn of the century (Burns 1980).” Consumer tastes also veered towards the European. The few who could afford it (due to high tariffs and importation hurdles), would purchase European goods. Those who could not, would replicate them. On an individual scale, to consume like Europeans was to be European, and to be European was to be modern and cosmopolitan. And to be modern Europeans is what differentiated Argentines from the rest of Latin America.

Recalling Lefebvre’s position that the cityscape is simultaneously a locus, a medium, and a tool of hegemony, and that a fine blend of persuasion and coercion is always at play in organization of a city – physically, socially, and culturally (Lefebvre 1991)¹⁷⁰, the case of Buenos Aires is no exception. At its most obvious, porteño fascination with all things European is (still) reflected in the development of the city’s neighborhoods. Argentina’s early (and wealthy) families of

¹⁷⁰ Lefebvre’s attention to the “representation of space” alerts us to that dimension of space that is conceptually intrinsic to a mode of production and planned to fit the vision and requirements of the elites. This dominant dimension of space strives to produce and reproduce social relations by molding what Lefebvre defined as “representational space” and “spatial practice” – space as it is respectively perceived and used by its publics.

European lineage built grand palaces and mansions mimicking the styles they remember seeing in Europe, initially in the Southern neighborhoods of the city. After the outbreak of yellow fever in 1871, these families relocated to the northern end of the city, and continued to leave their architectural stamp there. Industrialists from Britain and France encouraged the urban development of the business and commercial districts. Various religious orders established areas around their parishes and the buildings constructed resembled those left back home. Working classes also made physical imprints on the city, most notably by way of murals and frescos originally painted in the 1940s in the social realist fashion (additions commissioned by the city in the late 1990s). Depicting the Eurocentric foundational stories of Argentina, the images reference (in any combination thereof) Spanish conquistadors, Spanish royalty, saints, priests, and nuns, women comforting children with food, immigrant European workers, artists, musicians and soccer players, Italian and Spanish flags. The la Boca neighborhood epitomizes this, and hosts a high concentration of these murals. Whichever neighborhood people find themselves in, the message is clear: this is European space, and these are European people. Although Buenos Aires' main origin story is framed by Europeanness and observable in the cultural influence of language, food, names, ideas, architecture, the fact remains that Buenos Aires is very much an immigrant city. Interestingly, in its later iterations, the reterritorialization of Buenos Aires as European is what allowed activists to challenge inequalities based on sexual orientation, and the modernity upon which the city was modeled was revised to include those previously excluded from spatial representations.

As is common in other cities boasting themselves as magnets for immigrants, othered identities are relegated to the margins but still visible: indigenous and native peoples (protesting and

squatting on main thoroughfares near the famous Obelisk), Central American workers living in overpopulated tenement houses mere steps from swanky mansions, immigrants of African descent (selling trinkets on the street), and the occasional Chino-shop (a convenience/grocery store run by Asian residents). With a rich, politico-cultural potpourri in the city, Buenos Aires has come to exemplify urban hybridity or cultural heterogeneity, that is, the “coexisting cultures in urban space (Huffschmid, 121).” Though its people may initially appear homogenous, the porteños are an amalgamation of Spanish descendants, immigrants from Italy, Germany, Poland, Great Britain, and China, and a small percentage of indigenous peoples. In a city so dense and so diverse economically and educationally, professional classes sip mates alongside blue-collar workers, and during the 2001 economic crisis may have rummaged through the same dumpster. With European aspirations remaining intact, citizens’ goals and conceptions of what it means to be European change along with changes in Europe, but also with the changes in the culture of the cosmopolitan city.

The city presents a clash of past constructions of an Iberian/Italian influenced modern nation with contemporary urban cosmopolitanism that suppresses or counters the possibility of a more traditional, nationalistic discourse¹⁷¹. Since the first research almost five decades ago by Edward Soja and others on the modern city (Castells; Sassen), a general consensus has developed around

¹⁷¹ Now more than ever it is possible to view the city as exercising a determining role in the creation of social subjects whose “identification (positive or negative) with the city is a determining factor in the creation of an interaction between place and person that is crucial for any and all forms of cultural production, with culture understood here in its broadest, all-encompassing sense of human social enterprise. The city is no longer a way station, nor is it a profound curse: such views will, of course, have their reflexes in cultural production – specifically, in so much of the negative images of the plight of immigrants in a city like Buenos Aires – but they cannot transcend the view of the city as an aberration, as the delegitimation of any authentic national identity...We are, then, talking about two essential principles here. First, the emergence of a view of the city as the primary and therefore fundamentally determining phenomenon of contemporary social existence and, second, of the city as the locus of subject formation, not an accident but a globalizing experience... (Foster, 8)”

the importance of the city as much more than just a place where people live. Rather, the city is understood as first of all the defining locus of modern, postmodern, and post-postmodern culture. This is particularly important as a perceptual “shift from the ideology of rural settings as the front of national identity (‘the call of the land’) and the interpretation of the city as a place where individuals lose that identity (Foster, 8).”

The influence of urban desires on citizens in the context of subject-formation is also visible economically, both in the city and beyond. While 50 percent of Argentines qualify as middle-class, the majority (80 percent) identify as such. The reasons transcend class desires and encroach into the territory of national belonging. In Argentina, middle class identity is tied to certain national folklore that paints the country as one of hard-working, European immigrants who were able to thrive in a strange new land (sound familiar?). Someone identifies himself or herself as middle class not only to create a boundary line with the poor (Adamovsky 2009), but more importantly, to identify oneself as possessing European markers. This social identity has been coupled with a certain longing for European culture and roots, and by extension social legitimacy.

A couple of gay activists from Libre Diversidad/Secretaria del Partida Socialista attributed the history of Spanish immigration as the reason for Spain’s importance in the collective mindset of LGBT activists: "The truth is, that the movements in Argentina - LGBT, gender, and sexual diversity - were first nourished in Spain. It must be due to our historic relationship with this country, because of the constant coming and going of important sectors of the population, to here and also vice versa.” One self-described anarcho-feminist essayist explained to me that while

Argentina as a whole is very inward-looking and introspective, Buenos Aires, on the other hand, “is a very modern city... and always looks beyond itself... because it is a port city, and received millions of immigrants. Buenos Aires always looked toward Europe, Spain and Italy, and this tradition remains”. A lesbian activist from La Fulana explained the impetus to follow Spain’s success: “when Spain achieved the marriage law, we got in touch with our Spanish partners, who gladly spoke with us. You know, we import more than just ham, we import ideas as well. That was very supportive. The idea is that we want to continue replicating”.

Upon closer inspection, however, the relationship between Spain and Argentina is revealed to be more nuanced, largely on account of more recent migration flows from the new world to the old. There exist deeply embedded transnational connections between the two. Known as a country of immigrants, Argentina has also become a country of *emigrants*. Spain has maintained a liberal policy of dual nationality, and allows émigrés to maintain Spanish citizenship for several generations. Complementing this is an aid program that allows Spanish descendants in Latin America a free trip “home” (Jorda and Mirabet, 1997: 60; Los Angeles Times, 1999), a sort of birthright trip similar to the one offered to Jewish youth travelling to Israel. In recent decades, many Argentines chose to emigrate for political, social, or economic reasons, mainly to other countries in the region or countries from whence their parents and/or grandparents hailed. “An estimated 185,000 Argentines emigrated between 1960 and 1970¹⁷², and the number climbed to an estimated 200,000 in the decade that followed (Jachimowicz 2006)”.

¹⁷² Primary destinations of the highly skilled included the United States and Spain, although other Western European countries and Mexico and Venezuela were also popular destinations.

Spain's human rights policies were shaped significantly by Latin American political refugees in the 1970s. Many Argentines fled to Spain during the Dirty War (Corrales and Pecheny 2010), and in the process forged strong relationships with the human rights and LGBT communities there. Although some emigrants returned after the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1983, bringing back their acquired human and social capital, many Argentines remained abroad and were, for the most part, integrated in their host countries. This is significant because it suggests not only an Argentine agency in shaping Spain's human rights laws, but a coming-and-going between the two nations, making the political influences all the more intertwined and less foreign, and fairly recent. Migration to Spain wasn't limited to political dissidents, but also included military leaders after the fall of the junta. For them, however, the move wasn't beneficial, as illustrated by the case of naval officer Adolfo Scilingo. He is serving 30 years (the legally applied limit, although sentenced to 640 years) in a Spanish prison after being convicted on April 19, 2005 for crimes against humanity, including extra-judicial execution (20 Minutos 2005, Schmidt 2014; Wilson 2008). This was the first use of a new Spanish law whereby people can be prosecuted for crimes committed outside Spain. Scilingo's confession prompted Argentines residing in Spain to press charges against him. This back-and-forth continues to this day, as activists continue to travel to Spain to participate in conferences and workshops. It is no wonder then, that Spain's renewed interest in Latin America, particularly after integrating with the European Union in 1985, wasn't problematic in the eyes of porteños and Argentines more broadly. Spain's connection to the LGBT movement in Argentina (via Buenos Aires) follows a well-tread path of political involvement (Grugel 2000), as well as recent patterns of migration.

I caught up with a very involved trans activist before his speaking engagement at a cultural

center in Buenos Aires. Marcelo resides in Córdoba, where all his activist work is centered, despite frequent travels to the capital for work and friends, also acknowledged Spain's role, albeit more begrudgingly: "...in Argentina right now the main influence is Spain, for better or for worse. We are following the Spanish federation model that was imported to us... I'm just tired of Spain. I go to Spain a lot too. I mean, the roots of the international campaign against trans discrimination are in Spain, so I work with Spanish activists all the time."

The president of the Federacion Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, y Trans (FALGBT) explained Spain's importance in this way:

"When we saw that a country with a cultural matrix like Argentina had been able to approve... and that of the first five countries that approved equal marriage, none of these countries has a cultural bond with Argentina like Spain... Argentina has a society very similar to Spanish society, in terms of the largest immigration to Argentina mostly comes from Italy and Spain. So when Spain took the step towards equal marriage it allowed us to see that here is also possible."

While perhaps a bit oversimplified¹⁷³, it is this close identification with Spain (and Italy) that has served to also mobilize activists. So, while activists in other countries might have been happy for the changes achieved in Spain, and perhaps also felt positively motivated and hopeful because of it, their Argentine counterparts, particularly porteños, went several steps beyond that and understood Spain's progressive changes as foreshadowing for their own project.

¹⁷³ Not least of all due to the erasure of indigenous peoples from the national imaginary – with occasional resurrection for purposes of Pampas fetishism – but also the relative inability to recognize the particularity of the Argentine-descended-from-immigrants (a "new animal"), from that of the contemporary Spaniard, which ends up reading as Spaniard-abandoned-on-the-Southern-Cone. There exists a strong national image of Argentina as mirroring Spain (culturally, demographically, politically), even by those who do not share Spanish or Italian ancestry.

One activist-academic with whom I spoke posited another interesting rationale as to why such transatlantic meddling didn't rile anyone, and the simple reason has to do with language. The power of shared language is no small detail, and Argentine activists' ability to correspond with movement activists in neighboring countries and Spain with little linguistic effort makes movement activities and strategies not only more relatable to the general public, but also less threatening. Activists rarely relied on the English versions of common LGBT terminology, opting instead for native colloquialisms. Even in speaking with me, informants (despite their ability to speak English) stuck exclusively to Spanish despite my butchering their native tongue. In doing so, the movement can't be perceived as foreign by the mainstream or opposition. In using language everyone can understand and relate to domestically, activists preclude their own othering from the national imaginary, and extended a bridge for the public to cross and via which to engage.

Conclusion

The movement in Buenos Aires doesn't exist in isolation from the global trends happening around LGBT issues, nor does it eagerly soak up whatever latest idea seeps in from the outside. Instead, the movement's uniqueness lies in its delicate balance of local understanding, national sensitivity, and global selectiveness. Spain's role in the passage of Argentina's same-sex marriage legislation elucidates the process of transnational norm diffusion, wherein norm entrepreneurs mobilize significant resources to underwrite efforts elsewhere, and building on existing structural determinants like favorable legislation and cultural linkages. But Spanish collaboration and norm diffusion would not have been possible had Argentina not already come to embrace human rights on its own. Domestic factors were crucial in achieving same-sex

marriage. Argentina provided a context already complete with a well-organized community of activists, and favorable public opinion.

While human rights language and strategies are often ascribed to the West, and when deployed in some non-Western contexts deemed inauthentic and threatening, Argentina's unique political history has removed such a roadblock from acquiring a sympathetic public and making policy progress. When in the throes of its own Dirty War, civil society actors took up the cause of addressing human rights violations. In joining the struggle, LGBT activists managed to fashion themselves a legitimate political force and a worthy player in a lively political community. More importantly, it did so at the same time that the Catholic Church lost its political legitimacy, thereby removing a political obstacle and having to contend only with the Church's cultural influence.

As one spoke under the larger human rights umbrella, the LGBT contingent was part of the broader coalition-building efforts of human rights groups pre- and post- transition. Those alliances allowed for further bridge-building into LGBT issues. The particular genesis story of the LGBT movement in Buenos Aires has made it possible to view LGBT issues through a broader lens in the context of Argentina, as it has long been understood as a human rights struggle, with the latter touching a particularly sensitive nerve with the Argentine public. This history has given the movement its political legitimacy.

The global LGBT movement is not only less controversial in Argentina, but also less significant. What little international or transnational collaborations that do exist are not perceived as

inauthentic impositions. Through a long process of immigration and nation-building, and lingering European sympathies, the collective identity of porteños as Europeans - and as such, the entirety of Argentina, too – has come to be naturalized. This extension and internalization of Europeanness has made European (specifically Spanish) intervention unthreatening. Shared language and use of Spanish – instead of English - among activists has also contributed to ameliorating potential moral panics.

6. From Generative Space to “Gaycation” Destination

Introduction

From the moment I began my search for airfare to Buenos Aires to embark on field research, until well after landing at my destination, I was inundated with advertisements flouting the LGBT friendliness of the city. Airline searches resulted in pop-ups for same-sex couples’ packages, romantic getaways from the city to nearby areas, and even discount offers for rainbow family trips. The message was clear: “If you’re queer, we want you here! Come on down!” While the city has been a gay destination since it legalized same-sex unions in 2003¹⁷⁴, the country’s recent political advancements, and the city’s leading role in the victory had made their way (more than ever) into the city’s promotional materials. Equal marriage legislation further solidified the relationship between cultural politics and commerce into a perfect marriage of convenience, so to speak.

Cities like Buenos Aires, that is to say, vibrant, global metropolises, produce particular forms of culture, and general forms of culture assume particular dimensions in that “sites are never simply locations. Rather, they are sites for someone and of something’ (Shields, 6)” (Foster, 10). As the City of Good Airs shows, The LGBT movement and its consequences, while extending to Buenos Aires, manifest and act in a particular, even surprising, ways. Buenos Aires is important, as the totality of Argentine cultural production dealing with lesbian and gay issues is largely centered in the city, a fact that has facilitated the eventual commodification of LGBT spaces in the city. While it is possible to find treatments of LGBT themes elsewhere, cultural production dealing with LGBT rights ends up with a metropolitan basis, in part because the history of gay

¹⁷⁴ http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13346-2005Mar7_2.html

rights has been an urban history and in part because, significantly, the definition of gay rights is based on characteristics of urban life (Foster, 12). As is the case with many immigrant cultures, women's movements, and racial politics, LGBT visibility and the movement are all firmly rooted in the urban landscape.

The social importance of the city lies in its ability to serve as a place where it is possible to be visible, out, anonymous, and to meet others like oneself who share similar values, struggles, and perspectives. This possibility leads to more internal and external migration, activism, and social and artistic creativity. At the same time, it attracts commercial interests, leading to a global gay tourism which carries with it its pros, but also problematic cons. The latter trend shows how the former trend carries with it both promise and potential problem: how domestic/national transformation - thanks to artistic, political, human energy - also leads to commodification and consumption (the gentrification of gay at the expense of the queer). In this way Buenos Aires has proven inevitably, deeply global. Conversely, gazing inwards at the city as a collaborator and negotiator in the national sphere illustrates the city's influence domestically, particularly in its ability to focus on and channel different local needs. This characteristic has meant that its influence and participation in the global/international Latin American sphere has been largely absent. The focus has tended to be concentrated on the domestic front.

When I eventually arrived in Buenos Aires in early 2011, the country was still reveling in the afterglow and euphoria of passing equal marriage legislation in July of 2010. I had been in Poland at that time, and it was quite interesting to see the effect it had on activist morale in Poland, which is to say, quite positive. It did, however, pose a bit of a problem, as my case

selection was originally decided on account of similar legislation in both places. The most recent development complicated matters. Now, I was tasked with exploring why this had been a possibility in Argentina, but more importantly, to recognize and address the very different points in the process that each movement now found itself, and to recognize how this placement influences the very meaning of (different) global interventions playing out locally. Once again, the role of the city proved to be vital, and in sharp contrast with the capital city's role in Poland, in Argentina, Buenos Aires proved to be much less of an overtly imposing force on the rest of the country, but rather a receptor for a much more wide-spread national sentiment. The trajectory of Buenos Aires's role for the movement in Argentina is reflective of the larger process the country has gone through over the past decade. The city's evolution from movement leader to tourist destination highlights the fact that social movements do not operate in isolation, and is one that illustrates the dynamic between movement outcomes and their utilization by other players (capitalist forces, public policy-makers).

In its chaotic and messy beauty, the city makes place-making possible, both locally and nationally, because queer bodies are public and visible. The loud conversations taking place in Buenos Aires define the national discourse, influencing public opinion more broadly, and encouraging splinter conversations throughout the provinces. The city also has ears, or even antennae. It extends its feelers out beyond the capital and notes vibrations and chatter. It has taken note of goings-on elsewhere, and been humble enough to follow the lead of smaller, more modest towns. For goals that are national in scope, like the fight for equal marriage legislation, Buenos Aires plays an integral role. For other objectives, like transnational network building, its importance is marginal, not because there isn't potential, but rather because activists don't see a

necessity for it. Additionally, Buenos Aires has been able to accomplish something unique. While not a direct result of activist work, but rather a consequence of it, the city has garnered the reputation of being a gay tourist mecca. Made possible largely thanks to the efforts of the city's neoliberal urban policy makers, department of tourism and businesses, the city has successfully positioned itself as a top gay tourist destination in Latin America. However, this interplay of cultural politics and capitalist forces poses an interesting outcome for Buenos Aires, as the city government's efforts to court LGBT tourism occurred alongside then-Mayor (now President) Macri's hostile relations with activists. Activists' place-making and visibility in the city has made way for market-led city-making via (very selective) sexualized urban entrepreneurialism. Historical movement advances have been recognized as marketable resources, appropriated for city-branding purposes, and commodified, much like history of apartheid tours in Cape Town, South Africa, and Civil Rights sites in Atlanta, and the Communism tours in Warsaw, Prague, and Berlin. "Buenos Aires offers insight into the complex intersections between pro-equality politics, the increased social acceptance of dissident sexualities and the appropriation of tolerance by cultural entrepreneurialism" (Kanai, 656).

This chapter explores Buenos Aires's tripartite role as 1) a central social site, 2) a national collaborator and mediator, and 3) a center of gay tourism. Tracing the city's evolution from movement leader to gay tourist destination illustrates the dynamic of social movement outcomes and their utilization by other players (capitalist forces, public policy-makers). The city's importance as a generative space and central site of cultural production resulting in activists' place-making and visibility, has also made way for market-led city-making via (very selective) sexualized urban entrepreneurialism. The unintended consequences of the cultural shift

spearheaded by activists in Buenos Aires has piqued the interest of urban policy-makers and globalization-oriented entrepreneurs who have come to view culture as a strategic resource on which to profit. At the same time, those inclined towards socially oriented approaches to urban development – community leaders, LGBT activists, marginalized communities, feminists – also are trying to harness it. Currently, it has resulted in a heightened struggle among state and social actors over the meaning, goals and implementation of urban cultural policy and its effects.

Buenos Aires as a central social site

Buenos Aires serves a social importance as a generative space¹⁷⁵. Historically, large cities have been hospitable to marginalized identities, and Buenos Aires is the largest city in Argentina, and the second-largest metropolitan area in South America.. As a designated global city that is also the political, economic, and cultural capital of Argentina¹⁷⁶, Buenos Aires enjoys a significance shared by only a select number of cities – all scattered across the globe. “The global city is probably the most mediated city but also the most diverse and open urban centre in the world: it is welcoming to the cultural industries but it is also globally recognized for the long and intense flow of people, ideas, and media that link it to the rest of the world and bring the world to it” (Georgiou, 2). Including Mexico City and São Paulo, it is one of the three Latin American cities considered an 'alpha city' by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network¹⁷⁷. Buenos Aires is the political, financial, industrial, and commercial hub of Argentina. The economy in the city alone totaled US\$84.7 billion (US\$34,200 per capita) in 2011¹⁷⁸, and amounts to nearly a

¹⁷⁵ Generative space is a physical and social environment that not only meets the basic purpose of that space, but also improves the quality of life for participants.

¹⁷⁶ Neither part of Buenos Aires Province nor the Province's capital; rather, the city of Buenos Aires is an autonomous district. Buenos Aires was federalized and removed from Buenos Aires Province in 1880 after years of political infighting.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2010t.html>

¹⁷⁸ measured by Gross Geographic Product and adjusted for purchasing power

quarter of all of Argentina's total. Metro Buenos Aires constitutes the 13th largest economy among the world's cities¹⁷⁹.

The city has a diversified and well-developed service sector, accounting for over three-quarters of its economy¹⁸⁰. The major industries include advertising, real estate, finance, and tourism. Advertising plays a prominent role both at home and in the export of services abroad, but the financial and real-estate sector is the largest, contributing to 31% of the city's economy. As with all global cities, finance in Buenos Aires is especially integral to Argentina's banking system. Last but not least, the tourism and hotel industry carries a non-negligible amount of weight, with nearly 300 hotels and another 300 hostels and bed and breakfasts licensed for tourism in Buenos Aires¹⁸¹.

As a cultural producer, the city has many draws that have long allowed it to establish itself as a tourist magnet. Visibly influenced by European culture, Buenos Aires is popularly referred to as the "Paris of South America". With over 300 active theatres, it is home to the busiest live theatre industry in all of Latin America, placing it the highest worldwide (surpassing London, New York, and Paris). The city hosts cultural festivals with more than ten sites and five years of existence, placing the city as second worldwide, after Edinburgh. In addition, the city is the site of an internationally rated opera house (Teatro Colón), several symphony orchestras and choral societies, numerous museums, zoo, and botanic garden (which, for some reason is home to hundreds of cats). Buenos Aires is also very active in street art, with major murals everywhere in the city, as well as street performances. In a world where print media seems on the decline,

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.citymayors.com/statistics/richest-cities-2005.html>

¹⁸⁰ compared to 59% for all of Argentina

¹⁸¹ City of Buenos Aires Census <http://www.estadisticaciudad.gob.ar>

Buenos Aires is home to hundreds of bookstores, public libraries, and literary associations, earning it an alternate nickname of “The City of Books”. Solidifying this title is the Buenos Aires International Book Fair – one of the top five books fairs in the world. The city has one bookstore per 4,000 residents, making it the highest concentration of bookstores per capita than any other city in the world. Porteños are a well-read lot.

Buenos Aires has a population size of 3,090,922 in the city proper (203 sq km)¹⁸², and is divided into 48 distinct neighborhoods. Like Warsaw, Buenos Aires does not have a designated de facto gay neighborhood. Deemed a *gayciudad*, or *gay ciudad* (Meccia 2011)¹⁸³, its spaces are scattered throughout the city, with organizational headquarters and gay-friendly establishments located in all neighborhoods, in a spatial distribution that includes both clustered and isolated locations. But LGBT-designated spaces may also not be as necessary as in Warsaw. Most LGBT people feel comfortable and safe meeting up in neighborhood cafes and bars. Most of the interviews I conducted took place in local cafes¹⁸⁴, patronized by neighborhood regulars: grandparents sharing sweet alfajores with their grandchildren, young hipsters sipping their café dobles, lunching office workers, and the evening crowd relaxing over glasses of Malbec before moving on to dinner. That being said, most activities, especially those catered to gay tourists, “still take place on the fringes of wealthy residential areas, the central business and entertainment district, and, in the case of the market segment labeled as [gay-]friendly, in neighborhoods which are being revitalized through the creative economy and global tourism” (Kanai, 658).

While all this is happening, a simultaneous trend is occurring in parallel, in which there is an

¹⁸² <http://www.indec.gov.ar/>

¹⁸³ A Spanish neologism for “gayness”, and “gay city”, respectively.

¹⁸⁴ Each informant selected our designated meeting spot. Neighborhood cafes and bars were the most frequent places chosen, while a few requested their organization’s headquarters, a workplace (government building), or their own homes.

overall decline of LGBT-sanctioned establishments in bigger cities. As acceptance of LGBT issues and people grows, and LGBT patrons feel safe and comfortable in “hetero” places, the need for demarcated LGBT spaces may be declining. This is increasingly true of places frequented by younger generations – hip new establishments are by nature more accommodating and cosmopolitan. With the sheer number of cool cafés, bars, and clubs in Buenos Aires, the distinction between gay and hetero establishments is disappearing. “Hetero” spaces are increasingly gay-friendly, and gay spaces are hetero-friendly, eliminating the necessity for divisions, and instead falling somewhere in a comfortable in-between.

As a cosmopolitan and global city it is pretty gay-friendly, which has influenced both internal and external migration, and tourism. Locally, place-making projects are happening all over the city. Almost immediately I began hearing a familiar refrain from activists, although with considerably less emphasis than their counterparts in Warsaw: Namely that certain ways of being are possible here, and not just the overtly-political strategies and visibility projects. The simple act of stepping out into the crowded city and walking hand-in-hand with a romantic partner of the same sex is possible. Finding employment as a trans-man is possible. Joining any one of the numerous groups that make up the rich *mélange* of LGBT organizational life is possible. Going with friends to a gay club, lesbian café, or queer festival is possible. This all harks back to the idea of visible anonymity in the city. It provides a cloak of possibility and freedom in the city, as well as the ability to create social bonds more easily than in smaller designations. In terms of social movements, the city is invaluable for its ability to promote the formation of collective identities, as the invisible markers of sexual orientation can be made visible by individuals when they encounter access to safe spaces.

“...sexual categories are not a priori social groups with identifiable bonds and settings. Often, members of social groups are visible to each other: workers may form unions, or members of religious minorities may worship at the same place. In contrast, because sexuality is a feature mainly expressed in intimate settings, members of sexual social groups are not necessarily visible. Establishing social (and political) bonds requires an active effort of visibility, internal and external (Corrales and Pecheny, 9).”

Buenos Aires is amenable to establishing social bonds, as visibility and diversity of LGBT identities and interests is plentiful thanks to LGBT concentration in the city. There are enough people who identify as LGBTQ as to allow for the successful existence of various social flora, resulting in numerous organizations - with political, cultural, recreation goals. The volume of people makes it possible to have groups targeting specific and more narrowly defined identities, concerns, and interests (lesbian feminists, religious gays, MTFs, sports leagues, etc.) as opposed to umbrella groups (LGBT). If a particular place has a smaller number of LGBT-identifying (or out) residents, the necessary critical mass for multiple organizations is lacking. There may only be a few groups with broader functions and goals (such as a bundle of advocacy, self-help, and legal aid)¹⁸⁵. Efforts of visibility become that much easier in a city with a thriving community. The number of LGBT organizations in Buenos Aires are numerous, and include political NGOs that have operated for decades: Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA), La Fulana (lesbian and bisexual women's group), and Asociacion Travestis Transexuales Transgeneros Argentinas (A.T.T.T.A.), as well as those who have formed within the past few years and include political, social, recreational, religious, and support groups. Several splinter groups have also formed from established political parties, and not only turn their attention to society at large, but also have a

¹⁸⁵ This will become all the more apparent when compared to the number of groups in Warsaw (where, despite some a sprinkling of recreational groups, mostly only a few political organizations and all encompass pretty widely-defined collective identities). The calculus then, is, the smaller the LGBTQ population/concentration/visibility, the fewer number of groups and the greater likelihood of groups encompassing umbrella LGBTQ identities and goals. The greater the LGBTQ population, the greater the organizational mélange, and a greater likelihood that those organizations will have more specific goals and audiences from one another.

stake in LGBT visibility and voice within the parties themselves: Diversidad JxI (Jóvenes por la Igualdad), Partida Socialista Grupo LGBT, and Libre Diversidad (within the MST).

As is the case with most cosmopolitan cities, Buenos Aires is generally more hospitable to LGBT persons than far-flung provinces. While a household exodus is generally atypical in Argentina, the inverse is true among LGBT individuals and migration to the capital city is a common theme among activists. Homophobia starts at home, which is more problematic in countries like Argentina and Poland, where youth live in their family homes much longer than their contemporaries in the USA or Western Europe.

“Several authors (D’Emilio 1983; Weeks 2000; Seidman 2003; Pellegrini 2002) have noted the role of global capitalism and economic prosperity in releasing one from traditional family obligations and allowing for urban migration. Yet, Argentina’s poverty (Corrales and Pecheny 2010) has often kept young people bound to their families of origin... until the time they are wed, which usually correlates with increased financial independence. Argentina’s strong family ties (Corrales and Pecheny 2010) also kept many from leaving rural homes to migrate to Buenos Aires, where gay establishments had developed. When the family itself may be necessary for economic survival, a gay youth may fear being disowned.” (Cooper 2012: 106).

This trend, however, has been changing, as many younger people have been migrating to urban areas with greater frequency, usually under the guise of seeking better job prospects. Buenos Aires attracts many such internal migrants. Many activists spoke of their move to the city as a liberating experience. Mateo, a trans-man and activist unaffiliated with any particular organization, moved to Buenos Aires from La Plata over ten years ago. Originally having left home due to family problems, Mateo has a day job and also writes for the daily newspaper, *Página/12*. According to him, “the city has a different ideology [than the provinces] that governs it”. For Mateo, Buenos Aires offered more social interaction, anonymity, and diversity, as well

as physical and emotional distance from family, and the practical consideration of more work opportunities.

Marcelo, a trans and intersex activist from Cordoba, splits his time between the capital and the former. While fond of Cordoba and his place of work – the University of Cordoba – he travels to Buenos Aires to have a more rich social life and engage more politically. In response to my questions about the significance of Buenos Aires as it relates to his activist work, he was very clear about dispelling any notions of the capital city’s grandeur that I may have been expecting: “It’s not so meaningful. I mean, I come to Buenos Aires to work. I’m also an intersex activist and I teach at the University [of Cordoba], so, for example, I am here because I was invited... to participate in a conference in the school of law last Monday and I just decided to stay and organize this [talk at cultural center], so it has to do with engaging with local activists who are also friends. It’s a way of having a social life.” While he maintains that Buenos Aires is not central to his work, he does concede that “people have more access to meet other people, so the sense of community is bigger here [BsAs] than in Cordoba... [T]here are more opportunities for almost everything, like friendship and community and love and having a sex life”.

Marcelo’s case is interesting because his focus tends to be regional and international. He’s well connected with international and global networks, and so “coming to Buenos Aires is not that significant for me. Not as much as going to Geneva, or New York, or even Cape Town, which is the capital of the African trans movement... [those places are important] because the UN offices are there, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and because there are networks that meet in those particular places... in those places I can meet with people I’m working with,

like UN officers, or funders or other regional networks”. For activist purposes Marcelo travels frequently all over the world or telecommutes, but he mainly understands his visits to Buenos Aires as a way to maintain a social life and for recreation. And why not? If the city is able to offer cultural events, LGBT-specific spaces and/or acceptance and safety in the public realm, it seems a logical choice for making it a destination spot in which to relax.

Julia, an INADI worker and activist involved with La Fulana and FALGBT, moved to the capital from the provinces for a few reasons, including the allure of the city, employment, activism, but also on account of her lesbian identity. “In the provinces it is much more difficult to be visible or to live tranquilly... and it’s not like something specific happened to me [back home]... I like Buenos Aires and I came to live here”.

Another independent activist, Rafaela, explained the advantages of the city in terms of spaces of sociability and safety.

“There are many places to socialize for the LGBT collective: discos, clubs, cultural centers, specialized libraries, reflection groups, a mountain of organizations that do activities. In general, the city center is a safe place. There are daytime events and later night-time parties. It seems to me that there are many advantages to being in Buenos Aires, because visibility is also safer. I can walk along the street with my partner. It’s rare to receive aggressive comments, or violence. Things that happen more often to trans people, violence, also to trans-men, but in general there are very safe spaces, where people are more open and more accustomed to seeing same-sex couples.”

The event that has come to be most associated with the LGBT movement internationally, the gay pride parade, also occurs in Buenos Aires, with events taking place all over the city. However, a few marked differences exist from the “Western” model. It is called the Marcha de Orgullo (Pride March), and since 1997 the event occurs in early November, to mark the 1969 formation

of the first gay organization in the city. The march has taken place every year since 1992, with only a couple hundred participants, and has grown into one of the largest festivals of the year, swelling to over 250,000 participants by 2011. Frequently, the parade/march route begins in front of the Casa Rosada¹⁸⁶, at the Plaza de Mayo – a longtime site for political assembly, most notably by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. The march culminates in the Plaza de los Dos Congresos, where the National Congress takes place. Pride events tend to be the most obvious markers of LGBT visibility, and in the case of Buenos Aires, reflect a general stability of LGBT visibility, representation and acceptance. This is all the more remarkable given that since the return to constitutional democracy in the mid-1980s, Argentina has seen considerable struggle and frustrating setbacks surrounding the attempt to get a lesbian and gay movement under way (with eventual success). Visibility of non-heteronormative preference (and public debate over said visibility), has been one of the main goals of the movement.

“The proposal to make the presence known of lesbians and gays in the urban space of Buenos Aires and other cities has been a crucial strategy for the legitimating of same-sex desire by naturalizing it through an open discourse. Certainly, from a feminist perspective – and it is important to underscore how many Argentine feminists do not support lesbian activism – visibility as women does not just mean a physical presence. Women are clearly physically evident in urban society. The point, however, as in the case of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, is to find ways in which women are in evidence in actions and activities that do not correspond with, and indeed significantly disrupt, traditional gender roles assignments. Feminist activism accomplishes this to a degree, but lesbian activism involves a geometrically greater defiance of conventional presence (Foster, 108)”.

Visibility via group concentration has been made possible in part thanks to the city’s cloak of anonymity. LGBT concentration, in turn, has allowed for collective identity formation. The latter has eased the way for political strategizing, and given the heterogeneity of the city’s population, making connections to other struggles has been key. The success of political actors in Buenos

¹⁸⁶ The “Pink House”, known officially as *Casa de Gobierno* (“House of Government”), is the executive mansion and office of the President of Argentina, much like the White House in the USA.

Aires has rested on their ability to construct larger frames of meaning that resonate with other population sectors – even beyond the city - while simultaneously addressing particular concerns.

Buenos Aires as a collaborator/negotiator/mediator

In addition to being local generative space socially and politically, Buenos Aires has also acted as collaborator and negotiator domestically. Many projects – equal marriage and gender identity come to mind – have been national in scope, but Buenos Aires has pursued them by channeling different (and sometimes competing) local needs. Activists' focus on the domestic has correlated with its absence from exerting an influence on a global or international Latin American sphere. Following the Dirty War and last military dictatorship, Argentine civil society pursued human rights, a legacy which has had profound consequences to this day, not least of all for LGBT activists. In recognizing the work needed to be done at home, the movement has concentrated on creating relationships with broad sectors of society, and building a substantial country-wide LGBT network. What is important to note, is that although Buenos Aires is generally understood as vanguard of the movement, other smaller towns also have progressive histories, with LGBT milestones sometimes preceding those in the capital. What is more, activists in other towns and provinces have been happy to collaborate with activists in Buenos Aires. The creation of the national network of LGBT organizations - FALGBT - has been the most notable form of a nation-wide collaboration, as it has illustrated not only a willingness on the part of organizations in other provinces to pursue domestic goals, but also Buenos Aires organizations' willingness to recognize peripheries' different needs and to compromise on certain notable goals and strategies.

In conjunction with its role as a movement leader within Argentina, Buenos Aires has also served as a collaborator with other towns, and mediator of local and national sentiments and desires. Towns on the periphery have been vital to the movement of which Buenos Aires is often understood as vanguard. Various movement milestones have bounced from town to town rather than simply followed a linear path after Buenos Aires' progress. While, admittedly, most have not been so generous, some towns granted various rights/services to LGBT people well *before* Buenos Aires. Central to much of the success heralded as Buenos Aires-led, has been the town of Rosario. It is the third largest city in Argentina, located just a few hours away from Buenos Aires. It is a hub of political and intellectual activity, and much of its progressive character can be attributed to the fact that since 1989, the government of Rosario has been Socialist-led¹⁸⁷.

On December 20th 1996, the organization Colectivo Arco Iris, submitted an anti-discrimination clause, which was subsequently adopted by the Rosario town council¹⁸⁸. The clause was modeled after the one adopted a few months earlier in Buenos Aires¹⁸⁹. Despite all the talk about LGBT advances in Argentina, prior to March 2015, no national law existed to address discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Only the cities of Buenos Aires and Rosario included these clauses in their civil rights laws protecting people from discrimination. The two cities have regularly worked in concert. The conversation that precipitated the creation of FALGBT took place at a meeting in Rosario in 2005. Over 100

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensenews/2012/08/14/silvia-augsburger-leads-argentinas-human-rights-movement/>

¹⁸⁸ <http://iglhrc.org/content/argentina-activists-win-another-victory-lgbt-community-rosario-argentinas-second-largest>

¹⁸⁹ Reads: "no discrimination [on the basis of] race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ideology, nationality, physical appearance, psychological, social, economic condition, or any other circumstance will be allowed ... The city promotes the removal of any and every type of obstacle that actually restricts equality and freedom, [or] impedes a person's full development and her/his effective participation in the social, political, or economic community life."

activists from around the country took part in this meeting, and walked away with blueprints for creating the Federation. This meta-organization was then later based in Buenos Aires – partly because most LGBT organizations are located there, but also for strategic reasons. Namely, to affect national policy in a centralized country, the Federación, too, had to be centralized, while maintaining links with member organizations spread across the country.

Another city known for its openness is Córdoba – a young college town, located in the geographical center of Argentina, about 436 miles from Buenos Aires. It is the second-largest city in the country, and has long been one of Argentina's main educational centers, with six universities and several postsecondary colleges. The city's college atmosphere once created problems for Córdoba. The government murdered an estimated 30,000 people - political dissidents - during that era. Needless to say, with the freethinking atmosphere afforded by being young and in college, residents of Córdoba were particularly targeted by the regime. Additionally, the schools of law, journalism, and psychology were targeted more than others. Today, the town's liberal atmosphere, once vilified by the right-wing government, has proven of value to gays and lesbians living in Córdoba.

For Córdoba-based trans activist Marcelo, Buenos Aires didn't provide any particular advantages for his type of activism. His involvement began in 1995 with a local group called Asociación Contra la Discriminación Sexual (ACODO), and then later with a group called Las Iguanas – a group for lesbians, bisexuals, women, and FTMs¹⁹⁰. He further recited his impressive roster of experience:

¹⁹⁰ Shorthand for “female to male”, a term used for male-indentifying individuals who were labeled female at birth. MTF stands for “male to female”.

“After that I started being involved with an FTM national network that existed at the time, and very soon got involved with international activities because a friend of mine was working at the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. So, I started doing some work for them (In 2005 I was hired to coordinate a trans and intersex area at the Latin American Program at the IGLHRC). In 1997 I started working in another organization, a regional one on sexual rights , called Mulabi: Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos. In 1999, I left Mulabi to start a project called GATE – Global Action for Trans Equality¹⁹¹”.

Marcelo continues to focus on work through GATE, and can be found lecturing in various universities, law schools, forums and conferences, and cultural centers. What stands out about Marcelo’s case is that his work isn’t national in scope, and he doesn’t view his presence in Buenos Aires as vital, nor his presence in Córdoba as a hindrance. His work tends to focus on making connections and building regional and international networks with other trans individuals and activists, and to do this he takes it upon himself to travel extensively while maintain Córdoba as his base.

While the city of Buenos Aires legalized civil unions in 2002, the first same-sex marriage in Argentina (and Latin America) took place in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego in 2009. Initially, a court in Buenos Aires had approved the marriage, with even conservative then-mayor Mauricio Macri not appealing the ruling, only for another court to block the marriage a couple weeks later, pending review by the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the Governor of Tierra del Fuego Province, Fabiana Ríos, ordered the civil registry office to perform and register their marriage. On December 28, the two men married¹⁹².

¹⁹¹ <http://transactivists.org/>

¹⁹² <http://www.lgbt.org.ar/00,matrimonio-12.php>

Because of its broad scale, the most visible evidence of multi-town and province, intra-national collaboration between Buenos Aires and the other designations has been the establishment of the Federación Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Trans (FALGBT) in 2006. The blueprints for this network of organizations was first concocted at a meeting in Rosario in 2005. Since then, the FALGBT has grown to include 50 organizations representing all the provinces, with the headquarters and majority of groups located in Buenos Aires. The formation and execution of the FALGBT is the most explicit example of the ability to mediate the energies, goals and desires of Buenos Aires activists and those in other towns and provinces. While it certainly has its detractors in the activist realm, and despite being headquartered in Buenos Aires, the Federation hasn't necessarily privileged the capital contingent of activists. Instead, it has pursued strategies that would have the most tangible affects on LGBT people across the country, something Buenos Aires activists have taken for granted, given their privileged position in a cosmopolitan city. As its first order of business, the Federation's ability to rally around a single, tangible cause as their first task – marriage equality – has been paramount to its success and to its identity. While the Federation has a national focus, its location and activism in Buenos Aires is what allowed for the successful passage of equal marriage legislation in 2010.

That being said, once equal marriage was passed, activists didn't waste any time, and built on existing momentum by turning their attention to *la ley de identidad de género* (gender identity law). FALGBT, along with ATTTA had been working on proposals since 2007. Following the 2010 passing of equal marriage legislation, activists pursued their next goal. The law was passed in 2012, and is currently the most progressive gender identity law in the world, as it does not pathologize the trans condition. The law allows people to officially alter their gender without a

formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria, and simplifies obtaining free hormone therapy or gender reassignment surgery. The bill was first proposed by Silvia Augsberger, a congresswoman from Rosario at the time¹⁹³, highlighting the part select smaller towns have played in movement progress, and exemplifying how Buenos Aires has assumed the ideas and proposals of the periphery. In regards to the city's national role, one activist's (Julia) sentiment was that in addition to the convenience of political institutions being centralized in Buenos Aires, was the FALGBT's role in the development in the provinces. According to Julia, organization on the periphery were fortunate to gain from the advances spearheaded in the capital – following the success of equal marriage, the topic of sexual diversity is now discussed and politicians and candidates seeking public office cannot disregard these issues. “Senators can no longer claim, ‘there are no gays in my province’”. Her argument being that provincial organizations have been strengthened by the national legislation because there is now LGBT visibility in public discourse and issues can no longer be swept under the rug because individual politicians deem action unnecessary.

Through their website, the Federation publicizes events hosted by member organizations in their respective towns, and allows for continued collaboration between member organizations for future events, such as the first ever youth camp to take place this year in Cordoba. Also, in an effort to increase its effectiveness, after years of collaboration with the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI)¹⁹⁴, FALGBT recently deepened their relationship by co-signing a new Framework Convention on ‘Mutual Assistance and Technical

¹⁹³ Much of the progress the movement was able to attain came as a result of aforementioned former Rosario congresswoman Silvia Augsberger, who has led the charge not only for marriage equality and women's rights, but also wrote the transgender rights bill in 2007 that was finally passed in 2012.

¹⁹⁴ INADI was created in 1995 by Federal Law 24515, and is considered one of Argentina's National human rights institutions. URL: <http://inadi.gob.ar/>

Cooperation' to achieve objectives on human rights with INADI. Representatives agreed to work together to advance the construction of policies that further advance the fight against discrimination. This collaboration has nationally-reaching significance. INADI is a decentralized government agency with delegations in every province, and the resources and know-how to address citizens' grievances. The potential for reciprocal benefit is not lost on FALGBT, as Marcela Romero, the Federation's President stated "'The FALGBT has organizations across the country. It is important that we federalize this experience together with INADI. Complaints of discrimination, xenophobia and racism are manifesting every day...We need specific attention to our community, visibility in all areas of decision-making to further deepen equal opportunities and rights."¹⁹⁵ I met with several INADI employees who were also LGBT activists. It is clear that even before the formal partnership of the two entities, there was a clear relationship. President Cristina Kirchner appointed Maria Rachid, a prominent lesbian activist, as the President of INADI. She maintained that role at the time of my fieldwork, and later became President of FALGBT.

While effective, the centralization of the movement also illustrates the tensions of activist spatial politics. It is important to note that LGBT politics remains metro-centric and cosmopolitan in its approach, sometimes at the expense/neglect of peripheral/rural needs. While not necessarily ideologically different, so much as varied in degree with different emphases, the rights-based demands of the city assume a blanket solution (a trickle-down of sorts) to the more tangible, service-based demands of the periphery. But this is where the FALGBT-INADI partnership serves as a potential solution to the intrinsic limitations of a movement that is still largely

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.falgbt.org/uncategorized/firma-de-un-nuevo-convenio-marco-entre-el-inadi-y-la-federacion-argentina-lgbt/>

centralized. With a county-wide presence and the power and legitimacy of a governmental agency to back it up, the decentralized INADI serves to address grievances in other towns and provinces.

The president of the FALGBT at the time of my fieldwork - and part-time resident and native of Córdoba - explained: “Argentina is a very centralized country... Anything that happens in Buenos Aires gets projected nationally. 40% of the population lives in the city and greater Buenos Aires. So, realistically, you can’t make national politics without being in the capital”. This was sentiment echoed by all other FALGBT activists with whom I spoke. At the same time, some activists located further on the outskirts of metropolitan Buenos Aires have expressed disillusionment with the focus of activists in the center. While those in the center have been preoccupied with rights, those on the outskirts of the city, and on the margins of the movement (trans individuals) have been more concerned with tangible services (housing, employment, healthcare, safety). This was reflected in discussions I had with several individual activists who refused to be associated with any one particular group and expressed cynicism over the FALGBT, citing the focus on marriage equality as a superficial and homonormative¹⁹⁶ goal, with little or no benefit for their communities¹⁹⁷. Nation-wide antidiscrimination legislation (passed later) would have been more applicable and broader-reaching than those limited to marital bliss. To these people, the goals of the Federacion were cast in metrocentrist terms.

¹⁹⁶ Homonormativity is the adoption and acceptance of heteronormative ideals and constructs into homosexual culture and individual identity. Homonormativity does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions such as monogamy, procreation, and binary gender roles.

¹⁹⁷ Located on the city’s outskirts and one of the most disadvantaged jurisdictions in the metropolitan region, in La Matanza, the *Putas Peronistas* organization, have consistently critiqued the failure of wealthier urban gays and lesbians to embrace broader social concerns and show solidarity with those from the periphery, who oftentimes lack basic housing, employment, healthcare, and education.

In explaining the tensions inherent to national projects, Julia, the INADI worker and FALGBT activist, explained that while FALGBT member organizations are present throughout the country, the Buenos Aires contingent still maintains dominance over the discourse, and it is the responsibility of FALGBT to mediate that discourse. Discourse, which tends towards the academic and privileged. For example, when FALGBT decided to pursue equal marriage legislation, many organizations or activists – most notably CHA - left on the grounds that the FALGBT was fighting for a patriarchal and bourgeois institution. Those that remained contend that pursuing equal marriage was a logical way to obtain many of the same rights afforded to heterosexual couples. When debating the frame of the gender identity issue, organizations had differing opinions on what should be stressed in terms of trans issues. The Buenos Aires contingent was criticized for pushing for legislation that would “normalize/standardize bodies”. Julia explains that herein lies the difference between the FALGBT as a whole and organizations that work solely in the city:

“the trans colleague that lives in Santa Cruz isn’t going to discuss the normalization of bodies, and whether there is a difference between sexes or genders. What she needs is to be recognized and have her identity embodied in a document through which she gains access to employment and healthcare. She isn’t going to take part in the debate, it doesn’t interest her, because she has other needs that are not part of this debate. Sure, this debate is interesting, we’re going to debate over body politics, but we’re going to do so at the university. Real people in the provinces like Quilmes don’t ask for this debate, they just want their identity, and its better when it is reflected in a document.”

In the case of Marcelo’s activism, aside from the goals of GATE not being local or national, other reasons why location plays less of a role for him - not least of all the opportunities afforded by the internet (Shapiro 2004) - may be due to a larger pattern occurring within the movement wherein the trans contingent is increasingly stepping out from under the LGBT umbrella, or in some cases being pushed out: partly out of changing conceptions of trans

identities and the relationship with the LGB contingents (Broad 2002), and partly due to frustration and tensions. Trans individuals often suffer a double stigma of transphobia – first, rejection by mainstream society, and then again by lesbian and gay members of the LGBT community (Craig 2007; Hill and Willoughby 2005; Norton 1997; Weiss 2003), not to mention the high instances of violence experienced by trans individuals compared to national averages (Jauk 2013). Several other trans activists I spoke with did not identify with any particular organization, as in the past they had experienced microaggressions (and other not so micro) from within the very organizations that were supposed to offer relief and support. Interestingly, those trans individuals who did not identify with a particular group tended to be FTMs, as they found very little in common with organizations like ATTTA, which is dominated by MTFs.

Rafaela also preferred to remain an independent, unaffiliated activist, as opposed to what she called “*militantes*” – those affiliated with formal organizations and linguistically “military” is a verb associated with “military and discipline... and an institutional hierarchical order that dictates what activities will be done, and everyone puts on their shirts and takes out their flags, and there’s no discussion... they’re not horizontal organizations... it’s not a form of collaboration for me... I like to be able to say what I want to say, and not support what I don’t want to support...” Despite this, Rafaela does not see obstacles to collaborating on projects with other independent activists (and occasionally alongside organizations). In fact, the city proves very amenable to more loose activism. Rafaela described an event organized by a group of unaffiliated activists, wherein people congregated outside the Peruvian embassy in order to protest an incident where Peruvian police attacked a manifestation in front of a cathedral. The Buenos Aires group acted in solidarity with the plight of Peruvian activists, and stopped traffic,

sang songs, chanted slogans until the ambassador agreed to meet with them.

As the social significance of the city is undeniable, and advances are being made, commercial interests are building on recent progress. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, the fact that what is deemed desirable and undesirable by the market is not necessarily commensurable with the goals of a movement whose aims are to be inclusive. While the movement itself has proven to result in intra-group tensions and even exclusions, these same marginalizations are being replicated on a spatial level. Through a unique form of gentrification, metrocentrism and economic spatial politics also manifest in the city's development as a gay tourist hub.

Buenos Aires as a center of gay tourism

While maintaining an air of Latin exoticism, the “European” and cosmopolitan character of Buenos Aires has long been a draw for tourists of various ilk. As with many global cities and their role as generative spaces, the city's established reputation of being gay-friendly has attracted LGBT tourists as well. With the most recent advances in nation-wide pro-LGBT legislations, the city has become a hub for gay tourism in Latin America. This is interesting, because while the movement's energies have largely remained focused on the domestic front, its unintended global influence has also boomeranged back to supposedly benefit the country. The city's LGBT global role or placement has become (or been harnessed) as that of entrepreneurial resource. Urban policy-makers, in conjunction with the well-established tourist industry have capitalized on the recent cultural and political shifts so central to the way the city is portrayed by the outside world to encourage the flow of “pink money”. This is a result of a congruence of

factors: global city a magnet for people and global capital, cultural shifts, financial crisis/debt default/devaluation of peso, already-established service-sector and tourist industry.

As it has been center for LGBT culture and social activism within Argentina, Buenos Aires has also become a center of gay tourism. What is more, its status as gay mecca preceded the passage of national LGBT laws. In this way, the city's trajectory has been similar to other global cities that also serve as popular LGBT tourist destinations. Gay travel destinations are often, although not exclusively, large cities, and frequently correlate with the presence of thriving gay neighborhoods. These cities and their respective tourism bureaus often work in concert to develop their reputations as gay destinations, commonly by aligning themselves with local LGBT organizations, and local businesses. Most importantly, the existence of a core, gay-friendly population is often the primary catalyst for the development of a gay-friendly tourist destination. If sites are hostile, LGBT travelers are not likely to travel there.

Since Richard Florida first articulated it, the notion that creativity and tolerance promote urban economic growth and prosperity has gained in popularity among US policy-makers and their European counterparts. The idea has since been extended and linked to gay-friendliness (2002). Critiques of this idea have not deterred urban policy-makers from adopting its prescriptions, namely "the general revalorization of socio-cultural difference" but also particularly "the rush of urban policy-makers to promote and capitalize upon sexual tolerance" (Kanai 645). Problematically, policy-makers and investors have also been partly driven by a belief in the affluent DINK (dual income no children) myth frequently attributed to gay and (somewhat less frequently) lesbian couples, when the reality is that the socioeconomic status of LGBT

populations is just as colorful and diverse as that of heterosexual folks. The supposed prosperity gained from gay tourism is merely the result of tapping-into and serving a long-overlooked segment of the population, combined with the advances in LGBT safety inherent to tolerant societies - something hetero couples or (male) travelers may not need to consider as much. Additionally, as adoption becomes an option for some couples, desirable destinations have shifted from romantic night-life to family- and kid-friendly. Despite this, a simple online search for “LGBT vacation” will result in (presumably) childless, gay-male focused images, with vacation packages touting romance, luxury, and parties.

The case of Buenos Aires is no exception. Policy-makers have already realized the economic advantages of sexual tolerance, and have translated it into a national campaign wherein the tourist board’s “Authentic Argentina” campaign includes depictions of the LGBT community. “The entrepreneurial Buenos Aires city government also supports LGBT tourism through an official website (Buenos Aires Ciudad), which provides information and mentions various annual events. Moreover, the city issues same-sex tourist couples (non-nationals without permanent local addresses) with marriage certificates” (Kanai, 659). The FALGBT has even publicized information and instructions on how tourists can go about obtaining a marriage license in Argentina on their website, under the heading ‘Marriage Tourists’¹⁹⁸. Interestingly, they did not bother translating into other languages. Many attribute the potential economic gains as the reason why even former mayor of Buenos Aires and current President, neoliberal social conservative, Mauricio Macri did not oppose equal marriage and instead stated that it was the direction society was heading and a fact the country need to embrace.

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.falgbt.org/matrimonio-turistas/>

It is largely thanks to the quickly changing social and political climate of Argentina that Buenos Aires's tourism industry has been able to thrive, making it the most visited city in South America. "Latin American cities are becoming increasingly 'gay friendly,' defined as having a high density of LGBT establishments per capita. In some cases, Latin American cities score higher than richer cities in other democracies... Large cities like... Buenos Aires... often rank high in LGBT destinations in international travel guides (Corrales and Pecheny, 11)". The macroeconomic crisis of 2001 and the ensuing 2002 devaluation of the Peso, and an already-established tourism industry, prompted a boom in gay tourism, particularly from the United States. The passage of the city's civil union law in 2002 made it a destination-wedding favorite, and by 2003 the media began to call it the gay mecca of Latin America. LGBT and gay-friendly hotels, apartment rentals, etc, have popped up to meet the needs of travelers. Buenos Aires is the most visited city in South America, and the second-most visited city in Latin America (after Mexico City)¹⁹⁹. Tourism officials estimate that at least one-fifth of foreign visitors to the city are LGBT²⁰⁰.

Buenos Aires has become very good at situating itself as a product in the LGBT market, and has managed to capture this niche largely by creating accepting environments which includes the changing laws. Following the 2010 legalization of marriage, etc., the tourism industry has been able to use it as part of their promotional draw. The city has hosted a gay-focused tourism symposium, soccer tournament, film festival, and the first gay cruise on the continent's waters. Appropriately, the city is home to gay hotels, bookstores, and a series of shops that offer

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.infobae.com/2012/06/14/1052348-mexico-df-buenos-aires-y-san-pablo-los-destinos-turisticos-favoritos>

²⁰⁰ "Going Pinker on the Plata," *The Economist*, December 4, 2008. URL: <http://www.economist.com/node/12725407>

discounts to customers wielding a “gay-friendly Buenos Aires” card. The influx of so-called “pink money” has become a pillar of the city's economy. According to the Instituto Nacional de Promoción Turística (National Institute for Tourism Promotion), more than 445,000 LGBT tourists descended on the country in 2014, bringing with them \$1.2 billion to the country's economy²⁰¹. “LGBT global tourism is serviced by a diversified and professionally managed economic sector. Buenos Aires is a port of call for LGBT cruises, and was the first Latin American city to host the Gay World Cup (2007). There are specialized hotels and shopping opportunities... including custom-made Argentine gay wine... Increased business opportunities have promoted the growth of trade associations. One of the most visible is the gay and lesbian chamber of commerce (Kanai, 658)”²⁰².

As encouraging as the emphasis and success of gay-tourism has been, it is not without its drawbacks. A major critique entails the selectiveness of capitalism, and how its selective, sexualized consumerism of LGBT-specific markets and services has come at the price of community building. Spatially, this is observable in the salience of selective sexual tolerance in the branding of cities (Bell and Binnie 2004, Hubbard 2011). The rising homonormativity of commercial endeavors in global cities has resulted in the promotion of selected urban districts, including trendy neighborhoods featured in promotional city brochures, while other less-marketable spaces are ignored altogether. This is visible in the promotion of the Brandon Gay Day monthly events in the trendy Palermo district, but less glamorization of the organizing body

²⁰¹ <http://www.argentina.travel/en/type/glb>t

²⁰² In addition to hosting its own annual trade and tourism conference to raise awareness of the economic significance and business opportunities of the LGBT market, the Argentina Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CCGLAR) has networked with various service sectors outside the capital (vineyards, ski resorts). The Chamber also visits specialized fairs internationally to promote Argentina.

and smaller venue, Casa Brandon²⁰³, located in the grittier, middle-class neighborhood of Villa Crespo. While one could attribute the louder promotion of the event at NiceTo Club on account of the larger space of the venue and the primary goal of the event is to raise funds – a large part of which help keep Casa Brandon afloat the rest of the time. The choice of location is an economic one. By hosting the event in the well-to-do Palermo district, the organizers are more likely to attract an affluent clientele, as well as young hipsters, and party-seeking tourists, for whom the admission fee is not a hindrance. In some ways, the organizers are being strategic, but they may also be relying partly on the DINK myth that has also driven policy-makers and the tourism industry.

As stated earlier, Buenos Aires doesn't really have a "gay neighborhood" with organizations and venues spread throughout every neighborhood. In a way, this has been an important characteristic for the movements in the city, as it signifies that LGBT encounters, or encounters with the LGBT other, are possible in every urban corner. As certain neighborhoods (namely posh Palermo and vintage San Telmo) begin to gentrify – which, in the case of Buenos Aires, is happening alongside the pink-washing and branding of those neighborhoods as a way to attract tourist money – the formation of an official "gay neighborhood" may detract from the allure of other sites. What is more, incorporation of selective "others" into the desired urban citizenry, seeks to reinforce "positive images", while the "queer unwanted" are further ostracized as

²⁰³ Among its many achievements, Casa Brandon organizes, 'Brandon Gay Day', a large monthly party with music, DJs, dancing. 2015 marks the 15th anniversary of this monthly event. While it is organized by its namesake, Casa Brandon, it sometimes takes place elsewhere. The NiceTo Club has frequently played host to this event. As testament to the scattered nature of LGBT sites, the two venues are separated by a little over two kilometers, and a neighborhood away. Casa Brandon is located in the Villa Crespo neighborhood – a low-key, traditionally middle-class neighborhood, located in the geographical center of the city - while NiceTo Club is in Palermo – an increasingly trendy area (think pilates studios and expensive rent) in the northeast of the city. It is also the largest neighborhood in Buenos Aires, requiring it to be further broken down into 12 subdivisions.

unwanted, unhealthy, and even criminal (Binnie 2004). Those disqualified from homonormative acceptance encounter great hardship in accessing mainstream gay and lesbian space and its resources. This includes, but is not limited to

“sex workers, those who frequently cruise grounds and public sex spaces (Andersson 2011; Hubbard 2001, 2004; Ross and Sullivan 2012); transgender people (Doan 2007); unassimilated immigrants, discriminated ethnic minorities and people of color (Nast 2002; Nero 2005; Visser 2008); and the overtly political, who have maintained their traditional radical anti-capitalist activism and link LGBT struggles with other liberation movements (Brown 2007; Sears 2005).” (Kanai-Lundholm, 654)

Buenos Aires may eventually get its very own gay neighborhood. However, what residents may end up with is a gay (male) neighborhood created *not* through the grassroots LGBT activist history of porteños, like San Francisco’s Castro district, or New York’s Greenwich Village, but rather a neighborhood designation created by developers for commercial purposes. But even with those cases, gentrification has resulted in the “demise of queer space” (Doan and Higgins 2011). The trend is happening alongside the process of gentrification in Buenos Aires, and developers are banking on the cosmopolitan and modern appeal of a gay village. Alternatively, the gay neighborhood may soon be passé, as societies become more open and accepting, reducing the need for demarcated exclusive spaces based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The case can also be made that while *gay* (male) spaces are plentiful, *lesbian* spaces remain quite limited in comparison, a distinction directly related to the elaborate body of literature on gendered spaces, the inherent male-bias of the market, wherein societal power relations are reproduced and reinforced in the urban setting (Manolache 2013; Podmore 2006; Pritchard et al, 2002). A combination of structural factors remain that exert varying influences on women's

leisure opportunities in an urban context (Scruton and Watson 1998). In either of the mentioned scenarios, lesbian spaces tend to suffer in the face of gentrification. Many scholars have pointed to the faster disappearance of lesbian and queer spaces (and bodies), as a global trend, over gay male spaces.

Conclusion

As a result of the movement's success - Buenos Aires has become a node, both within the country and internationally. As a generative space it is desirable socially and collaboratively. While Buenos Aires has been a significant player (MVP, if you will) in struggles that have been national in scope, the history and culture of other towns (namely Rosario and Córdoba), have also served as sometimes earlier, smaller-scale blueprints, helping to legitimize the capital city's activists' domestic aspirations. In a way, creating the FALGBT and pursuing domestic policies was more beneficial to the rest of the country and its LGBT inhabitants, than to those in Buenos Aires – who were already living in a tolerant and accepting environment.

Even for activists who work elsewhere, Buenos Aires still remains important as an informal space, to maintain social ties to other LGBT people, since more concentrate in the capital. While activists' political work is never truly over, after achieving marriage equality, adoption rights, inheritance rights, progressive gender identity legislation, and antidiscrimination legislation, LGBT activists can take a step back and appreciate their victories. Undoubtedly, other issues will eventually come up (LGBT-related or not), in which case the movement will reactivate and reform to address new grievances and limitations. The source of one of those new issues may just be the very victories championed by activists and allies.

The unintended consequences of the cultural shift spearheaded by activists in Buenos Aires has piqued the interest of urban policy-makers and entrepreneurs. Globalization-oriented entrepreneurial regimes have come to view culture as a strategic resource on which to profit. At the same time, those inclined towards socially oriented approaches to urban development – community leaders, LGBT activists, marginalized communities, feminists – also are trying to harness it. Currently, it has resulted in a heightened struggle between state and social actors over the meaning, goals, and implementation of urban cultural policy, and its effects.

7. Comparing *Jabłka*²⁰⁴ and *Naranjas*²⁰⁵

In 2010 Argentina passed equal marriage legislation along with adoption, spousal benefits and protections, extensive anti-discrimination laws, and a year later tackled gender identity legislation. 2016 Poland, by contrast, is still debating the merits of antidiscrimination legislation that explicitly addresses LGBT issues²⁰⁶, but oddly enough, has had the right to change legal gender since 1983. With a newly elected, socially-conservative government, any more “extreme” measures are unlikely to pass, and the limited milestones face threat of reversal. The two countries could not seem more distinct, and yet, just seven years ago their legislation bore more similarities than differences. How did we get here?

Much has changed in the course of writing this dissertation. My initial goal was to decipher the role of international/transnational/global connections for LGBT activists operating locally in Warsaw and Buenos Aires, and to understand what role these cities play in facilitating different strategies. Initially, my cases seemed rather similar and selection was originally decided largely on account of similar legislation. Very soon after commencing my research, the political landscapes changed, and the differences in cases became much more profound, complicating matters. Despite this, the contexts of Warsaw and Buenos Aires for LGBT activists do share grounds for rich comparisons. These two sites, so abundant in political turmoil, social contention, and historical violence, have been incredibly helpful in illustrating the various challenges, successes, and oddities – some similar, many dissimilar – of the global LGBT movement in localized settings.

²⁰⁴ “Apples” in Polish

²⁰⁵ “Oranges” in Spanish

²⁰⁶ Anti-discrimination laws in employment only

Now, I was tasked with exploring why the gaining of extensive rights had been a possibility in Argentina and not in Poland. Several themes arose from this study, explored side-by-side below. First, the role of the city for both place-making and activism proved to be vital in both sites, although with varying levels of legitimacy within each state. In sharp contrast with Warsaw's role in Poland, in Argentina, Buenos Aires proved to be much less of an imposing force on the rest of the country, but rather a receptor for a much more wide-spread national sentiment. Second, while activists in both cities deployed similar tactics and language, the reception by the mainstream varied greatly. In this case, I cannot overestimate the importance of history and the national imaginary on normalizing movement frames or rejecting them as impositions.

Theme 1: The city as site for place-making

An important commonality shared by Warsaw and Buenos Aires is their absence of something many other cities have. Additionally, a striking difference between the LGBT population and ethno-racial, religious, or national groups in both Warsaw²⁰⁷ and Buenos Aires, is that there are no “gay neighborhoods”. In neither city are there equivalents to Chicago's Boystown, San Francisco's Castro District, or London's Soho. Instead, LGBT sites are dispersed throughout both cities, and as such, have made the claims to space all the more complex, because, instead of remaining largely limited to one geographic designation within the city, the entire city remains *in play*. As such, the entire city is the locus, because it serves as what Pratt (1992) calls “contact zones”²⁰⁸. Not only do groups become exposed to other groups, but also to their use of symbols and ideas, and in the case of Warsaw and Buenos Aires, not by intentionally strolling through the

²⁰⁷ An ethnic map of Warsaw became available in 2008, depicting the areas inhabited by large concentrations of foreign national groups, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Hindi, Koreans, Africans, and even Americans.

URL: <http://www.zw.com.pl/artykul/270247.html>

²⁰⁸ It is important to note that Marie Louise Pratt originally applied this term to linguistic exposure, but I have come to find it useful in understanding the city as node or generative space.

gay ghetto, but anywhere in the city, en route to the supermarket, or to the train. This presents both positive and negative effects. On the plus side, less isolation means LGBT sites are more embedded into the everyday – this is especially true in the case of Buenos Aires. On the downside, this dispersal can serve as an obstacle to LGBT community-building. Urban scholars have written extensively on the role of ethnic enclaves for creating vibrant communities (Abrahamson 1996; Hinze 2013; Logan et al 2002; Massey 1999; Portes and Wilson 1980), not to mention their importance for collective empowerment (Roy 2005; Soja 1999). Manuel Castells has called the phenomenon of ethnic enclaves “the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded” (1997, 9).

Having no territorially-defined neighborhood that, while increasing their *collective* visibility, decreases their *individual* visibility (Baumann 1995), LGBT people in Warsaw and Buenos Aires have had a drastically different context in which to operate than either ethno/religious/national minorities, or even LGBT groups in the West. Activists are seeking change not by simply claiming a locale or neighborhood, but have expanded their goals to place-making within the national imaginary.

In both instances, the city is central to the national place-making projects undertaken by activists. Both cities are capital cities, global cities, of particular regional importance, and economic, political, media, and cultural centers within their countries. As is the case with most large cities, the largest concentration of LGBT organizations and associations are in Warsaw and Buenos Aires – a result of two mutually reinforcing factors: because both cities are sites for internal-migration, organizing and membership is more successful, and because they have the most

diversity in terms of LGBT organizations, they attract more LGBT people. In both cases, this has allowed for community-formation by sheer density. The density contributes to visibility. Visibility, in turn, feeds back into place-making projects.

The attributes of these capital, global cities has been central to the more professionalized and high-skilled missions adopted by activists, including lobbying, legal work, and social campaigns. While not completely absent, movement activities in these cities have largely shifted from self-help, identity-formation and empowerment, and LGBT-centered recreation. The focus is no longer on simply congregating as a merry band of misfits, but on changing institutions through the tools available in a democratic society. Here the similarities end, for each city's relationship to their respective nation, and placement internationally plays out differently for activists.

Theme 2: the city's legitimacy (intra-movement relations)

In both cities, place-making activities extend to encompass national place-making goals through challenges to domestic policy. How this is executed, however, makes all the difference. Buenos Aires activists have been successful in their efforts, largely on account of their disciplined focus on local and domestic fronts and acknowledgement of the realities in other provinces. Warsaw, although ambitious, has mistakenly sought to gain national legitimacy by positioning itself as a regional leader through collaborations at the expense of domestic partnerships.

Warsaw has become a movement leader within Poland by crowning itself as such. While other towns and cities have LGBT organizations and events, they remain very locally-oriented and relegated to visibility, community-building, and self-help. Activists in Warsaw, on the other

hand, have taken their aspirations many steps further, focusing their resources on policy goals by professionalizing their activist pool. Activists are savvy grant-writers, adept at seeking and obtaining international funding for projects, multilingual, highly educated, and well-versed in legalese, not least of all because they count practicing lawyers and academics among their ranks. By virtue of the cosmopolitan climate of the city, Warsaw activists are in constant contact with foreign allies, visitors, and international bodies (embassies, diplomats, funders, organizations). As a result of these exchanges activists have grown to think and strive big. It is important to note that inspiration has not resulted in simply copying and pasting Western ideas. If anything, it has made the Warsaw contingent all the more aware of their potential intermediary role between the East and West, and activists have taken up leadership positions in transnational collaborations.

Although commendable, this desire to act and influence beyond Poland has in part created some tension and discord with activists in other towns and provinces who not only feel like they still have much to learn from the West, but that they're being overlooked by the Warsaw contingent altogether. Not only are they not being brought into the fold on the national scale like their counterparts in Argentina, but their experiences and contributions haven't truly been acknowledged. Warsaw activists' attempts at creating national change is happening without much participation by those outside of Warsaw, either tangibly or symbolically.

Like Warsaw, Buenos Aires became a movement leader within Argentina *de facto*, but it did not crown itself. Its legitimacy as such was a long-term work-in-progress: the same labor that allowed activists to foster alliances across the civil society spectrum. Activists in Buenos Aires, too, have become more professionalized and their activities broader in scope, but international

interests are strictly limited to Spain. Activists themselves have stated that membership in organizations like ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) is only symbolic and doesn't really result in material benefits or transnational collaborations. A large part of movement strategies have been lobbying the national government and rallying support for equal marriage legislation from all corners of society. Efforts have been concentrated on the domestic front, all the while bringing the provinces into the fold through the creation of the FALGBT network (Argentine Federation of LGBT groups). Even though activists in Buenos Aires spearheaded the project, conversations included groups from beyond the capital from the very beginning, particularly as many initial advances took place outside of Buenos Aires. This is not to say that Buenos Aires couldn't do it alone. Of course it could plow through like Warsaw, but it chose not to. Instead, it reveals a sensitivity by the Argentine movement to the need for a broader national dialogue, one which recognizes the provinces and makes room for them. This, in large part, has legitimized the movement and its proposals – both for LGBT activists, and for Argentine society as a whole, because there has been more intra-movement cohesion, and unified voice (which is not to say that individuals and groups didn't at one point or another disagree).

Theme 3: National response to movement strategies (movement legitimacy)

In addition to differences in domestic intra-movement relations, and the significance and legitimacy of capital city priorities within each country, another important distinction between the movements led by Warsaw and Buenos Aires has been the national (mainstream) responses to movement strategies. While there have been some surface-level similarities in tactics (place-making in city via visibility campaigns, some extension in other provinces, formal lobbying and professional activities, adoption of global movement language), their implementation and

reception have been interpreted and received much differently. Namely, they have been successful in Argentina, and less so in Poland.

Partly because activists in Warsaw have been so eager to jump the shark and collaborate transnationally, both at the grassroots level, and formally via international entities and funders, mainstream society hasn't been brought into the loop, let alone fully understand the issues at stake. This has meant that the battle over issue-framing has been a particularly weak area for activists, as opponents have free-reign to misrepresent and define the terms. The fact that activists have endeavored to utilize the language of international human rights - a concept many see very little need for in Poland - in the public sphere has only served to alienate the movement from the national agenda. Same goes for use of English terms like "gender". In Poland, the concept of gender has been twisted by conservatives into a "gender ideology" and invoked as a boogeyman, and to great effect, too: because the mainstream doesn't understand the definition, nor how the concept is present and can be observed everywhere and at all times, it remains abstract enough for opponents to utilize it for purposes of fear-mongering. "Dzender" can become anything at any time, and many people feel that they must remain vigilant. In a way, conservative politicians have succeeded on the backs of gender, in part due to activists' and academics' loss of control over the term. Its use beyond the confines of academia and activist spaces was not followed up with a primer. Instead, it was left to freeze outside like a little street urchin, only to be scooped up by questionable characters and paraded around town and stoned in the town square for supposed transgressions.

Activists have also placed their energies into creating partnerships inter/transnationally. Sure, while historically there has been a relationship between the feminist movement and LGBT movement, as well as some lefty environmental movements, broader alliances that reach past the left end of the political spectrum, or go beyond political ideologies have not been forged. There are individual cases like that of trade unions helping out organizations by sharing their office space, but whether this has translated into tangible political capital remains to be seen. In a very conservative country - politically and culturally - activists haven't taken measures to secure a stronger foothold. Unfortunately, the obvious moment for this was brief, and hindsight is 20/20. By not acting out with greater abandon during Operation Hyacinth, and securing more visibility prior to the transition to democracy, activists missed their chance of a turning point (for now). The moment to garner broader societal support and secure long-term alliances had passed. Since then, activists have been fighting an uphill battle of proving their Polish authenticity, a difficult if not impossible task, as Polishness has come to be narrowly defined by conservative, Catholic, and nationalist elements.

What is more, because of little support domestically, the process that activists are plugging into is a global one, potentially harming their claims to national belonging, all in an effort to obtain it. In their attempts to alter the national context, and with it their local situations, activists are reaching out to global actors and building transnational coalitions. By doing this, their civil society engagement ceases to be limited to the local or even national level, opening themselves up to potential critique from opponents.

On the other end of the spectrum is the national reception of the Buenos Aires-led movement within Argentina. Global exchanges or external influences have not been met with hostility and wariness by mainstream society. The reason is twofold: First, for the most part, in recent history, Argentina's periods of turbulence were domestic in nature, and Spain's role as colonizer has long been replaced with the United States' economic empire. Add to this the geographic fact that the country is fairly isolated. Second, what little foreign interventions exist, they tend to be largely Spanish, an identity that has long secured its place in the Argentine national imaginary, along with Italians. As such, Spain is the opposite of foreign, it's family. Additionally, the movement has been able to benefit from normalizing frames of human rights struggles from decades prior. Activists forged alliances across sectors of civil society during the transition to democratic rule following the fall of the last military dictatorship. Bonds were created in the country's move towards reconciliation, and later called upon for LGBT specific issues.

Even when utilizing global concepts like human rights, Argentines have a special claim to the concept, as they were touting their values well before "gay rights are human rights" became the organizing slogan for the LGBT movement. As such, its application for the movement was only the next logical step for a society that has learned some grim lessons from its own violent history. At the same time, activists see little need or allure in using English terms for their movement. Instead, they confidently utilize their own language and terminology, thus diminishing any potential damage that might otherwise arise from using foreign words in the public forum (ex. género).

What is most striking is that the strategy that Argentina picked up from Spain was one that strengthened it as a national issue. Specifically, they borrowed the idea to create a country-wide network in the form of a federation of LGBT organizations. While the equal marriage legislation is the most frequently cited example of the model cut-and-pasted from Spain, it may not have been possible had the former not been implemented first. The FALGBT created a broader domestic space in which to raise issues and enrich dialogue between groups. This was all the more significant since most groups hailed from Buenos Aires. The capital could have easily dominated the conversation and done it alone from the beginning. Instead, activists encouraged the participation of the provinces, which allowed them to measure the national climate and act accordingly as a larger, more representative unit. With the push for marriage equality being a result of a country-wide collaboration, the Argentine population was less likely to view it as a new-fangled idea concocted by cosmopolitan Porteños who longed to be European. Through wide-spread discussions it was received as a genuinely home-grown and authentically Argentine response to large-scale cultural changes.

While entities like the European Union have proven to be somewhat important for Polish groups, no regional intergovernmental organization equivalent exists in Latin America. Sure, there is MERCOSUR, but it does not wield nearly as much power as the EU, nor does it care to dangle economic incentives to influence policies related to LGBT issues. If anything, the EU - via Spain - has played a greater part in influencing LGBT-specific policy in Argentina. This highlights another important distinction between the two areas. They have differing approaches and attitudes toward Europe, by way of historical determinants. Argentina, which has managed to construct and foster a European national affiliation, is eager to embrace European proposals.

Poland, while firmly situated within the confines of Europe - sometimes Eastern, sometimes Central – remains skeptical, and luke-warm at best towards proposals from Brussels. The changing political climate in Europe and the recently-elected right-leaning government in Poland have resulted in a rejection of European proposals, and have framed international agreements as impositions onto Polish sovereignty, and the EU as merely a front for an all-too familiar German domination.

Conclusion

The comparison of the two cities was revealing in surprising ways. In both cases, the city is a gateway for place-making within the nation. As cities with considerable influence on their respective domestic politics, they serve as invaluable resources for those seeking recognition and acceptance into the national fold. This, in combination with the city's role in negotiating global influences, has resulted in drastically different outcomes between the two cases. In collaborating extensively with outside donors, associations, and even governing bodies, Warsaw activists' strategies in Poland were met with defensive hostility and outright opposition. At best, major political parties refuse to take up the LGBT cause, while at worst, spread hostile messages to their constituents. Situated within a city and country that has long been a bridge between east and western Europe, and throughout its long history been at the center of international conflicts, activists draw on that legacy and understand that transnational, international, and global collaboration and exchanges are par for the course. Unfortunately, this comes in direct conflict with the now-dominant frame of Poland's geopolitical legacy: that is to say, a nation betrayed by its neighbors, and sovereignty threatened by institutions like the EU. Add to this activists'

coalition-building limited to civil society groups left of the political spectrum, and the lack of headway is not surprising.

Activists' approaches in Buenos Aires have been markedly different. For starters, they have relied on a extensive coalition forged during the transition to democracy and in a broader struggle for human rights. While a large part of supporters come from left of the political spectrum, overall, allies and sympathizers are represented across the board. While focusing largely on a national front, with very limited transnational projects and collaborations (even within Latin America), the only "foreign" influence has been that of Spain. However, due to a long-established national myth originating and spearheaded by Buenos Aires elite since the 19th century (and adopted by middle and worker classes), Spain is the opposite of foreign, it is family. As such, its own LGBT advances were understood as natural precursors to Argentina's, and its eventual involvement welcome. To be clear, any lessons learned from Spain would not have been possible had the country not already provided fertile ground. Argentina was already very sensitive to the concept of human rights, and proposals from Buenos Aires were reflecting a wider national sentiment (as opposed to projecting and imposing it domestically). While Buenos Aires has been hitting legislation out of the park, and fashioning itself into a LGBT tourist destination, Poland is far from making any headway whatsoever. This is a major point of difference between the Poland case and the Argentina case. Activists in Buenos Aires jumped into action at the national level only *after* local expressions and place-making were visible in the capital city and in other provinces and towns. Activists in Warsaw seem to be placing the idea

before (or in conjunction with) the lived experience, which as Lefebvre states, can cause the lived to disappear even before it's had a chance to thrive²⁰⁹.

Although their conditions are quite distinct and paths very different, LGBT social movement activists in both sites can learn from one another. In Poland, Varsovians can take a page out of Argentina's book by not spreading their efforts so thin and broad - in a desperate attempt to be a regional leader at the expense of its own movement- and instead to focus exclusively on the national front, but with the active participation of other voivodeships. Porteños, with their advances and successful achievements, could do with paying it forward through collaborations with their neighbors. This is particularly obvious given that they speak the same language, and that Argentina isn't an imperial power or former colonizer – an obstacle European and American movements have difficulty compensating for. In short: one movement could do with a little more introspection, and the other adopt a more outward-looking approach.

²⁰⁹ “So much is intimated by myths... but it is only actualized in and through (religio-political) space. Like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized; but the speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the ‘unconscious’ level of lived experience per se (Lefebvre, 34)”.

8. Conclusion

Debates over LGBT rights persist all over the world, and cities have tended to be at the forefront of movement progress, oftentimes leading the way for national policy implementation. What is more, global and capital cities have afforded activists certain tools for pursuing their claims to national belonging, sometimes by way of transnational networks. This has blurred the demarcations between local, national, and global activism, and reintroduced questions on the roles of globalization and nationalism for identity-based movements.

In undertaking this research I sought to understand how civil society actors envision and engage in an ever-changing political world, particularly in cities that occupy global spaces, and what role those cities play in facilitating group objectives and strategies. To do this, I focused on the visible and contentious LGBT social movement sweeping the globe. I further narrowed my gaze to compare two sites: Warsaw, Poland, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, and relied on Lefebvre's concept of the production of space in order to introduce the idea that the city serves as site and tool for national place-making: by way of its role as agent in subject-formation as well as itself being subject to both national and global imprints. Through several chapters based on ethnographic fieldwork, I analyzed these cities as simultaneously local, national, and global spaces and explored how each dimension has been useful to activists in various ways. I also looked at the past significance of cities for the construction of national identity and how dominant interpretations and frames have either been of help to activists or a major obstacle.

Recap

The broad, central question underlying this project investigated the political and social implications of local-global intersections in regards to actual outcomes (intended and unintended) by asking how activists create and utilize networks, and specifically what role the city plays in facilitating specific kinds of interactions and exchanges. To identify how local rights groups are organizing their efforts I investigated four dimensions: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaborations, correlating with the following central subquestions: (1) What are the mechanisms through which activists connect to a larger global movement?; (2) How does cross-national collaboration influence local projects in strategy, form, or goal?; (3) conversely, how does local context influence the "cosmopolitan" aspirations of urban civil society activists?; and (4) does recognition by and collaboration with international actors empower activist claims at the national and local levels, or hinder their attempts at political influence?

My findings reveal different approaches by local activists in two cities engaged in the same global movement, and my comparative analysis enabled me to study the independent value of the city. The role and importance of the city was quite nuanced depending on the goals and strategies pursued by activists. What is more, the role each city has occupied historically - both domestically (as a site of national place-making), and internationally (as a global node) - has also had repercussions for activists utilizing the city to make their claims. In chapters three and four I outlined various roles that Warsaw plays locally for the LGBT movement within the city; nationally, in other parts of Poland; as well as internationally, for activists in other countries. Locally, Warsaw is a place of difference, convergence, and freedom. It lends itself to nest-building by various groups, and allows for the relatively peaceful cohabitation of contradictory

mores and ideologies. In this, it is different from Poland in general. Simultaneously, however, what occurs in Warsaw influences the social and political culture of the country as a whole, as it is also the capital city and the economic, media, and political hub of Poland, and what becomes commonplace in the capital tends to also take effect in other regions. Activists in Warsaw are much more connected to the global LGBT movement. They have more opportunities to make connections in their own town with foreign visitors, acquire funds that allow them to travel internationally, as well as have access to the kind of logistics required to host large, international events like EuroPride. The problematic aspect for the movement in Warsaw has been the global characteristic it sometimes embodies, or is perceived as exuding. With the movement painted as a foreign imposition by opponents, activists have lost the battle of issue-framing. Despite activists' careful attention to cultural context, they are burdened by the need to continually assert their Polishness, and therefore their political and social legitimacy.

In chapters five and six, I focused on Buenos Aires. Argentina's capital passed same-sex civil union legislation in 2002, same-sex marriage and adoption in 2010, and gender-recognition legislation in 2012. This has been made possible by a combination of several factors: Argentine's particular national identity as propagated by Buenos Aires, foreign intervention limited to Spain, a domestically-forged precedent for human rights, and LGBT activists' ability to build broad coalitions and make alliances across civil society. All four elements allowed activists to harness particular political opportunities that were key to making LGBT advancements nationally. I further explored Buenos Aires's tripartite role as 1) a central social site, 2) a national collaborator and mediator, and 3) a center of gay tourism. Tracing the city's evolution from movement leader to gay tourist destination illustrates the dynamic of social movement outcomes and their

utilization by other players (capitalist forces, public policy-makers). The city's importance as a generative space and central site of cultural production resulting in activists' place-making and visibility, has also made way for market-led city-making via (very selective) sexualized urban entrepreneurialism. The unintended consequences of the cultural shift spearheaded by activists in Buenos Aires has piqued the interest of urban policy-makers and globalization-oriented entrepreneurs who have come to view culture as a strategic resource on which to profit. At the same time, those inclined towards socially oriented approaches to urban development – community leaders, LGBT activists, marginalized communities, feminists – also are trying to harness it. Currently, it has resulted in a heightened struggle among state and social actors over the meaning, goals and implementation of urban cultural policy and its effects.

As laid out explicitly in the previous chapter, several themes arose from this comparative study. First, the role of the city for both place-making and activism proved to be vital in both sites, although with varying levels of legitimacy in terms of intra-movement relations. Second, in sharp contrast with Warsaw's role in Poland, in Argentina, Buenos Aires proved to be much less of an imposing force on the rest of the country, but rather a receptor for a much more widespread national sentiment. Third, while activists in both cities deployed similar tactics and language, the reception by mainstream society varied greatly, thereby highlighting the differences in movement legitimacy within each context. In this case, I cannot overstate the importance of history and the national imaginary on either normalizing movement frames or outright rejecting them as impositions.

While literature on global cities portrays them as political capitals, economic powerhouses, and financial centers, at times almost sovereign from the state, it is important to also account for their limits, especially in terms removed from the abstract global marketplace, and focused more on actual people. The city, while a constitutive force, does have its restrictions, as it must still contend with national narratives and histories. In terms of social movement activism and agency, cities' significance is much more varied and complex. City-centered activism has been crucial for network building at local, national, and transnational levels. However, how the execution of collaborations has been received by mainstream society (and in effect, the degree to which they've been translated into policy successes), depends on the relationships activists have with other civil society groups; the relationship between the city, periphery, and nation; the larger national discourse; and the state's historical relationship with the international community at large. Relatedly, social movement activists must mediate their privileged placement as cosmopolitan urban-dwellers with very specific global connections and perspectives, and the broader national context their activism affects.

Conceptual Implications

This dissertation traced a unique process of social movement engagement represented by the melding of discourses in urban politics, civil society, and national belonging: that of global city centered activists' innovative uses of their local space for purposes of national place-making, by way of transnational networks. Four themes framed my chapters, which all relate closely and even overlap with one another in terms of understanding activism in and through the city: mechanisms, influence, context, and collaborations (MICC). In practice, it is difficult to detangle where one stops and another begins, but the purpose of this taxonomy was precisely intended to

clarify the ways in which cities serve as constitutive forces. The MICC model provided the framework for understanding how the city functions as the key mechanism for facilitating activists' access to networks, which then influence the kinds of projects in which those activists engage. I argue that because this influence is mediated by the city, this influence will be mitigated and shaped by the urban context in which actors perform. Understanding this process puts us in a better position to evaluate the efficacy and outcomes of collaboration between global, national, and local actors. My work complicates the common separation between the global, national, and local spheres, and illustrates the imbeddedness of global components in local and national spaces, and vice versa.

The implications of this research inform the debates around globalization and the nation state. My work illustrates that they are not simply always in contest with one another, with the latter's sovereignty in constant peril, but rather, the two can also work in concert. With the global city occupying a unique role as intermediary between the two, the influences of both make their imprint on the city. What is more, despite the prevalence of transnational collaborations by civil society groups, social movements like LGBT illustrate the continued resonance of the national in a time of globalization. Activists engaged in global movements do not actually succeed in trumping national forces or sentiments. Instead, they carefully select, mediate, negotiate, and translate tactics that may have been successful elsewhere. If a victory is achieved, it is because a message has particular resonance within the larger national discourse.

Directions for Future Research

While multidisciplinary, this dissertation is far from exhaustive, and suggests many potential directions for further exploration around issues of transnational social movement engagement, national belonging, and urban activism. This research explored Warsaw and Buenos Aires' triple roles as local sites for residents, national sites for citizens, and global sites regionally, and the rich interplay of all three. While my research touched upon the relationship between the capitals and periphery towns, particularly to highlight how the formers' global status and local activists' cosmopolitan goals sometimes put them at odds with their movement compatriots in other towns and rural areas, resulting in tensions that required addressing, a more in depth analysis was beyond the scope of this research project. There is a great deal of potential in further exploring this relationship, particularly from the perspective of the peripheral town. I believe the reversed directionality of the gaze from the town to capital would yield considerable insight into the ways activists and residents respond to dictates from the capital, or even what global spaces or moments can be found in smaller towns and whether they have any significance.

With activists from all stripes increasingly reaching beyond their immediate communities, forming networks across different publics, and at various points engaging in transnational collaborations, much work remains to be done on the various and ever-changing intersections between local needs and global strategies. Furthermore, there is a need to interrogate the role of outside players – whether funding institutions, NGOs, or agencies of foreign governments – and understand their participation not simply as an intrusion, but rather as an activist-deemed necessity, and asking why.

As my two cases illustrate, respective countries' movements do not follow the same path, even if connected to the same global movement, and even when centralized in the capitals and global cities of similar caliber. Even in instances where certain victories can be claimed (Argentina), the results and further implications are never fully owned or controlled by those actors who catalyzed the changes. As such, further exploration is required into how movement successes are later harnessed by non-activists (in the Argentina case, by urban policy entrepreneurs), and how this speaks to original movement goals.

What started out as an attempt to understand the ways in which actors on the ground harness the potential of the global city in which they reside to influence policy and society at the national level, resulted in a much more complex picture. Instead, my inquiry evolved into exploring how global social movement activists residing in global (and capital) cities negotiate the local/national/global significance of their city, and how this figures into their political activism. It raised the question of where local or national engagement ends and global engagement begins, or whether we can even make sharp distinctions any more, and what opportunities and repercussions arise as a result of such ambiguity and amalgamation. It is my hope that my work has offered insight into the complexities of contemporary grassroots political activism which relies increasingly on a combination of spatial dimensions.

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APPENDIX A

Polish national anthem: current official lyrics and English translation

Mazurek Dąbrowskiego

Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła,
Kiedy my żyjemy.
Co nam obca przemoc wzięła,
Szablą odbierzemy.

Marsz, marsz, Dąbrowski,
Z ziemi włoskiej do Polski.
Za twoim przewodem
Złączym się z narodem.

Przejdziem Wisłę, przejdziem Wartę,
Będziem Polakami.
Dał nam przykład Bonaparte,
Jak zwyciężać mamy.

Marsz, marsz...

Jak Czarniecki do Poznania
Po szwedzkim zaborze,
Dla ojczyzny ratowania
Wrócim się przez morze.

Marsz, marsz...

Już tam ojciec do swej Basi
Mówi zapłakany —
Słuchaj jeno, pono nasi
Biją w tarabany.

Marsz, marsz...

Dąbrowski's Mazurka

Poland has not yet perished,
So long as we still live.
What the alien force has taken from us,
We shall retrieve with a sabre.

March, march, Dąbrowski,
From the Italian land to Poland.
Under your command
We shall rejoin the nation.

We'll cross the Vistula and the Warta,
We shall be Polish.
Bonaparte has given us the example
Of how we should prevail.

March, march...

Like Czarniecki to Poznań
After the Swedish occupation,
To save our homeland,
We shall return across the sea.

March, march...

A father, in tears,
Says to his Basia
Listen, our boys are said
To be beating the tarabans.

March, march...

VITA

NAME	Nawojka K. Lesinski
EDUCATION	Ph.D., Political Science, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2017 B.A. Political Science and International Management, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN, 2004
RESEARCH	Civil society and social movements, urban politics, global cities, Eastern Europe, Latin America, LGBT activism
PUBLICATIONS	Torres, Maria de los Angeles, Kenneth Fujimoto, and Nawojka Lesinski. 2011. "Does Age Matter?" <i>Dialogo</i> . Center for Latino Research, DePaul University. Fall 2011, No. 14. Bada, Xórchil, Vanessa Guridy, Nawojka Lesinski, Amalia Pallares, Joanna Schmit and María de los Ángeles Torres, 2010. "Politicizing the Civic and Socializing the Political: Latino Civic and Political Engagement in Chicago and the Metropolitan Area" in <i>Latinos in Chicago: Reflections of an American Landscape</i> (White Paper Series, June 2010). The Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame. Lesinski, Nawojka and Mariana Menezes Neumann. 2009. "Problemas globais requerem soluções globais: novas estratégias da sociedade civil". <i>Relações Internacionais no Mundo Atual</i> , Faculdades Integradas Curitiba, Curitiba.
CONFERENCES	"The Global Reach of the City: Regional Influences of Warsaw's Civil Society". International Studies Association Conference, Warsaw, Poland. June 17-18, 2014 "Situating Global Civil Society within the City: LGBT Movement Activism in Warsaw". Urban Affairs Association Conference, San Antonio, TX. March 19 - 22, 2014. "Ties that Bind: Reflections on Field Research in the City". LGBT/Queer Studies: Toward Trans/national Scholarly and Activist Kinships, Madrid, Spain. June 3-5, 2011. "Field notes from Warszawa: Understanding the role of transnational networks for local LGBTQ activists". UIC Political Science Graduate Student Colloquium, February 16, 2011. "Valorizing the Oft-overlooked: The Political Importance of Informal Engagement." Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR), UIC, Chicago, Sept. 25, 2009.

“Do Global Problems Require Global Solutions? The Changing Strategies of Civil Society.” Latin American Studies Association Congress, Rio de Janeiro, June 11-14, 2009.

“The Life and Death of Global Social Capital.” Thinking (With) Out Borders, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, June 12-13, 2008.

“The Public Sphere: Checking I.D. at the Door?” Midwest Political Science Association Conference, Chicago, April 4, 2008

Commentator for Panel II: On Engaging Civically Engaged Youth in the Americas: A Three City Perspective – Chicago, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, September 20, 2007.

“Alliances and Colonial History: An Extension of Dependency Theory” Midwest Political Science Association Conference, Chicago, April 2007.

“Cities in Context: Comparison of Politically-Engaged Youth in Chicago, Ciudad de Mexico and Rio de Janeiro”. CIESPI, Rio de Janeiro, April 9, 2007.

HONORS

Chancellor’s Graduate Research Fellowship, 2012 and 2013
Lyn Ragsdale Fellowship, 2011-2012
Chancellor’s Student Service and Leadership Award, 2010
UIC Graduate College Presenter’s Award, 2008
UIC Graduate Student Council Travel Award, 2007 and 2008
UIC Department of Political Science Travel Award, 2008
UIC Graduate College Travel Award, 2007
UIC Department of Political Science Travel Award, 2007
Mary Learman-Houk Writing Scholarship, 2000-2004
Hamline University Trustee Scholarship, 2000-2004
Hamline University Diversity Scholarship, 2000-2004

TEACHING & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Latin American and Latino Studies Program, UIC, Chicago, IL
Academic Advisor for the M.A. program, 2014- 2016

Instructor, *Qualitative Research Methods*. August 2012 - December 2013

Instructor, *Social Movements in Latin America*. January 2010 - May 2010

Grant-writing. Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, Warsaw, Poland. 2010

Dept. of Political Science, UIC, Chicago, IL

Teaching Assistant, *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. August 2009 - December 2009

Teaching Assistant, *US Politics: Current Problems and Controversies*.

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Teaching Assistant, *Introduction to American Government*. August 2007-December 2007

Research Assistant, January 2007 – May 2007, August 2005 – May 2006

Department of Latin American and Latino Studies, UIC, Chicago, IL
Research Assistant, and M.A. Curriculum Development, June 2006 – 2010

Teaching Assistant, *Latino Studies*. January 2008-May 2008 and August 2008-December 2008

Teaching Assistant, *Latin American Studies in a World Context*. August 2006 – December 2006

Conference organizer, “Chicago in the National Immigrant Mobilization”, March 1-2, 2007

Conference organizer, “Civically Engaged Youth in the Americas”, September 20, 2007

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Latin American and Latino Studies Undergrad Association
Creator and organizer, May 2015

The Modest Scholar (AGSP biannual newsletter)
Founder and Editor, May 2009 - June 2010

Association of the Graduate Students of Politics (AGSP) at UIC
President, August 2008- May 2009
Vice-President, August 2009-May 2010

TRANSLATION

English subtitles for 2010 Polish documentary *Trans-Action* by Sławomir Grünberg (HBO Central Europe)

Translation of documents, website content, press releases, and educational short films for Kampania Przeciw Homofobii (June 2010 – December 2010)

English revisions for the Polish Social Watch Report 2010, “Poverty and Social Exclusion in Poland” prepared by Polish Social Watch Coalition and Polish Committee of the European Anti-Poverty Network and published by Kampania Przeciw Homofobii

Simultaneous oral translations of Pride House conference panels during Europride 2010 in Warsaw, Poland