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Visibility in movement and transnational politics

> The tide of history only advances when people make themselves fully visible.
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> – *Anderson Cooper, 2012*

During the opening days of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, activists from a group called the Gay Folks' Movement cunningly beamed their logo onto the facade of the Russian embassy in Berlin. This visible act of solidarity was in response to a lengthy campaign by Russian and transnational activists that voiced concerns about Russia's draconian state ban on gay "propaganda." So was Google's home page, which depicted various winter sports in the bright rainbow colors commonly associated with the LGBT movement. Beneath the design, Google quoted statements on human rights and anti-discrimination from the Olympic charter. Acts like these, which make the LGBT norm publicly visible, have gained unparalleled momentum in recent years. And more and more frequently, prominent figures across the globe, including a British diving star (Tom Daley), an Icelandic prime minister (Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir), a Latvian foreign minister (Edgars Rinkēvičs), and a Polish Catholic priest (Krzystof Charamsa), are coming out. The notable actor Wentworth Miller came out in 2013 by referencing his Russian heritage while declining to take part in the annual St. Petersburg film festival. "I cannot in good conscience participate in a celebratory occasion," he wrote, "hosted by a country where people like myself are being systematically denied their basic right to live and love openly" (Miller 2013). Shortly afterward, the retired German soccer professional Thomas Hitzlsperger came out, saying that he did so because "gay football players

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so far don't exist officially" (Agence France Presse 2014). The attention Hitzlsperger's coming out attracted in Europe suggests that he has indeed helped to lift the veil of silence he decried. By September 2014, following campaigns by various LGBT rights organizations, the International Olympic Committee added non-discrimination based on sexual orientation to the Olympic charter. The addition sent a strong signal to potential host countries that have laws discriminating against LGBT people. As the visibility of the transnational LGBT community grows, it reshapes our understanding, and indeed our imaginations, about the place of LGBT people in international society.

This book has explored the effect of this increasing visibility on state and societal recognition of LGBT people across states in the European region. I set out to answer two broad questions: how do international norms spread, and why do societies and states embrace change in some cases and not others? The conclusion of my empirical analysis is simple but matters a great deal: norm visibility increases the political efficacy of marginalized groups and their ability to place demands on their states. This notion of visibility explains how minority-group rights diffuse across borders: visibility empowers social groups on the political margins; it moves them to the center of political debate and public recognition, and helps them claim their rights. Before the terms "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," and "trans" can become politically salient identity markers, the people they describe must first become visible. When people openly identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, that visibility mobilizes actors, and it affects minority groups' ability to assert themselves and to demand recognition from their societies and states. As LGBT rights spread to new states, this necessary visibility comes from both domestic and transnational sources. People are empowered to act because of the transnational channels that make new norms visible – a particularly important process in places where LGBT rights are not already part of the popular discourse.

I substantiated this visibility argument with empirical evidence demonstrating that differences in the transnational channels of visibility yield differing degrees of LGBT recognition across states and societies. Since there is an asymmetry in political will and information between first-mover states and new-adopter states, these transnational channels of visibility have become critical for the diffusion of LGBT norms: when activated, direct, indirect, and brokered channels can make hidden political issues visible. And this visibility allows international norms to resonate within domestic politics, leading to compliance with, and then gradual internalization of, the new norms. A state's openness to international

organizations and social information flows has consistently demonstrable effects on diffusion, because that openness enables the entry of new ideas into the domestic discourse, fueling deliberation and learning in the domestic sphere.

The speed and direction of diffusion of LGBT norms are also shaped by the degree to which domestic actors are embedded in transnational advocacy networks. These domestic LGBT advocates – or norm brokers – who tie new-adopter states to advocacy groups in first-mover states are of central importance due to variability in domestic societal interpretations of new LGBT norms. Norm brokers make the norm salient by connecting activists to one another and by grafting international ideas to domestic ones, framing the message to fit locally. Not only do they redistribute resources and know-how across borders, they also unite with external elites that have the power to sanction states for noncompliance. My findings make a strong case that these transnational actors, and the movements they substantiate, affect the likelihood of norms becoming visible and salient in domestic discourse.

In sum, an international norm may exist, but its felt intensity varies across contexts due to (in)visibility. States differ in the degree to which norms become visible, and this variation depends in large part on the channels that connect across a given state's borders. Indeed, for LGBT people in many closed and unresponsive domestic contexts, transnational channels provide the only real avenue for initial political influence at home. The transnational channels of LGBT visibility have been effective. Sociopolitical channels, in combination with local LGBT actors embedded in transnational networks, signal to state and society that compliance with the visible norm is part of what it means to be a member of their international community (in this case, European society). And these successful increases in LGBT visibility and rights have occurred in the most unexpected of cases; we are witnessing a rapid, unmistakable shift in both attitudes toward and legislation concerning LGBT people across parts of Europe, Latin America, and North America.

In addition to its discussion of the effects of norm visibility, this book has also examined how perceived threats moderate norm reception. Since different domestic contexts and social groups attach different degrees of perceived threat to the incursion of external norms into domestic space, threat perceptions play an important role in the success or failure of norm internalization. This variable perception of threat may help to explain why the diffusion of international norms is often nonlinear: norms perceived as originating externally meet the heaviest resistance in states

where societal identities are rooted in religious nationalism. In these cases, domestic opponents of contentious norms frame their rejection as based on the norms' objectionable challenges to national identity. This process reveals a great deal about resistance and backlash, responses which are most likely to appear where there is perceived threat. Paradoxically, however, the same domestic opposition that resists these norms also increases their visibility. LGBT movements in Europe have, in most cases, found that waves of resistance are often followed by some success.

Proponents of both sides of the LGBT issue have emphasized the importance of visibility – of "coming out," not just as individuals, but as a collective – to the LGBT movement's ability to influence change. The AIDS Memorial Quilt has commemorated the victims of the virus in several massively visible displays (the first in 1987 on the National Mall in Washington); it is one of the most successful campaigns to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the funding of research to combat it. Coming out, a process for making the invisible visible, takes advantage of the human rights and dignity movement that has marked European and world politics since 1945. And while coming out is often associated with the LGBT experience, it is not limited to that domain. The 1960s American antiwar movement benefited greatly from the visibility and felt intensity of many American families' personal experiences with the draft. In contrast, the new century's Afghanistan and Iraq wars are detached from the public and far more invisible. For example, the Obama administration has banned images of the caskets of fallen American soldiers from being broadcast on television – just one way in which the contemporary antiwar movement has faced invisibility. For the animal rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "the *image* of [animal] abuse is the most powerful tool they have" – indeed, "it is what [a movement] can show people [that] has the potential to change the world" (Galkin 2007, emphasis added).

Visibility has always been central to mainstream recognition of movements mounted by subordinate groups: consider an example from recent American history, when undocumented immigrants used the term "coming out" to mobilize historic waves of immigrant protest. Long silenced by fears of deportation, immigrants now campaign for their rights and have gained a prominent position on the policy agenda (Zepeda-Millán 2011). Similarly, Europe's highly stigmatized Roma population has begun to organize Roma Pride parades to challenge negative stereotypes and affirm group identity (McGarry, forthcoming). Visibility has also had marked success in the arena of women's rights. Women's entry into

the paid labor force and exit out of the invisibility of the home provides another example of the power of visibility, as do the transnational dynamics behind the politicization of violence against women (Htun and Weldon 2012).[1] This transnational process of coming out as a group empowers marginalized people, mobilizing actors to demand change and influencing the spread of norms. The LGBT movement is just one aspect of this larger process of social change.

Invisibility, by contrast, has caused marginalized groups either not to initiate or effectively to halt their movement toward recognition. We can observe a politics of invisibility in the "poor people's movement" in the United States, in which the state over the last forty years has moved from regulating, to disciplining, and finally to incarcerating the poor – thus making them, and their grievances, largely invisible (Piven and Cloward 1977; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011). Scholars have compellingly argued that the disproportionate incarceration of Hispanic and African American men is a strategy to make these groups less visible and ultimately to control them (M. F. Katzenstein, Ibrahim, and Rubin 2010; Pattillo, Weiman, and Western 2004). Similarly, what Myra Marx Ferree (2004, 95–6) has called the "deafening silence" of pro-choice abortion discourse in Germany between 1970 and 1994 helps to explain why the German movement was less successful than its contemporary counterpart in the United States. The difference lay not in the quality or quantity of women's mobilization in each place, but in the very different levels of visibility the media granted them. Visibility awakens a discourse that moves us away from the impotence of invisibility's silence. Differing degrees of invisibility also explain the differential power dynamics between subgroups within minority categories (Beltrán 2010; Strolovitch 2007). For example, Polish parliamentarian Anna Grodzka describes the relative invisibility that trans people continue to face as a group, both within society at large and within the LGBT movement:

High visibility illustrates a strange paradox that we as transgender people experience daily. We are highly visible [physically] and yet almost invisible [politically] at the same time. Individually you often can't miss us. On a bus or in the street many trans people stand out, even if we would like to pass as a woman or a man. And because we are easy to spot, we are easy to bully. I have lost count of the number of times I have been shouted at in the street or felt threatened by unwanted attention from drunk men who think it's funny to ridicule someone who looks different from the norm … I think this is because… as a social group our voice is rarely heard. (Grodzka 2013)

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[1] Deondra Rose (2012) finds that increased educational attainment for women in higher education leads to enhanced citizenship in terms of equitable treatment by the state, social inclusion, and political incorporation.

While Grodzka alludes to the high day-to-day visibility of individuals, her emphasis is on the vast invisibility that trans people experience as a group. This invisibility mutes the group's ability to assert itself politically; only recently has the *T* been added to the acronyms of many LGBT groups.[2] Recall the anecdote of Judith Butler speaking at the Brandenburg Gate to a colorful and highly visible crowd of LGBT people with which this book opened; the dynamics of invisibility now characterize not LGBT people as a group, but LGBT people of color and LGBT migrants, who remain targets of discrimination and who are often disproportionately powerless – for example, the popular perception in several European countries that Muslim immigrant communities are more homophobic than white majorities has rendered LGBT immigrants largely invisible (Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010): if immigrants are homophobes, there remains no space for the existence of LGBT immigrants. The same dynamic is true in the United States, where the artificial construction of African and Latin Americans as homophobic erases the existence of LGBT people of color (Flores and Ramakrishnan n.d.). The 2015 trailer to the Hollywood feature Stonewall – which features a young white protagonist as instigating the riots – is a striking example of the whitewashing of LGBT people: most historical accounts link the instigation of the riots to trans activists of color.

The general underrepresentation of women and racial minorities in the American and European leaderships of the LGBT movement indicates how difficult it is to combat this exclusion (Strolovitch 2007). The processes of invisibility have hampered the development of the foundational elements of rights attainment: forming interpersonal relationships within societies, mobilizing actors for change, and establishing ties to the sympathetic elites who might help further a group's cause. In the end, this book speaks to the politics of (in)visibility and how it can hasten or impede social change on many fronts.

LGBT rights and the reconceptualization of diffusion

The case of LGBT norms offers both theoretical and empirical novelties that further our understanding of change in world politics. Indeed, the empirical realities surrounding the spread of LGBT rights modify existing theoretical accounts of diffusion and social change. To answer the

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[2] Similarly, the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) only added "and Transphobia" (IDAHOT) in 2013.

questions I posed at the outset, I built on conventional explanations – which have focused on differences in international pressures, the fit between domestic and international norms, modernization, and low implementation costs – to explain the timing and patterns of diffusion I observed in the examined cases. For instance, scholars of international relations have argued that international norms diffuse when they fit with domestic norms. In a review of the field, Richard Price (2003, 593) provocatively asked whether "transnational advocacy is [then] likely to work best where it is needed the least." This book has shown that transnational advocacy can work where it is needed (see Evangelista 1999). Despite the norm's contentious nature, some societies change against expectation, as when religious Catholic countries become leaders on LGBT rights. In secular countries, where we might expect more rapid adoption, we observe drastically divergent outcomes; and some strong democracies have struggled to adopt basic measures protecting the rights of LGBT minorities, while newer democracies have done so smoothly.

Rational institutional models rooted primarily in cost-benefit logic also fail to explain the variation in the spread of LGBT norms. The expectation that human rights norms are more easily transmitted when they come with carrots (such as access to the bundle of economic benefits accompanying EU membership) is clearly challenged by the active opposition to formal EU demands to protect LGBT people. In fact, Poland opted out of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights under the guise of protecting the state from having to implement same-sex unions, even though the Charter did not require state recognition of same-sex unions.

While isomorphism, path dependencies, and post-communist syndromes have affected the spread of LGBT rights in different ways, the extensive variation that I have charted points to more complex and contingent causality. At least in a region as receptive to transnationalism and norm diffusion as Europe, there is considerable room for optimism. Under the right transnational conditions, the most unexpected cases can change on this issue.

Bridging insights from different fields of knowledge, the visibility argument develops our theoretical understanding of diffusion processes and social change by emphasizing the agency of norm brokers and the mechanisms of framing, deliberation, and learning. It encompasses both relational and non-relational channels of norm diffusion and considers the internal domestic dynamics that moderate that diffusion, such as the presence of LGBT advocates as norm brokers, resistance, backlash,

and relationships between movements and countermovements. By considering both compliance and internalization, I expand the potential of any analysis of transnational change, for international norms concerning marginalized people are clearly intended to influence both state and society. Finally, my focus on resistance and social change contributes to an important new line of inquiry into contending movements and contested norms that commonly engender backlash (Fetner 2008).

The transnational mobilization of LGBT people and the development and spread of LGBT rights norms together offer a unique platform from which to study processes of change in contentious politics and international relations. Not only do sexual minorities exist in all societies, but the contemporary LGBT movement lets scholars systematically isolate and analyze the observable consequences of norm diffusion. Their rights have become the symbol of modernity on the world stage and a defining issue in geopolitical struggles over lost cultural identity. Yet despite the extensive research on transnational activism and the human rights regime, few political scientists have studied the transnational movement or normative changes concerning sexual minorities (Kollman and Waites 2009, 8). I hope that, by combining in-depth case studies with the quantitative analysis of multiple states, I have generated a bridging dialogue within the burgeoning field of LGBT politics.

Implications of the visibility argument

The various components of this book's central argument have broad implications for scholarship in contentious politics, international relations, and comparative politics, as well as practical implications for advocates of LGBT rights. Not only do the findings chart the empirical developments related to the LGBT movement in Europe, they also have far-reaching implications for theory building related to key concepts in the field. I use this section to reflect on fundamental aspects of the argument as they relate to political opportunities, transnational actors, diffusion, state compliance, societal internalization, threat perceptions, and domestic resonance.

Political opportunities and transnational actors
Europeanization impacts the mobilization of marginalized people. LGBT activism relies on transnational resources – especially social spaces and organizational capacity, which are scarce in some EU member states but

readily available in others – to mobilize. Cross-border mobility in Europe has given sexual minorities access to glimpses of LGBT life as it is lived in other countries; though LGBT expression and identity are rooted in distinct domestic experiences, some experiences travel. Multilevel opportunities (horizontal across states, and top-down, vertical ones provided by the European polity) served as mobilizing structures that united distinct groups of transnational actors, mediating new transnational channels of visibility for LGBT rights. The key actors include the political elites often seen in studies of Europeanization, along with the rooted cosmopolitans and foreign publics that work with and engage local actors in targeted states.

When domestic organizations join transnational LGBT networks, they become connected to actors in states with advanced resources. These networks are crucial, because they channel know-how, financial resources, avenues for political pressure, a voice with which to attract media attention, and foreign publics that can be mobilized for action in various contexts. Marginalized groups have established ties to first-mover states, and this kind of transnational cooperation can open access to political opportunities outside of the nation state.

In addition, transnational cooperation alters the tactics that movement actors use when they engage authorities and society in the target state. In the case of Europe, norm brokers tactically framed their demands by fusing the issue of LGBT acceptance with the democratic responsibilities associated with membership in the European polity. Strategically packaging ideas for a given audience was imperative when taking into consideration the strongly held views in opposition to the LGBT norm. Having "European" frames at their disposal, norm brokers could borrow from international scripts and graft this highly contentious norm into the domestic context.

In this process, states have rapidly attained a high level of fluency on LGBT issues, despite closed domestic political opportunities and minimal popular visibility of the LGBT issue at the turn of the century. According to the president of KPH in Poland, even the Polish language had signaled LGBT invisibility: "My first activity with KPH in Krakow was producing a leaflet and distributing it in the main square. I realized only later that [Microsoft] Word in Polish didn't recognize the word 'homophobia' and autotranslated it incorrectly on every leaflet" (interview no. 140). The situation has changed remarkably in the years since transnational activism began to increase LGBT visibility, fomenting domestic deliberation. Similar dynamics played out across the region as the LGBT issue moved from invisibility to visibility.

Interpersonal and public visibility

In addition to signaling to states that acceptance of LGBT norms is connected to membership in international society, LGBT visibility highlights the central role of interpersonal relationships in states' social acceptance of LGBT minorities.[3] While these relationships vary tremendously across states (for example, 3 percent of Romanians report having interpersonal contact with LGBT people, compared to 69 percent of the Dutch [CoE 2011]), transnational processes can help such ties form, both relationally and non-relationally. First, they connect sexual minorities across borders. These cross-border networks include rooted cosmopolitans who mobilize and organize in foreign contexts and return home to demand change; they also include LGBT people who are mobilized in solidarity to march in foreign contexts. Second, the public visibility of international norms dispenses ideas and images about novel identities, which offer models that can be invoked by people coming out in their own respective contexts. Such visibility engages societal majorities. The American ambassador to Albania, Alexander Arvizu, described the importance of visibility for LGBT acceptance:

> Change in Albania, I believe, will come when families and friends are able to put faces to the term "LGBT." I am always impressed at how people's impression of LGBT individuals changes, when they have an opportunity to get to know them, when they discover a good friend is gay or lesbian, or when they work with them. LGBT individuals in Albania are their own best ambassadors. We are looking merely for ways to support them and their message of tolerance. (Pinderi 2013)

As Arvizu points out here, LGBT visibility (and the visibility of norms governing LGBT rights) provides the foundation for the interpersonal relationships found by psychological and sociological studies to play an important role in tolerance for LGBT people. And these movements toward visibility are an often-overlooked source of empowerment for the participants themselves. Many of the activists I interviewed explained how their involvement in the movement has reshaped their outlook on the world, experiencing their identities as increasingly shared and fluid across borders. Increasing interpersonal relationships with LGBT people, coinciding with heightened public debate about LGBT rights in many

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[3] Individual-level Eurobarometer surveys have consistently shown that knowing LGBT people has a tremendous effect on the political landscape for LGBT people. Europeans with LGBT friends are much more likely to feel comfortable with an LGBT person attaining the state's highest elected office (8.5, on a scale of 10) compared to those without LGBT friends (5.5) (European Commission 2009, 119).

parts of contemporary Europe, are affecting the way people – within and without the movement – think and feel about this group.

Compliance and internalization

I also tested the effects of nonbrokered relational and non-relational transnational channels – political, social, economic, geographic, and shared identification channels. In examining sociolegal change for LGBT people across states, these transnational channels, to different degrees, foster the visibility of international norms that can lead to compliance and eventual internalization in domestic politics. Especially in new-adopter states, the channels most effective in influencing change are those that function through mechanisms of socialization; while sanctioning mechanisms for change are also active, their effects are generally more limited. In the case of LGBT rights, the latter were only strongly influential before EU accession, and they could spawn resistance and signify paternalism in domestic contexts where they find little resonance. In line with queer theorists that critique the power relations inherent in the disciplining of states, my findings lead me also to doubt such sanctioning top-down processes. By contrast, the social channels connecting transnational and domestic spheres were highly effective throughout the periods analyzed here. They empowered local minority actors with legitimacy and resources (discursive, human, and material). While activists note that "the influence of the EU is huge" (interview no. 138), they emphasize that the EU's influence is transmitted through the social mechanisms of learning and deliberation, and indirectly through aid to domestic and transnational civil society. "What you get with the EU is dialogue," a dialogue that is new and requires interpretation in many of the contexts analyzed in this study (interview no. 126).

Specifically on compliance, more porous states were more likely to adopt pro-LGBT legislation; and different processes of norm diffusion are evident in first-mover and new-adopter states. The findings demonstrated that states generally depend on transnational channels to influence them to adopt pro-LGBT legislation, and that new-adopter states are more dependent on these channels than first-mover states. While only the combined measure of transnational channels had a strong and consistent effect in first-mover states, several domestic variables (religious denomination, democracy level, and economic affluence) were also robust predictors of how likely that state was to adopt pro-LGBT legislation. In new-adopter states, all transnational channels of visibility were highly beneficial to the diffusion of higher levels of rights legislation, but the domestic variables (religion, affluence, and level of democracy) were not.

Broadly speaking, authorities – especially in new-adopter states – are attracted to internationally visible issues, even if domestic LGBT-rights debates remain unresolved. States care about their image on the world stage and are likely to make changes when their international society softly encourages them to do so. This was particularly apparent in the robustness of the diffusion variables in the event history models, which showed that European states emulate each other's policies toward LGBT people across various issue areas. For better or for worse, the visibility of the marriage issue has brought it to the forefront of the political agenda, even in countries where LGBT movements did not prioritize advocating for same-sex marriage. While the analysis focused on LGBT legislation, there is reason to believe that the results are relevant to several other issues concerning marginalized groups in international politics. The findings also, for example, have broad implications for research on the spread of pro-woman policies against domestic violence (Montoya 2013) and sexual harassment in the workplace (Roggeband 2010), and for the (de)criminalization of sex (e.g. adultery and abortion) (Frank, Camp, and Boutcher 2010) and the introduction of gender quotas (Towns 2012); state behaviors toward women are linked to both domestic and international politics, such as transnational networks for brokerage, emulation, and hierarchies in international society.

The results also suggest that the societal internalization of norms governing LGBT rights is, like state compliance with pro-LGBT laws, largely rooted in a process of transnational socialization. For example, before the successful 2015 referendum turned heads, a 2012 survey in Ireland indicated that 75 percent of Irish citizens would vote "yes" on a referendum to legalize same-sex marriage (Kennedy 2013). Of those supporters, most used an international frame of reputation, followed by a more general will to promote tolerance:

Two out of three people said they felt Ireland's *reputation as a modern society* will be strengthened by allowing same-sex couples to have civil marriages, while three out of five people agree that allowing same-sex couples to have civil marriages will promote a more tolerant environment in Ireland. (Kennedy 2013, emphasis added)

Societal majorities are aware of and respond to international cues of appropriateness concerning norms on minority rights. The channels of visibility tying porous states to the international community were responsible for much of the change in societal attitudes toward gay and lesbian people; they also helped to fuel processes of societal deliberation and learning in the

domestic realm. But transnational visibility influences various social groups differently. Individuals embedded in groups that socialize them to perceive the new norm as threatening – often because it challenges their religious and national identities – are consistently more reluctant to adopt favorable attitudes toward homosexuality. Among these "high threat perception" groups, change is more gradual; increased transnational channels can lead to a phase of worsening attitudes toward LGBT people. In these times of heightened international visibility of LGBT people, we should thus expect more positive attitudes among European societies in states that are more closely tied to the international community, and we should expect to see variation in the degree to which individuals will change their positions, based on the levels of perceived threat that their social groups ascribe to the norm.

A practical implication of the visibility argument is that the implementation of laws like Russia's ban on gay propaganda seriously impedes diffusion because such laws criminalize visibility, blocking both deliberation and learning. As an activist from ILGA-Europe notes, "It's about being open about speaking, and that's why exactly these laws in Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia are very dangerous because they would prevent the debate" (Euronews 2012). Furthermore, if visibility matters for change and acceptance, then local and norm-brokered activism that targets the public sphere – like Pride parades – should be supported by proponents of LGBT rights, even when they initially produce a societal backlash. Proponents should also proceed carefully so as not to overinstitutionalize LGBT activism and thereby remove the issue from local public debates (Lang 2013).[4]

Threat perceptions and domestic resistance

The visibility argument required that I establish systematic differences between transnational channels (both relational and non-relational) and the diffusion of norms governing LGBT rights. Relatedly, states – like the social groups within them – also differ from one another in terms of their own internal responses to new norms. Even the effects of strong transnational channels are moderated by differing domestic perceptions of threat (especially when the threat, as in the LGBT case, is perceived to

[4] As the issue becomes more transnationalized, movement actors might also be cautious of steps leading toward the "NGO-ization" (Lang 2013; see also Paternotte in press) of LGBT activism. Lang (2013) refers to an institutionalization process that increasingly furthers a disconnect between activists and their grassroots constituents, privileges urban, cosmopolitan, "Western"-oriented activists, and sidelines transgressive politics.

be at the intersection of national identity and religion). Comparing socio-legal outcomes for LGBT people to the mobilized resistance against LGBT norms, I found that when religion is deeply rooted in national identity, resistance to outside norms is heightened. While I analyzed Europe, other regions demonstrate a similar dynamic. In Latin America, for example, the history of the Catholic Church in Argentina – including its close ties to the dictatorship before democratic transition – has deflated its legitimacy to effectively lead the opposition to LGBT norms. In Chile, where the Catholic Church was officially and explicitly against the dictatorship, the Church has been a more legitimate and formidable opponent to the LGBT-rights movement (Schulenberg 2013).

Furthermore, domestic resistance to LGBT norms is, ironically, also an instigator of issue visibility and the political salience of norms. European anti-LGBT movements have two critical handicaps when compared to their LGBT movement counterparts. First, resistance movements generally include a broad spectrum of societal actors, including those who use radical tactics that can alienate certain segments of society. Second, the agendas of core segments of these resistance movements have been rooted in a nationalist philosophy that has often precluded any desire to establish transnational ties. Many members of the anti-LGBT resistance willingly dismiss the cross-border vertical and horizontal constellations that have done so much for channeling support and framing the arguments of LGBT movements.

While proponents of LGBT rights can remain optimistic that the effect of popular backlash in the streets can benefit LGBT rights, the newer and more concerted efforts by the Catholic Church and socially conservative political parties to orchestrate opposition behind closed doors is worrying for the LGBT movement. These new strategies could break down the nationally defined boundaries that have stifled their progress, by instead lobbying and funding antigay politics in ways that do not involve the street. Unlike the strategies of the past, these back-door and professionalized politics may not make LGBT people more visible. More research is needed on the newer strategies of opposition groups and their transnational networks in Europe.

In sum, these findings not only substantiate the importance of visibility for the spread of LGBT rights, they also highlight the often nonlinear nature of internalization. The development of societal responses to international norms depends both on the norm's visibility and on the nature of domestic perceptions of threat associated with the norm. While the analogy of

diffusion (from the field of biology) has been useful to this study, it does have a flaw: while it assumes that molecules diffuse into an empty space, "empty spaces" do not exist in topics studied by political scientists or sociologists, certainly not in the context of contentious norms.[5] The findings should, thus, encourage scholars of diffusion to attend to the internal domestic dynamics of the state that moderate diffusion: the norm brokers that tie the domestic and the transnational context, the differing levels of threat perception and their potential for politicization (defined in part by the unique relationships between the church, the state, and the nation), and the varying degrees of resistance in domestic realms and their relationships to the movement under consideration.

This book has another general takeaway: social movements matter. Making claims about the "effects" of movements remains tremendously challenging, even though scholars have spent decades trying to explain the elusive questions of why, when, and how movements actually produce change (D. S. Meyer 2003). I, too, will continue to grapple with these questions, but I close this book confident that activism, alongside broader changes in international norms, is indeed affecting outcomes related to compliance with and internalization of norms governing LGBT rights. In the multifaceted ways illustrated in this book, these activists do so by making the norm visible and helping states and societies interpret it. To be sure, transnational LGBT movements are thus making sexual minorities visible and fueling a discourse of legitimization around their place in society. Even those who disagree with the movement's goals still have to decide why they disagree (Goodwin and Jasper 2009, 412–13), acknowledging the presence of a once-invisible group – a tremendously powerful transformation in and of itself (Brysk 2013).

Moving forward

Beyond Europe: the regional and global dynamics of norm diffusion
Though I have described and explained norm diffusion in the European experience, Europe offers a solid foundation for understanding more general processes. With the spread of various types of LGBT rights and increasingly evolved societal attitudes, we observe some similar dynamics at play across some parts of the globe. For example, since Denmark introduced same-sex civil unions in 1989, dozens of countries have followed suit, and nineteen now recognize same-sex marriage at the federal

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[5] Thanks to Rahul Rao for this analogy.

level. In the order in which they have taken this step, they are: the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland, Argentina, Denmark (and Greenland), Brazil, France, Uruguay, New Zealand, Luxembourg, Ireland, Finland, and the United States. Some subnational jurisdictions, for instance within Mexico and the United Kingdom, afford same-sex couples marriage rights. Colombia and Australia are on the cusp of implementing marriage legislation. In Asia, commentators expect that Taiwan and Vietnam may have the support of enough delegates to introduce same-sex marriage to the legislative agenda in coming years (Maresca 2013).[6] In Japan, a Tokyo district's (Shibuya) local government began issuing marriage certificates to same-sex couples in 2015 and several Japanese cities followed suit (Murai 2015); the federal government will debate introducing the nation's first employment anti-discrimination law in 2016. South Korea, Nepal, China, and the Philippines are debating the partnership issue. Nepal also added anti-discrimination protections for LGBT people to its constitution in 2015, as well as introducing a third gender passport.

Perhaps most impressively, Latin America has made rapid and pronounced changes on several forms of LGBT rights in recent years. Aside from the domestic advances just mentioned, Spanish and Latin American norm brokers have played a successful role – particularly in Argentina – in spreading ideas about how to promote LGBT rights and how to obtain the resources necessary to do so, as Elisabeth Friedman (2012) has demonstrated. She also taps into the dynamics of network ties and diffusion between first-mover states and new-adopter states. Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay are all deliberating extensively on the LGBT rights norm. The extent of the advances in LGBT rights – and not just in the "liberal West" – signals a period of momentum in which the international community is showing a remarkable degree of responsiveness to a new and unanticipated frontier in human rights.

But the processes of change are not monolithic. However widely parts of this book's argument might travel, other parts remain limited to Europe. Considerable questions still remain about the degree to which

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[6] While they remain unrecognized, the Vietnamese government abolished a ban on same-sex marriage in 2015. The ministries of health and justice have supported such a measure. Some have attributed Vietnam's receptiveness to LGBT norms – despite its generally poor human rights record – to the presence of established LGBT activist organizations and the muted influence of religion in Vietnamese politics (Maresca 2013). The nation hosted its first Pride parade in 2013, and LGBT groups are petitioning to end employment discrimination.

LGBT rights norms have "global" weight (Langlois and Wilkinson 2014). Uganda and Russia represent two cases that have displayed a different dynamic – in both countries, what has diffused has been a heightened level of politicized homophobia (Weiss and Bosia 2013) and a global trend toward norm polarization (Symons and Altman 2015). I turn now to these difficult cases to discuss aspects of the visibility argument that hold in these contexts and to point out avenues for further study.

Pride and prejudice in Uganda and Russia

The introduction of sharpened antigay legislation in Uganda and the murder of David Kato, a Ugandan LGBT activist, have placed Africa – and Uganda in particular – on the radar of LGBT activism and scholarship, most of which follows a narrative about the export of political homophobia (Weiss and Bosia 2013). Scholars are correct to highlight what they see as a double-edged sword of diffusion: transnational homophobia, in the African case largely linked to western evangelical communities, is used to inhibit progress on LGBT rights even as some other parts of the globe experience one of the most rapid shifts toward the social and legal recognition of LGBT minorities in history. In February 2014, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni succumbed to pressure to sign a bill into law that expanded the grounds for imprisonment related to homosexuality, including suggestive touching by members of the same sex in public. A similar bill was passed in Nigeria, where homosexuality was also already illegal, around the same time. In the face of international condemnation, Museveni first held off on signing the popular bill, but he eventually agreed to do so after his scientific board could not establish a genetic basis for homosexuality. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the European Parliament both condemned the bill, and United States President Obama sharply criticized Museveni's intention to sign it into law, saying, "This will complicate our valued relationship." Museveni went forward even though Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands canceled twenty-six million dollars in aid, and the World Bank almost immediately put a ninety-million dollar healthcare loan on ice (Ring 2014).

On a regional level, Africa is distinct from Europe, in that its regional structures do not have a normative consensus on LGBT rights, even though it includes South Africa, which has been a trailblazer in passing LGBT legislation. The African Union institutions do not moderate this domestic debate in the same way as the European Union does. There is also a historically rooted suspicion in many African countries related

to adopting "un-African" and "Western" ways of doing things (Currier 2012). This provides the conservative opposition with strong ammunition with which to resist LGBT norms, even though the grassroots African LGBT movement has long worked without the support of – and often in opposition to – powerful states of the Global North. While in Europe opposition to European norms highlights national frames, in Africa opposing forces also draw upon pan-regional frames that denounce meddling in African affairs. These critical factors dispel the unfounded notion that domestic politics are reactionary while transnational politics are progressive. Furthermore, they highlight that we must take caution in describing the "global" successes of LGBT rights.

At the same time, this book's findings do contribute to the debate in contexts extending beyond Europe, including Africa. First, transnational diffusion – be it linked to homophobia or to LGBT norms – has strong transnational and domestic components. It is clear that the domestic developments made in these contexts cannot be separated from transnational processes. Scholars are correct to attribute the politicization of homophobia in Uganda to heightened transnational involvement by American conservatives, but they would be wrong to ignore the numerous domestic factors, also closely connected to identity and religion, that contribute to Ugandan homophobia. Second, a fundamental reason why Uganda has captured scholarly and popular attention is that channels tie an active and engaged Ugandan LGBT activist community to a transnational network of pro-LGBT groups. In some ways, Uganda mirrors Poland. Though other European states scored equally poorly on measures of LGBT recognition, Poland became an exemplar of LGBT oppression in Europe because Poland's norm brokers, like Uganda's, were well connected across borders. Ugandan norm brokers and the American missionaries who involve themselves in Ugandan politics may be equally responsible for the issue's visibility. In fact, like their European counterparts, Ugandan and transnational LGBT activists may be more responsible, because they captured the world's attention by publicizing the issue.

Despite domestic repression, LGBT Ugandans are marching in the streets more than they did before, and observers on the ground note that "the dynamics of being gay in Uganda have changed" (Okeowo 2012). Some activists view this wave of contestation as linked to the Ugandan movement's success. At the 2012 ILGA-International conference in Stockholm, representatives of African LGBT organizations were frustrated by the attention Uganda was granted: "American and European donors were

focused almost exclusively on Uganda, because of the visibility LGBT politics have attained there" (interview no. 155). And observers also note the paradox inherent in this oppressive backlash to public visibility. According to the South African constitutional court judge Edwin Cameron:

> The most interesting thing going on here is what I call an "unstable transition." It explains the force of the backlash just as African gays and lesbians are starting to come out. It releases hatred and rage, but what is happening is irreversible. Gays and lesbians are coming to consciousness, organising themselves and speaking out. (D. Smith 2013)

Indeed, the backlash in Africa has generated deliberation on the commonly held perception that LGBT people are un-African. The coming out of Binyavanga Wainaina, an acclaimed Kenyan author widely read across the continent, is an example of visibility that helps localize the issue. He spoke up in January 2014, just as the debate surrounding antigay legislation heightened in Uganda. Archbishop Desmond Tutu also restated his commitment to carving out a space for LGBT people in the African identity, drawing parallels between LGBT oppression and the struggle against racist laws that had mobilized hearts and minds during apartheid. In 2015, Mozambique decriminalized homosexuality when it removed Portuguese colonial anti-sodomy legislation from 1886. A year later, following a decision not to enforce the country's colonial-era sodomy law, Malawian President Peter Mutharika's government stated that LGBTI "rights should be protected" (Gwede 2016). Five months after Museveni signed it into law, the Ugandan constitutional court annulled the anti-homosexuality act. In 2015, former Ugandan Prime Minister and presidential candidate Amama Mbabazi made a declarative statement against homophobia (McDonald 2015). African LGBT politics highlights regional differences to Europe; yet there, too, a combination of domestic and transnational currents factor into new discourses on LGBT rights.

Russia is a case marred by low LGBT visibility – only 11 percent of Russians claim to have homosexual friends or relatives (Moscow Times 2013) – and high threat perception regarding LGBT norms. Like the tie between the Catholic Church and the notion of "Polishness" that heightened threat perception in Poland, "Russians today view [Orthodox] Church affiliation as a way to reaffirm their 'Russianness'" (Khazan 2013). While rates of religiosity are strikingly low in global comparison, much of the Russian population supports the Russian Orthodox

Church as a national symbol of pride, and the church wields considerable political might as a close ally to President Vladimir Putin's government (Stoeckl 2014). Russia differs from Poland in that transnational pressures have not yielded socialization successes during the country's era of zealous, anti-LGBT backlash. In June 2013, the Russian Duma extended various city ordinances banning LGBT "propaganda" – the ordinances that had aroused ample international attention in 2012 – by unanimously passing a federal bill that fines individuals or organizations up to $31,000 for promoting homosexuality (Khazan 2013). The Russian government remains undaunted by international efforts to push back on this trend, even provocatively warning France and the United Kingdom that their moves to institute same-sex marriage could disqualify their citizens from adopting Russian children. LGBT rights also found a central place in the contemporary geopolitics of the region, most notably in the recent Ukrainian crisis, when Russia portrayed its antigay stance as a feature of the cultural paradigm – distinct from the decadent West – that it can offer the world (Riabov and Riabova 2014; Wilkinson 2014). At the societal level, recent polls show similarly disapproving positions toward LGBT people. For example, more than 80 percent of Russians oppose same-sex marriage and adoption rights, and gay pride parades (Sansalone 2013).

The response is unsurprising in the sense that resistance is common when LGBT issues are new and when high threat perception is politicized. The more states perceive these issues to be "external," the more resistance they will provoke. While some Russian activists – including those the state has formally labeled "foreign agents"[7] – remain optimistic that this new struggle is better than silence, they face far greater difficulty combating domestic resistance amid a protracted opposition that has made their very visibility illegal. International condemnation and worldwide demonstrations against state-sponsored homophobia have had minimal effects politically in Russia (group no. 208).[8] This is surely linked to key differences that remain between the cases of Russia and those within the EU. While Russian LGBT activists are well connected to their European counterparts (one of the few established channels of

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[7] In 2013, a St. Petersburg court formally referred to the Russian LGBT organization Выход as a foreign agent.

[8] A key example is the case filed by Russian activists, following *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland* at the ECtHR. While Strasbourg lifted Poland's bans on LGBT assembly, St. Petersburg quickly introduced gay-propaganda bans, and the city of Moscow banned LGBT parades for precisely one century.

LGBT visibility), they have not had at their disposal the same in-group frames that being "European" provides. Only 13 percent of Russians considered themselves "European" in a 2011 study by the Russian Academy of Sciences, and just 7 percent felt Russia should step "into the common European home" (Riabov and Riabova 2014). Russia's political isolation from the international organizations, such as the EU and NATO, that house many first-mover norm entrepreneurs has greatly limited the socialization mechanisms of norm diffusion.[9] The unresponsiveness to international critique underscores the importance of regional differences and the limits of globalization, highlighting the argument that being in an in-group is immensely important to the spread of such norms (Checkel 2005; Deutsch 1957). As Oleg Riabov and Tatiana Riabova (2014) compellingly suggest, Russian attitudes toward sexual minorities are likely to correlate strongly with their attitude to the "West" for the foreseeable future.

Indeed, the international debate surrounding LGBT rights prompted by the Russian laws and the Sochi Winter Olympics may have had more immediate and empowering effects outside Russia. As the media extensively reported on the situation of LGBT Russians, and as foreign leaders reprimanded Russia for its antigay laws, they were also compelled to highlight their own states' hypocrisies, furthering a rhetoric that can be effectual for change.[10] Furthermore, social media users suddenly linked Olympic sponsors like McDonalds and Visa with homophobia: "Shame on @McDonalds sending #CheersToSochi while gay activists are attacked by Olympic officials" and "Visa: It's everywhere you want to be. Unless you're LGBT." The German Olympic team's rainbow-colored uniforms made headlines, as did the 2,000 Swedes who gathered in Stockholm's Olympic Stadium to sing the Russian national anthem in solidarity with LGBT Russians. According to the assistant director of an internationally oriented UK-based LGBT rights group, Kaleidoscope Trust, "One of the reassuring things that has come out of the response to the Russian laws … is a growing international apprehension. One of the last great undone pieces of the civil rights movement is to address the rights of

[9] We are left to wonder if the "historic opportunity" to include Russia as an associate member of NATO in the 1990s (Shevtsova 2007) may have paved a different path for LGBT recognition.

[10] Protests and boycotts were organized around the globe to generate public visibility. Even gay online social networks such as PlanetRomeo and Grindr attempted to generate interpersonal visibility and politicize their communities to protest Russian antigay laws. PlanetRomeo surveyed their Russian members and reported back to other members on the severity of local LGBT repression.

LGBT people, and there does seem to be a growing international support for change" (Saner 2013, 3).

Even within Russia, proponents of LGBT rights might hope that protracted backlash also introduces new, positive ideas and images regarding LGBT people into the debate. The tropes the opposition uses are not uncontested in Russia. For example, the blasé naivety with which LGBT people had been made invisible locally – and often the irony of it – was tellingly captured in a news article entitled, "20 Photos from Sochi's Biggest Gay Club: The One the Mayor Claims Doesn't Exist" (Ippolito 2014). Protests against the draconian laws that limit public expression by LGBT people continue, and some report that they are growing (Morgan 2014). As this book has shown, resistance does not suggest that change is unattainable or that states will remain locked in a state of politicized homophobia. Elsewhere, resistance has been part of a process of internalization that involves deliberation and learning. Future research will have to chart whether that will be the situation in Russia. The question remains whether contesting the norm will lead to socialization in a state that defines itself outside the international community that champions the norm. For Russian LGBT activists, as for their counterparts in many corners of the globe, the challenges that remain are formidable.

Open questions

How transnational channels play out in other world regions should challenge and fascinate scholars of world politics for years to come, as norms governing LGBT rights continue to spread and to meet resistance in various corners of the globe. Current developments in cases like Russia, Uganda, and Nigeria hold implications for future research, which needs to explore the effects of antigay domestic and transnational activism, acknowledging that standards of appropriate behavior concerning sexual minorities remain hotly contested and smack to many of outside imposition. It also seems quite clear that strong regional currents are at play, and that we should not expect any global homogenization of LGBT recognition. In this sense, a central task for future study is to explore how distinct regions – their institutional structures, domestic understandings, and political histories – mediate the effects of transnational channels of visibility.

Other questions related to the global frames for LGBT recognition arise. What is the effect of the LGBT activists' approach to framing the debate on the global level – for example, having Latin American states propose pro-LGBT resolutions at the UN to remove the "Northern" or "Western" tinge of LGBT rights? How do activists navigate contexts in

which "Western" norms are especially suspicious, and alternative frames for activists are few? Finally, what types of risks does visibility – in terms of its valence – entail in contexts that have a high threat perception domestically and that lack identification with international communities of first-mover states? I suspect that the degree to which states are embedded in international systems of knowledge that define LGBT rights as a norm affects the possibility for visibility to lead to positive outcomes for norm diffusion. The level of consensus at the macro level impacts the norm's legitimacy, and subsequently how deliberation in the domestic realm proceeds. For the spread of LGBT rights, it is important that states identify as part of a larger community in which the issue is championed. While for proponents of LGBT rights it is a welcome development that positive etymologies of LGBT people are now more plentiful and available for LGBT organizations to latch onto globally, future research must do more to determine the resonance of such ideas in specific states, depending on the prevailing regional norms in those states' particular international community.

This book also provides a point of departure for another area of study: the relative (in)visibility of subgroups within the LGBT categories and, more generally, the question of who is left out in the transnational diffusion of LGBT norms. Critical theorists (Binnie and Klesse 2013; Butler 2008; Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011; Weber 2015) have begun tackling these questions: are certain world regions (e.g. Africa), countries (e.g. Poland), subnational regions (e.g. the United States' South), religions (e.g. Islam), and groups (e.g. immigrants) "othered" and excluded as LGBT identities become recognized – and arguably "normalized" – by states? Do more radical queer forms of expression also diffuse, or are they precluded from transnational debates and identity categories that travel across borders? How do the norms and activism surrounding LGBT rights address intersectional identities and multiple marginalizations? As scholars are increasingly noting, "There is utility in identity politics, particularly for marginalized groups trying to forge new spaces and establish visibility, [but such politics] can overemphasize some categories while continuing to obscure others" (Irvine, Lang, and Montoya 2015, 5).

To give just one example of how important these questions are for LGBT politics, it is worthwhile to return briefly to the Berlin Christopher Street Day parade. Judith Butler's lament concerning the presence of homonationalism and pinkwashing has proven ever more justified in transnational activism. In more recent years, for example, the Israeli tourism board has distributed numerous Israeli flags at the

festival, and their abundant presence – waved in the air or attached as stickers to clothing – reflects at least in part the complicity that frustrated Butler. What is often lacking is a sense of "intersectionally linked fate" (Dawson 1994; Strolovitch 2007, 63), and thus a disconnect exists between one's own experience of oppression and marginalization and that of others. By waving the Israeli flag, the marchers linked gay rights (consciously or unconsciously) with a state that has been criticized by activists for using those rights in an effort to justify its treatment of the Palestinians (Lind 2014, 602; Puar 2007). LGBT activists are often attuned to this terrain of multiple marginalizations, judging by the debates I have heard at many international LGBT activist conferences, but the issue ought to be even more evident in the popular narrative of LGBT liberation.[11]

Many of these open questions call for the continued development and application of intersectional approaches (Cohen 1997; Hancock 2007; Strolovitch 2012). It is my hope that (in)visibility arguments contribute to the scholarly call to move beyond rigid typologies that exclude certain groups. Such a move will be important for theory building in contentious politics and international relations alike.

In looking closely at an often invisible group and its transnational interactions, I have striven to extend and integrate existing scholarly agendas, while also illuminating important implications for the contemporary expansion of LGBT rights. The movement for these rights has in the last decade gained a momentum that is arguably unprecedented in speed and suddenness among human rights movements. This study thus joins both scholarly and popular debates, some of which have regarded recent global trends with awe.

[11] In his eloquent ethnography of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Ryan Thoreson (2014, 61) challenges the portrayal of LGBT NGOs as a homogeneous gay international, a portrayal he argues has slighted their internal differences and also their sensitivity to many debates that critical theorists address. My fieldwork with European LGBT organizations supports Thoreson's assessment. For example, at the 2010 ILGA-Europe conference in The Hague – which the Dutch government generously sponsored, including an opening reception dinner at the Hall of Knights – the sociologist Meike Verloo gave a lecture critical of Dutch immigration policy. She lambasted the host state for using LGBT rights as a narrative with which to crack down on immigrant communities portrayed as homophobic. When concerning the promotion of LGBT rights, I thus emphasize that neither international advocacy nor states are monolithic. Furthermore, norm brokers negotiate their strategies and the identity categories they draw on in unique ways when they bring it into the domestic realm. The process is not simply top-down, and conceiving of it as such only strips local norm brokers of their own agency.

Was Victor Hugo right when he said in the nineteenth century that "nothing can stop an idea whose time has come"? And what does the LGBT movement tell us about Cesar Chavez's optimism about the civil rights movement: "Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed … You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." As politics in Russia, Uganda, and many parts of Europe remind us, even at this historic moment for LGBT rights, these inspirational remarks ring true only for some sexual minorities in some contexts. Looking at the rapidity of change in some regions over the last two decades, it is tempting to end on a note of modest optimism, but such modest optimism should not overshadow the fact that the oppression of LGBT peoples across societies persists, that LGBT norms continue to provoke resistance, and that transnational advocacy is limited in many corners of the globe. This book has been both an effort toward a holistic understanding of how and why states embrace LGBT rights, and an acknowledgment that that does not always occur.

What do the findings of this book suggest about general trends of LGBT norm diffusion across the globe? In terms of a linear trajectory and a specific time frame, very little. Rather, my work has shown that visibility can provoke both recognition and resistance, and that in many cases resistance follows visibility and precedes recognition. Yet while the process will play out differently across contexts (with smooth processes of norm internalization most likely in contexts with low threat perception), there is little question that state and societal recognition of LGBT people will continue to spread in some world regions. And when it spreads, it will extend first to contexts within which norm brokers are active and to places that are highly connected to the international community through channels of visibility. In these contexts, LGBT people can achieve public recognition and move themselves from the margins to the center of political debate.