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LGBT recognition in EU accession states: How identification with Europe enhances the transformative power of discourse

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Abstract

In the EU accession literature, there is a tendency to downplay the role of discourse in facilitating norm diffusion, particularly when domestic resistance towards European norms is strong. The assumptions in this thinking are that critical deliberations and civil society activism simply lack the potency required to elicit norm conforming behaviour in accession states and that the only realistic hope for achieving this rests with the introduction of material incentives that make the costs of normative adaptation lower than its rewards. I focus on developments in the field of LGBT politics to challenge these assumptions and to specify the conditions under which discursive strategies are likely to stimulate the domestic uptake of contentious norms. I highlight shared identity as a crucial factor in the success of discursive influence, contending that under conditions of identity convergence, a cultural environment prevails in which norm promoters can more effectively ignite a process of deliberative reflection, shame norm-violators into conformance and cultivate resonance around controversial ideas. I develop these arguments through an analysis of LGBT and accession politics in Croatia and Serbia, contending that Croatia's strong identification with Europe accelerated LGBT recognition there while Serbia's relatively weaker identification with Europe slowed it down.

Keywords

Europeanisation; Norm Diffusion; LGBT Rights; Croatia; Serbia; Conditionality

Introduction

Studies on why, when, and how states adopt foreign norms on the path to European Union (EU) membership has emerged as a thriving branch of scholarship.[1] In this 'Europeanisation' literature, certain assumptions prevail on how the international transfer of norms unfolds, with the relevance of discursive mechanisms centred on communicative reason, criticism, praise, and framing typically

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1 Judith Kelley, 'International actors on the domestic scene: Membership conditionality and socialization by international institutions', *International Organization*, 58 (2004), pp. 425–57; Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'International institutions and socialization in Europe: Introduction and framework', *International Organization*, 59 (2005), pp. 801–26; Frank Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization: Membership incentives, party constellations, and sustained compliance in Central and Eastern Europe', *International Organization*, 59 (2005), pp. 827–60; Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

downplayed next to the sanctioning mechanisms of material rewards and punishments. Explanations justifying the transformative primacy of material incentives begin with the observation that accession places significant reform burdens on states and conclude with the assertion that under such circumstances compliance with European reform directives will result only once it is made 'attractive – and non-compliance visible and costly'.[2] External pressure delivered merely through discourse is seen as incapable of producing such pronormative change, either because it supposedly fails to harness the utility-maximising behaviour of norm-receivers by prompting them to consider reforms merely in terms of their ethical validity, or simply because criticism and shaming are apparently too feeble a form of pressure to motivate cooperation next the 'tremendous geopolitical, sociocultural and economic benefits' of EU membership.[3]

However, the proliferation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)-friendly legislation and the relaxation of attitudes towards homosexuality throughout Europe defy the central assumptions behind this explanatory model of international socialisation. These legislative and social shifts emerged in the absence of a sustained programme of material incentives from the EU, which avoided stalling or accelerating accession progress in relation to how aspiring member states treated their LGBT populations.[4] Instead, change unfolded in the context of a critical discourse on LGBT rights that was led by advocacy groups and facilitated by nation-states with progressive LGBT policies, but also international organisations like the EU, which were troubled by human rights violations being committed against LGBT individuals. These actors campaigned for LGBT acceptance by defending it as a European value and presenting its observance as ethically binding on all who consider themselves European,[5] but not by extending or withholding material benefits in a sustained fashion.

I draw on these developments to specify the conditions under which discourse is likely to facilitate the diffusion of contentious norms. My aim is not to dispute the motivating power of material incentives, but rather, to point to the limitations of socialisation models that dismiss discourse as inconsequential in facilitating European norm diffusion. Just as there are scope conditions under which material incentives stand a greater or lesser chances of success, so too do such conditions also exist for discourse.

One factor I highlight as crucial to the success of discursive strategies is the degree of shared identity between norm promoters and norm receivers. I show that where affinities between them are strong, the transformative impact of discourse is also likely to be strong, even when the norm in question is deeply contested and hostilely received in the domestic context. This is because under conditions of identity convergence, a cultural environment prevails in which norm promoters can more effectively ignite a process of deliberative reflection, shame norm-violators into conformance, and cultivate resonance around controversial ideas. I illustrate these effects through an analysis of LGBT politics in Croatia and Serbia, contending that Croatia's strong identification with Europe accelerated the uptake of LGBT norms there while Serbia's relatively weaker identification with Europe slowed it down.

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[2] Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, p. 106.

[3] Ibid., p. 63; see also Kelley, 'International actors on the domestic scene'; Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization'.

[4] Dimitry Kochenov, 'Democracy and human rights – not for gay people? EU eastern enlargement and its impact on the protection of the rights of sexual minorities', *Texas Wesleyan Law Review*, 13 (2007), pp. 7–8; Connor O'Dwyer and Katrina Z. S. Schwartz, 'Minority rights after EU enlargement: a comparison of antigay politics in Poland and Latvia', *Comparative European Politics*, 8:2 (2010), p. 233.

[5] Phillip M. Ayoub and David Paternotte, 'Building Europe: the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and LGBT activism in Central and Eastern Europe', *Perspectives on Europe*, 42:1 (2012), pp. 53–4.

To develop these arguments, I proceed as follows. First, I define the key terms and variables of the analysis. Second, I conceptualise how international actors asserted influence over Croatia and Serbia in order to motivate those states to recognise their LGBT populations. Third, I assess the impact of this pressure, noting how it produced higher levels of norm conformance in Croatia. Finally, I explain why this variation is a factor of Croatia's higher degree of identification with Europe.

LGBT recognition

Recognition refers to the institutionalised patterns of cultural value that determine a group's social status and ability to participate in public life.[6] Such patterns of value can be anchored in formal institutional sites through legal codification and incorporation into government policies. Or they can be institutionalised informally by ingraining themselves in attitudes, beliefs, representations, and longstanding customs. Accordingly, a move towards recognition occurs when a society's laws, system of government, and patterns of interpretation and evaluation alter in a manner that increases a group's public acceptance, its ability to be politically consequential, and its self-worth. By contrast, a move away from recognition occurs when societal changes devalue the group's identity, diminish its voice in public life, and lead its members to experience a sense of inferiority.

LGBT politics are quintessential struggles for recognition, as they involve political action to overcome subjection to heterosexism: that is, 'the authoritative construction of norms that privilege hetero-sexuality' and therefore leave LGBT individuals disparaged, discriminated, harassed, and exposed to violence.[7] In the context of EU accession, such struggles are ideally studied as a process of norm diffusion, as the focus on norm flows captures the dynamic and cross-border nature of recognition effects. Through this analytical paradigm, increased LGBT recognition results when the inflow of new ideas on sexuality challenge, modify, and displace domestically entrenched ones based on heteronormativity to produce a cultural and legal environment that is more open and accepting of LGBT identity. This transformative process characteristically unfolds through a complex web of interactions involving not only EU institutions pressuring accession states to comply with European norms on LGBT rights, but also, domestic and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) campaigning, lobbying, advocating, publicising, and educating within and across borders with the joint purpose of generating recognition towards homosexuality as a legitimate way of being sexual.[8]

Shifts towards LGBT recognition can be registered by observing legal changes that positively revalue LGBT identity and enhance the autonomy of LGBT individuals. Such change may involve the adoption of legislation that decriminalises same-sex relations, prohibits sexuality based discrimination, makes the incitement to gay hatred a criminal offence, gives official status to same-sex partnerships, permits same-sex parenting, and brings same-sex laws on age of consent into parity with heterosexual ones.[9]

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[6] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[7] Ibid., p. 18.

[8] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 'Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics', *International Social Science Journal*, 51:59 (1999), pp. 89–101; John Dryzek, *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 119–22; Phillip M. Ayoub, 'Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe: Europeanization and political opportunities for LGBT mobilization in the European Union', *European Political Science Review*, 5:2 (2013), pp. 286–7.

[9] Phillip M. Ayoub, 'Contested norms in new adopter states: International determinants of LGBT rights legislation', *European Journal of International Relations*, onlinefirst, 10.1177/1354066114543335 (2014a), p. 10.

However, legal change on its own does not capture fully the societal transformations reflective of LGBT recognition. Also of pivotal importance are changes undergone in the cultural environment whereby shifts in unwritten social understandings revalue homosexuality and determine its legitimacy as a mode of being. Such social norms are important as they also play a pivotal role in conditioning the field of appropriate behaviour.[10] This is especially true in the context of sexuality, where extra-legal normalisations imbuing homosexuality with deviancy have contributed to its exclusion from public life and sustained the compulsion to self-regulate sexual subjectivity.[11] Or considered in the opposite sense, the structural power of social norms is evident in their capacity to facilitate, and not merely impede, non-hetero subjectivity. They do this by providing a vantage point for criticism, prescription and change away from heterosexism wherever legal norms are too weak or entirely absent to perform these functions.

The ability of social norms to enable such agency is witnessed in the EU, where legally enshrined rights and protections for LGBT individuals remain under-developed at the supranational level[12] and where some member states are more advanced than others in their legal understanding of LGBT rights.[13] In this sphere of weak supranational legal norms and inconsistent national legal norms, shared social understandings of proper conduct have functioned as critical standards for the recognition and protection of LGBT individuals. Such ideas have been elaborated in exploratory discourses about European values and have been invoked strategically to reconstruct the meaning of 'Europe' in the direction of LGBT acceptance.[14] While these ideas lack firm legal grounding, they still assume a structural quality, for they empower reformist politics and give rise to meanings of legitimacy centred on respect for LGBT individuals not reducible to legal understandings.

For these reasons, the definition of the dependent variable favoured in this article is an expansive one. LGBT recognition is defined to encompass not merely norms embedded in legal codes, but also unwritten norms circulating in discourses throughout a public sphere, given their crucial role in shaping thought and action.

Strategies for promoting LGBT recognition

Norms are 'collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity'.[15] Their diffusion is not always a consciously enacted process. It can also result from simply doing, rather than

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[10] Mlada Bukovansky et al., *Special Responsibilities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 56–7, 64.

[11] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

[12] Kochenov, 'Democracy and human rights', pp. 30–2; Roman Kuhar, 'Use of the Europeanization frame in same sex partnership issues across Europe', in Emanuela Lombardo and Maxime Forest (eds), *The Europeanization of Gender Equality Policies: A Discursive Sociological Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 169, 70.

[13] O'Dwyer and Schwartz, 'Minority rights after EU enlargement', p. 233; Ayoub, 'Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe', p. 285.

[14] Ayoub and Paternotte, 'Building Europe', pp. 52–3; Kuhar, 'Use of the Europeanization frame', p. 184; Katja Kahlina, 'Local histories, European LGBT designs: Sexual citizenship, nationalism, and "Europeanisation" in Post-Yugoslav Croatia and Serbia', *Women's Studies International Forum* (2014), p. 2.

[15] Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Norms, identities, and culture in national security', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 54.

deliberating and designing,[16] or from mere exposure and repetition, which generates familiarity around a foreign norm and therefore increases the likelihood of its internalisation.[17]

Nevertheless, while norm diffusion can be an authorless process, it is also frequently the outcome of goal-directed action conditioned by a desire to reshape patterns of thought and behaviour towards a preconceived notion of what is appropriate. Such socialisation by design is commonplace where norms encounter resistance and can be categorised into two broad categories of influence – 'incentive-based' and 'discursive' – each of which is intended to induce specific motivating logics for conformance.

Incentive based strategies involve the extension and retraction of material inducements carried out with a view to eliciting a strategic calculation in favour of conformance. Those who positively respond to this mode of influence anticipate compliance will secure more benefits than incur costs, while those who respond negatively anticipate the costs of compliance to outweigh any likely benefits. The utility functions at the centre of these cost-benefit calculations are various, but, in the context of the EU accession, are typically political, economic, and social in nature. The most prized ones comprise the protection of EU law, inclusion in the EU's decision-making, access to the EU market, transfers from the EU budget and increased investment, and membership in an exclusive club of states.[18] Incentive based influence is at the heart of the EU's so called conditionality process. Under this norm diffusion mechanism, the EU drives conformance through a process of reward and punishment, advancing aspiring member states up the accession ladder whenever they behave pro-normatively and delaying their progress when they do not.

Whereas incentive based influence seeks to accelerate norm diffusion through a 'logic of consequences' tied to material benefits, discursive influence does so through interrelated logics of 'arguing'[19] and 'appropriateness'.[20] The coordination of action via this communicative route can take various forms. It can involve acts of deliberative persuasion, whereby justification and social learning are used to generate wider acceptance of proposed reforms.[21] It can also involve reputational techniques of enforcement, where the shaming, humiliating, and condemning of non-conformers and the praising, encouraging, and endorsing of conformers generates social pressures for compliance.[22] Finally, discursive strategies can also involve framing activities, with reflection encouraged through a cluster of facts, values, and vocabularies most likely to generate resonance towards the reform measures being advanced.[23] Accordingly, those who respond

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[16] Bukovansky et al., *Special Responsibilities*, p. 60.

[17] Checkel, 'International institutions', pp. 810–11.

[18] Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization', pp. 831–2; Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, p. 60.

[19] Thomas Risse, '"Let's argue!": Communicative action in world politics', *International Organization*, 54:1 (2000), pp. 1–2.

[20] Checkel, 'International institutions', p. 804.

[21] Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge: MIT, 1994).

[22] Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, 'The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: Introduction', in Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink (eds), *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 15; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 74–88.

[23] Robert Entman, 'Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, 43:4 (1993), pp. 53, 55.

positively to these discursive modes of influence do so because they are convinced of the validity of reforms, wish to protect or enhance their reputations, and/or are interpreting the social world through a frame of reference that recasts their interests and values as compatible with reforms.

In the EU accession literature, there is a tendency to view discursive strategies as inconsequential in the facilitation of norm diffusion, particularly when domestic mobilisation against European norms is strong.[24] The assumption in this thinking is that discourse simply lacks to the potency required to elicit norm conforming behaviour and that the only realistic hope for achieving this rests with the introduction of tangible incentives that make the costs of normative adaptation lower than its rewards. Such explanations do not entirely relegate discourse. However, they depict it as merely playing an incidental or subordinate socialising role next to incentive-based strategies. That is, once material influence achieves the all-important initial conformance, it is supposedly only then that deliberative reflection steps in to produce socialising effects, depending on whether or not actors end up reflecting on the merits of the norms and accept them as valid and binding on themselves.[25]

Drawing on these assumptions, Frank Schimmelfennig concludes that in Central and East European countries (CEECs) 'only the high material and political rewards of membership in the EU and NATO have triggered change that initially violated the liberal-democratic community norms' and that 'normative suasion and social influence alone have not been effective'.[26] Moreover, the political mobilisation of civil society actors was apparently of scant relevance, because, in Schimmelfennig's view, the former 'are too weak vis-a-vis the states … to serve as effective agents of socialization'.[27] Under these conditions, it was simply intergovernmental bodies, with the allure of their material enticements that were achieving the sought-after impact.

However, such explanations are too hasty in their relegation of discursive influence. First, discourse does contribute to actual norm conformance, if not directly, then at least indirectly, by enhancing the appeal of material incentives. Indeed, CEECs did not come with a ready-made desire to join the EU. That preference was actively cultivated by Western intergovernmental and civil society actors through processes of social learning and argumentative exchange. Such interactions reshaped thinking on government, security, and human rights such that joining Euro-Atlantic institutions was no longer perceived as threatening, but desirable and the most rational foreign policy choice.[28] In other words, without these discursively induced actor transformations, EU membership would not have been interpreted as a carrot and exclusion from EU membership would not have been interpreted as a stick.

Second, and more crucially from the perspective I wish to advance, the impact of discourse can also be direct and comprehensive, generating conformance itself even where domestic opposition towards a norm is robust. This claim is supported by developments in LGBT politics, where pro-LGBT goals have been realised in the virtual absence of material inducements. For example, even though the EU

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[24] Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization', pp. 828–9, 51, 55; Kelley, 'International actors on the domestic scene', pp. 426, 34–5.

[25] For a description of this sequential socialisation model, see Checkel, 'International institutions', pp. 808–14.

[26] Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization', p. 828.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Alexandra Gheciu, 'Security institutions as agents of socialisation? NATO and the "New Europe"', *International Organization*, 59 (2005), pp. 994–1003.

has increasingly taken an activist stance on LGBT rights, it did not systematically use accession progress as a device to motivate action against homosexual prejudice.[29] It relied, instead, on social learning, persuasion, criticism and shaming, among other discursive techniques of influence, applying these independently of membership rewards and punishments to facilitate compliance with European standards on sexuality. In fact, far from consistently conditioning membership on LGBT reform, the EU has a history of advancing deeply homophobic states up the accession ladder.[30] And yet, even so, LGBT goals have continued to be realised in the context of EU enlargement, witnessed through the adoption of gay friendly laws and favourable attitudinal shifts in a number of accession states.[31]

What is more, far from being insignificant, the non-institutionalised and networked activism of civil society actors comprising human rights and LGBT NGOs has been key to this expansion of LGBT recognition. While NGOs are not materially empowered actors, lacking the economic, military, political, and bureaucratic clout associated with European institutions and nation-states, their mobilisation has raised visibility towards homosexuality within domestic public spheres traditionally hostile to its expression.[32] This has broken down taboos around homosexuality and generated a more enlarged and considered understanding on sexuality-based issues where misinformation and demeaning stereotypes discouraged such public reflection. Furthermore, the activism of NGOs has drawn international attention to the mistreatment of LGBT populations in accession states. In doing so, it has compelled the EU and already existing member states to take a stand against such behaviour, since their reputation as self-identifying promotors of human rights is dependent on being seen to take such action.

In stressing these points, my intention is not to question the motivating power of material incentives or to assume that discursive strategies can function as credible substitutes in a prescriptive theory of international socialisation. The empirical evidence speaks for the causal primacy of material incentives. Across a range of domestically controversial issue-areas, the aptly timed delivery of tangible rewards and punishments has brought about norm conformance where appeals to reason, naming and shaming produced minimal or no effects.[33] Given this, material incentives will remain a key ingredient of international norm diffusion programmes and will be required whenever discourse on its own fails to produce effects.[34]

Nevertheless, the tendency in the accession scholarship to characterise norm diffusion as a compartmentalised, sequential, and hierarchical division of labour in which material incentives must first produce norm compliance before discourse can produce norm internalisation is empirically suspect. Not only does discourse do more of the transformative work throughout the socialisation process than it is given credit for; it can, under specific conditions, produce compliance towards

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[29] Kochenov, 'Democracy and human rights', pp. 7–8; O'Dwyer and Schwartz, 'Minority rights after EU enlargement', p. 233.

[30] For example, the European Commission assessed Romania as having adequately met human rights standards during its EU accession, despite the *de facto* criminalisation of same-sex relations there. For further examples, see Kochenov, 'Democracy and human rights', pp. 16, 19.

[31] Connor O'Dwyer, 'Does the EU help or hinder gay-rights movements in postcommunist Europe? The case of Poland', *East European Politics*, 28:4 (2012), pp. 333–4; Ayoub, 'Contested norms in new adopter states'.

[32] Ayoub, 'Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe', pp. 290–1.

[33] Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*; Kelley, 'International actors on the domestic scene'.

[34] George Vasilev, 'Minority rights activism beyond borders: the synergies between deliberation and strategic action', *Policy Studies*, 36:3 (2015), pp. 329–44.

controversial norms in its own right. LGBT reform allows us to identify and study those conditions because, unlike many other domestically controversial EU directives, its subjection to membership conditionality has been limited. It therefore offers an opportunity to analyse the transformative effects of discourse in relative isolation from those of material incentives.

One condition I take as important in enhancing discursive effectiveness is a prior sense of shared identity between norm promotors and receivers. This factor will remain the focal point for the remainder of the analysis.

Shared identity and discursive impact

Identity can be defined as 'the images of individuality and distinctiveness ("selfhood") held and projected by an actor and formed (and modified over time) through relations with significant "others"'.[35] Employing the concept to theorise the individuation of nation-states, identity refers to, on the one hand, nationally varying ideologies of collective distinctness and purpose, and on the other hand, varying understandings of sovereignty that are enacted domestically and projected internationally.[36]

There are several reasons why shared identity might enhance the transformative impact of discourse. First, it provides an environment conducive to deliberative persuasion. When interlocutors enter a dialogue with a mindset to be persuaded, they open themselves up to the possibility that a claim made by someone else has merit and are prepared to adjust their positon as a result of this.[37] This reflexiveness and enlarged mentality is more probable when interlocutors share a level prior identification, as a higher degree of empathy, trust and credibility is likely to define their relations. These assumptions are supported by research in the field of social psychology, which shows that in-group persuaders are perceived as better sources of information and are less frequently met with suspicions of possessing motives that are deleterious to their audience's interests.[38] Under such conditions, the ideas advanced by in-group individuals are more frequently approached with an open mind and less frequently prejudged as illegitimate, especially when they challenge conventional wisdom.

Second, shared identity heightens sensitivity to social influence. The well-being of back-patting and the social anxiety of opprobrium will only be felt when one already belongs to, or has aspirations to belong to, a specific group, as the judgements of its members determine one's social standing, status, and self-esteem.[39] Indeed, if prior identification were absent, there would be no ambition to be positively affirmed and no basis for protecting one's reputation. As Alastair Johnston puts it: 'Owners of coal-fired electricity plants cannot shame an environmentalist.'[40] In these terms, the desire to be liked by a group enhances the power of communication to elicit conformity, as one will be loath to appear inconsistent with the behavioural expectations and beliefs of a group whose approval is valued.

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[35] Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 'Norms, identities, and culture in national security', p. 59.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Mark Kingwell, *A Civil Tongue: Justice, Dialogue, and the Politics of Pluralism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 47–8.
[38] George Vasilev, 'Preaching to the choir or converting the uninitiated? The integrative potential of in-group deliberations', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 16:1 (2013), p. 115.
[39] Johnston, *Social States*, pp. 79–88.
[40] Ibid., p. 86.

Third, shared identity facilitates framing processes. To frame an issue a particular way is to selectively call to attention aspects of reality that promote acceptance towards one's point of view.[41] Prior identification enhances the effectiveness of such activity, as reflection through frames of reference that are familiar and register an audience's identity make arguments more noticeable, meaningful, and memorable. Considered specifically from the standpoint of cross-border interactions, the invocation of a shared identity functions to reduce the alien quality of outside ideas by enhancing their perceived fit with the prior beliefs and practices of domestic recipients.[42]

Identification with Europe in Croatia and Serbia

Serbia and Croatia are ideal cases for testing the hypothesis that shared identity reinforces the norm conforming impact of discourse. These societies are culturally and historically similar, but project distinct types of attachment to Europe and different degrees of shared identity with their European socialisers. The nature of these European attachments can be described as 'intrinsic' in the context of Croatia and 'instrumental' in Serbia.

In Croatia, attachments to Europe are of an intrinsic quality, because Europe is interpreted as constitutive of what it means to fulfil idealisations of national selfhood. In the country's dominant identity discourses, being European is inseparable from being Croatian, as the idea of 'Europe' is incorporated into the very value system by which national worth is judged. As Jelena Subotić puts it: 'Europe was everything the Balkans were not: liberal, democratic, capitalist, progressive, and Catholic. It is the Europe Croatia wanted to join.'[43] In these terms, becoming a part of the EU (the institutional home of the European identity) and doing what other Western European states do (the sources of European cultural capital) are ends in themselves, as they are prerequisites for national integrity and a positive relation to self.

Crucially, Croatia's foundational identification with Europe has not merely been restricted to a tightknit liberal section of its population. Rather, it has acquired prominence across the ideological spectrum, with both conservative and liberal political parties upholding Europe as an idealised former state of affairs to which Croatia must return.[44] In this Manichean identity narrative, 'civilised' Europe is juxtaposed against the 'backward' Balkans, with Croatia depicted as having never belonged to the Balkans from the standpoint of history, culture, religion, or civilisation.[45] This hierarchical system of classification has offered a widely invoked point of reference for self-affirmation relative to culturally similar, but undesirable, national neighbours, especially Serbs, who are portrayed as embodying all the negative hallmarks of the Balkans but none of the positive ones of Europe.

In Serbia, the idea of Europe has not had the intimate connection to national identity and state sovereignty witnessed in Croatia. In the dominant discourses on identity, the Serbian nation is

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[41] Entman, 'Framing', p. 55.
[42] Amitav Acharya, 'How ideas spread: Whose norms matter? Norm localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism', *International Organization*, 58 (2004), p. 248.
[43] Jelena Subotić, 'Europe is a state of mind: Identity and Europeanization in the Balkans', *International Studies Quarterly*, 55 (2011), p. 316.
[44] Ibid., p. 319.
[45] Ibid., pp. 315–16. See also Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 39–40

conceived as occupying a liminal symbolic space, sitting somewhere between Europe and the Russian sphere, but never completely at home in one space nor the other. This sentiment is expressed in the attitudes of the majority of Serbia's voting public, which identifies itself with the broader European continent as opposed to simply with the nations of Western Europe.[46] It is also echoed in the rhetoric of mainstream political parties, which extoll the Serbian nation's role as a civilisational bridge between the 'East' and 'West'.[47]

In the context of this intermediate symbolic positioning, the type of affinities with Europe that have taken root are of an instrumental quality. That is, even though Europe assumes the status of an aspirational identity, it is valued predominantly in terms of what strategic advantages it promises. Serbian politicians do not frame European institutional integration as a cultural homecoming and rejuvenation of the nation, but rather, as a pragmatic self-interested calculation in which certain national costs (diminished sovereignty over Kosovo and the transfer of war heroes to the Hague tribunal) are outweighed by certain national benefits (modernisation, access to international loans, and increased direct investment).[48]

This instrumental orientation and sense of social distance from Europe is captured in a statement by Aleksandar Vučić, Serbia's prime minister, and leader of the centre-right Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). Commenting in 2010 on his perceptions of Europeans, he asserted rather tersely:

> I do not care for them, I just respect them. I neither love them nor are they especially dear to me, but we, as responsible people, have to take care of our country. We need a rational, realistic and serious approach to national politics in order to get the most we could for the country and to lose the least.[49]

A further point of contrast with Croatia is the wide currency of counterdiscourses in Serbia that portray Europe as a threatening Other. Whereas the idea of Europe enjoys near universal appeal in Croatia, it is frequently invoked as a term of opprobrium in Serbia due to a perception that Europe has been responsible for the nation's recent misfortunes. In this interpretation, representatives of Europe are accused of stripping Serbia of territory (Kosovo), national pride (the humiliation of losing the Yugoslav wars), and collective memory (rewriting the script to cast Serbia as the aggressor of the Yugoslav wars).[50] These perceived injustices featured prominently in the rhetoric of many mainstream political parties until they began to adopt pro-EU lines in the mid-2000s.[51] They have also been pedalled with considerable zeal by the tabloid media and the Orthodox Church, which have sought to mobilise public opinion against EU accession by characterising it as Western imperialism and a threat to Serbian identity.[52]

In what follows, it will be argued these differences in identification with Europe help to explain why discursive activities promoting LGBT recognition have been considerably more effective in Croatia

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[46] Marko Stojić, 'The Changing Nature of Serbian Political Parties' Attitudes Towards Serbian EU membership' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, Brighton, 2010), p. 22.

[47] Ibid., p. 30.

[48] Jelena Subotić, 'Explaining difficult states: the problems of Europeanization in Serbia', *East European Politics and Societies*, 24:4 (2010), p. 612.

[49] Cited in Stojić, 'The Changing Nature', p. 30.

[50] Subotić, 'Explaining difficult states', p. 321.

[51] Stojić, 'The Changing Nature'.

[52] Isidora Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse: How nationalist myths and stereotypes influence prejudices against the LGBT minority', *The Equal Rights Review*, 7 (2011), pp. 44–65.

relative to Serbia. Insofar as the desire to feel and be accepted as European was strong in Croatia, there was greater openness to the ideas of LGBT reform presented by European socialisers who rarely distributed material rewards in order to induce such a response. By contrast, insofar as prior identification with Europe was weak in Serbia, receptivity towards arguments for reform was less pronounced. The commitments binding Serbian actors to their European norm promoters were based predominantly on a desire to maximise utility. While deeper symbolic attachments were not entirely absent, they failed to emerge as a dominant form of national belonging due to the hegemony of rival identity discourses characterising Europe as a civilisational threat. In this cultural environment, Serbian actors remained relatively unmoved by appeals to reason and shaming from international actors seeking cooperation on LGBT reform. Likewise, resonance between outside LGBT norms and domestic practice failed to materialise sufficient to stimulate a process of localisation.

Methods

In order to illustrate how shared identity can facilitate the uptake of controversial norms in a context of discursive engagement, I have adopted a 'most similar' comparative research design. As noted above, Serbia and Croatia differ significantly with relation to the independent variable (European identity). However, they share similarities in relation to political and cultural factors that potentially have bearing on the dependent variable (LGBT recognition). These factors, along with the reasons why their effect on the dependent variable is similar across both cases, can be summarised as follows:

• *The discursive influence applied transnationally for the adoption of LGBT reforms.*

  The cross-border ties between NGOs, international institutions and economic actors that facilitate the flow of information, new ideas and people were underdeveloped in both Croatia and Serbia when they commenced accession in the early 2000s, as each country had just emerged from an era of authoritarian rule that left it shunned by Western political actors. However, transnational linkages eventually strengthened in both countries as they democratised and entered the fold of European institutions to the point where the transnational embeddedness of Serbia's LGBT advocacy was no less significant than Croatia's.

• *The societal influence of domestic religious institutions strongly resistant to LGBT reforms.*

  Both countries have national churches that influentially shape popular preferences and have reach into the policymaking process (the Orthodox Church in Serbia and the Catholic Church in Croatia). The mobilisation of these organisations against LGBT reform was prominent in both countries.

• *The ideological disposition of ruling political elites.*

  As I discuss below, both countries had periods of sustained liberal government ideal for the acceleration of LGBT friendly change in between periods of conservative government unsympathetic to such change.

I rely on 'process tracing' to uncover the relationship between shared identity and norm uptake. This investigation technique is an analytical narrative that shares features with historiographic and ethnographic accounts, but differs from these open-ended narratives through its more focused objective of discovering a casual relation. The process tracing I undertake to illustrate the causal relation between European identity and LGBT recognition draws on multiple data sources cited throughout the article. These include primary sources, such as media statements by key political actors, data on homophobic incidents, data on legislative and policy change, resolutions from the European

Parliament, and accession progress reports containing the European Commission's communications to domestic politicians. The data also include secondary sources such as prior ethnographic studies and discourse analyses examining perceptions and representations of LGBT identity, along with reports by NGOs assessing the treatment of LGBT populations in Serbia and Croatia.[53]

Pride marches figure prominently in the empirical analysis. These events generated heightened public debate on LGBT rights and European identity. They therefore offer an opportunity to study how domestic governing elites were responding to LGBT reform demands couched in the language of European values.

My reference to 'Serbia' and 'Croatia' gives the impression that states there exist as unitary wholes. However, as will become apparent below, each state is internally diverse, inhabited by, on the one hand, liberally-oriented actors sympathetic to LGBT rights (for example, the Social Democratic Party in Croatia and the Democratic Party in Serbia) and, on the other hand, conservative actors lacking such sympathy (for example, the Croatian Democratic Union in Croatia and the Serbian Progressive Party in Serbia). As such, my deployment of national identity labels is simply a shorthand for states comprising a variety of actors not always seeing eye-to-eye on LGBT rights, but states which are nevertheless distinguishable from one another on the basis of divergent policy responses to discursively imposed pressure to observe LGBT rights norms.

Homophobia and LGBT activism in Serbia and Croatia

LGBT activism began to gain a foothold in Serbia and Croatia as each country set on the path of EU membership and took decisive steps towards democratisation following the replacement of authoritarian regimes in the early 2000s. This geopolitical repositioning and move away from authoritarianism heralded a new era of LGBT activism. In the atmosphere of enhanced civil liberties and democratic openness that emerged, Croatia and Serbia's LGBT rights campaigners gained the associational space to organise themselves and mobilise for the legal recognition and social acceptance of their identity.

The associations that were at the forefront of this activism included: LIGMA (Lesbian and Gay Men Action); Kontra, and Iskorak in Croatia; and Arkadija, Labris, and New Age-Rainbow in Serbia. Their magazines, newspapers, newsletters, commemorations of international LGBT awareness days, conferences, photography exhibitions, helplines, libraries, public lectures, workshops, radio and television appearances, billboard advertising, festivals, and poetry events functioned as sites for the consolidation of shared interests and the proliferation of LGBT perspectives throughout the wider public sphere. Also of significance were the associations that emerged in subsequent periods to build

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[53] The qualitatively oriented discourse analysis I employ to infer causation comes with certain trade-offs when weighed against a quantitatively oriented approach, such as a numerically grounded content analysis. The narrative detail and longitudinal freedom afforded by a discourse analysis permits a richer description of political events and scope for observed statements to be explained within their cultural and historical contexts. However, this gain in narrative and contextual detail is won at the cost of statistical verifiability, which a content analysis provides by measuring the frequency of indexed terms during a clearly defined period of scrutiny. I have sought to minimise selection bias and ensure my inferences remain congruent with empirical realities by triangulating across multiple data sources and conducting a structured reading of media statements and parliamentary discussions. The data sources of primary relevance for pursuing my research objectives have been those focusing on public sphere communications, as these sources illustrate how representations of European identity function to legitimate or undermine policy choices affecting LGBT populations.

on this forerunner activism. These included Inqueerzicija, *Queer* Zagreb, deNormativ, KugA, Zbeletron, and Zagreb Pride in Croatia and SPY (Safe Pulse of Youth), Queeria, Lambda i Guerilla, Gay Straight Alliance, and Gayten LGBT in Serbia. Their entry into the activist scene was facilitated by the wider availability of the internet and social media, which served as vehicles for enhancing the coordination of political action and cultivating ties with likeminded associations abroad.[54]

However, this era of nascent activism also brought into sharp relief the strong homophobic currents running through each society. While harassment and persecution of sexual minorities was nothing new, having a long legacy dating back to Yugoslav times, the entry of LGBT advocacy groups into public life created an unprecedented level of LGBT visibility that quickly polarised the population. The newfound political assertiveness of LGBT individuals, a despised category of citizens that had historically remained hidden from view, drew hostile reprisals from quarters of the population perceiving non-heteronormativity to be a threat to the nation and moral fabric. An intensification of homophobic hate speech followed as politicians, the media, the Orthodox Church in Serbia, and the Catholic Church in Croatia began a campaign of vilification, representing homosexuality as a mental disorder and a degenerate lifestyle from which society required protection. Intimidation and organised violence against LGBT individuals also grew in prevalence as far-right groups began disrupting LGBT events and brutally attacking participants.[55]

The context most emblematic of antigay hostility was Gay Pride marches. Such events are an unremarkable aspect of associational life in many liberal democracies. However, they became a *cause célèbre* in Serbia and Croatia, occasioned by routine violence, moral panic, and securitisation. During Croatia's first Pride parade in Zagreb in 2002, thirty marchers were beaten up by neo-fascists, skinheads, and homophobic bystanders.[56] Further antigay violence accompanied Zagreb Pride marches held in 2007 and 2009, along with the first Split Pride parade in 2011, when 10,000 antigay protestors mobilised against 200 Pride marchers. A number of these marchers were injured, as members of the hostile crowd threw rocks and bottles at them.[57] Croatian authorities were subjected to harsh international criticism over these incidents, with human rights groups and representatives of international organisations condemning authorities for failing to ensure the safety of marchers and for the lack of convictions issued over the violence and ensuing hate speech.[58]

[54] Marko Juričić, 'Povijest LGBTIQ aktivizma u Hrvatskoj [History of LGBTIQ activism in Croatia]', in Aida Spahić and Saša Gavrić (eds), *Čitanka LGBT Ljudskih Prava [LGBT Human Rights Reader]* (2nd edn, Sarajevo: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2012), pp. 89–100; Vladana Vasić, 'LGBT aktivizam u Srbiji [LGBT activism in Serbia]', in Aida Spahić and Saša Gavrić (eds), *Čitanka LGBT Ljudskih Prava*, pp. 101–10.

[55] Sanja Sagasta, 'Lesbians in Croatia', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 8:3 (2001), pp. 357–72; Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse'.

[56] Amir Hodžić, 'Queer migration in and out of Croatia: Waitressing is an awful job when you're gay in a straight bar', *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 28:2 (2010), p. 271.

[57] 'Human Rights Watch, 'Croatia: Don't force change in Pride march route', *Human Rights Watch* (31 May 2012), available at: {http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/31/croatia-don-t-force-change-pride-march-route} accessed 31 May 2014; Boris Pavelic, 'Croat Police to secure Split Gay Pride', *Balkan Insight* (5 June 2012), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/police-to-secure-threatened-croatian-gay-pride} accessed 9 February 2015.

[58] Danish Institute for Human Rights, 'Study on Homophobia, Transphobia and Descrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Sociolological Report: Croatia' (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2010), p. 7; Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 'Unsafe Pride event in Croatia casts shadow over accession prospects', *Intergroup on LGBT Rights* (13 June 2011), available at: {http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/unsafe-pride-event-in-croatia-casts-shadow-over-accession-prospects} accessed 13 June 2014.

Serbia's first ever Pride parade was held in 2001 in Belgrade. However, it was abandoned halfway through due to violence by ultranationalists. Following a long hiatus, the next Pride parade was held in 2010. However, this too was disrupted as right-wing extremists attempted to burst through security cordons to attack marchers. Although the marchers escaped physical harm, some of the police offers protecting them were seriously injured during clashes with the rioters.[59] The Serbian government responded to the violence by prohibiting Pride parades altogether. It imposed last minute bans on parades planned in Belgrade in 2009, 2011, 2012, and 2013. The government's justification for its policy was the preservation of security, contending that such events jeopardised lives and were therefore best left for a time when Serbian society was more accepting of homosexuality.[60] However, the policy was introduced in the context of intense lobbying by politically influential opponents of the parade. These included the Orthodox Church and ethnonationalist civil society organisations, which were generating intense public alarm around homosexuality by depicting it as an act of depravity and a grave threat to the nation.[61]

International influence: Discursive pressure through transnational networking

International actors began to press the governments of Serbia and Croatia to protect their LGBT populations as the full extent of their mistreatment became apparent. However, this pressure did not involve the sustained extension and retraction of material benefits to motivate cooperation, as was the case with other reform directives that encountered strong domestic resistance. Rather, it was discursive in nature, involving the exchange of ideas on LGBT justice through acts of persuasion, criticism, and framing.

The insignificance of incentive-based pressure can be observed in each country's EU accession process. Consistent with its approach in previous eastward enlargements, the EU accelerated or stalled accession progress in spite of what action Croatia and Serbia's governments had taken to address the mistreatment of their LGBT populations. Although the EU expressed concern over each country's poor track record on LGBT rights, this reform area was overshadowed by the EU's keen desire to see accused war criminals put to trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and to achieve a resolution to the political stalemate over Kosovo's secession. The international community placed tremendous importance on these objectives, as they were tied to the pursuit of international justice and the maintenance of regional peace and security.[62] Consequently, some of the longest accession strides were made during the darkest moments of antigay hostility and government inaction as membership readiness was assessed in relation to cooperation with the ICTY and Serbia's relations with Kosovo.

While material pressure was not forthcoming in response to inaction on homophobia, the same could not be said about the assertion of discursive pressure. Throughout the accession period, transnational governance networks campaigned for legal and social change, circulating ideas of LGBT justice and seeking to hold Croatian and Serbian officials answerable to those ideas. The EU

[59] Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse', p. 44.
[60] Christian Axboe Nielsen, 'The cyclical farce of Serbian Gay Pride', *Balkan Insight* (7 October 2013), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-cyclical-farce-of-serbian-gay-pride} accessed 11 February 2015.
[61] Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse'.
[62] Subotić, 'Explaining difficult states', p. 600; International Crisis Group, 'Serbia and Kosovo: the path to normalisation', *Serbia and Kosovo: The Path to Normalisation* (Brussels, 2013).

was at the centre of such mobilisation. Its involvement was an extension of its founding mission to promote core values centred on human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.[63] The EU has assumed a burden to expand those values within its neighbourhood and to a lesser degree, worldwide under a call for 'global responsibilities', motivated by a moral imperative to do what is universally right, but also, by a desire to claim legitimacy for itself against criticisms that its supranational governing structures are incapable of reflecting the will of the people. The promotion of values defined as European – among which is LGBT equality – has been the basis of this legitimation strategy. It has enabled the EU to project an image of itself as more than the sum of its national parts and an entity that embodies a common European good shared by the European citizens the EU claims to represent.[64]

However, despite perceiving the promotion of LGBT equality as part of its role conception, the EU was neither the sole, nor necessarily the most significant, locus of power in this activity. Rather, the cross-border networks that coalesced around LGBT issues were frequently steered by advocacy groups and human rights organisations raising awareness on rights violations, reminding the EU and other member states of their responsibilities to intervene, and offering advice on the development of LGBT policies for adoption in Croatia and Serbia.

This exchange of ideas unfolded at a variety of levels of authority and involved both collaboration and oppositional action. First, outside the sphere of the state, exchanges of information and services emerged between domestic and international LGBT advocacy groups functioning as points of leverage against each government. These cross-border links were underdeveloped when Serbian and Croatian LGBT activists began campaigning in the early 2000s. However, they gradually became institutionalised as conferences, Pride Weeks, and other routine LGBT events attended by foreign delegates increased the frequency and intensity of interactions between local and international campaigners.[65] The strengthened ties between international and domestic advocacy groups equipped the latter with the personnel, resources, and knowhow to mobilise more effectively. They also opened up channels for the outward flow of information. This attracted new network members, as the privileged access to global media and international institutions enjoyed by international advocacy groups enabled the plight of each country's LGBT community to reach a wider global audience.

A second notable level of networking involved the relationships forged between LGBT advocacy groups and the various institutions of the EU. These relationships increased the capacity for LGBT claims raised in the public spheres of civil society to be converted into policy outcomes within the empowered spaces of the EU's decision-making arenas through the creation of communicative channels linking each space. One such example is the official governance partnership between the Commission and the NGO International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association-Europe (ILGA-Europe). Through its status as an EU-accredited civil society organisation, ILGA-Europe has gained privileged access to the Commission's policymaking arena, allowing it to pass on its expertise and engage in lobbying on behalf of LGBT individuals.

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[63] Sonia Lucarelli, 'Interpreted values: a normative reading of EU role conceptions and performance', in Ole Engström and Michael Smith (eds), *The European Union's Roles in International Politics: Concepts and Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 49–52.

[64] Ian Manners, 'Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40:2 (2002), p. 244.

[65] Danish Institute for Human Rights, 'Study on Homophobia', p. 6; Hodžić, 'Queer migration in and out of Croatia', pp. 272–3; Irene Dioli, 'From globalization to Europeanization – and then? Transnational influences in lesbian activism of the Western Balkans', *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 15 (2011), p. 315.

ILGA-Europe's annual country reports, which offer a detailed assessment of the status of LGBT rights, have been an important means through which it has been able to do this, as their publication stimulates attentiveness towards LGBT interests in Serbia, Croatia, and across Europe more generally.

An additional network relationship across public and empowered spaces that was consequential in the production of policy outcomes was the partnership between LGBT advocacy groups and EU parliamentarians (MEPs). This partnership became institutionalised through the formation of the Intergroup on LGBT Rights. The Intergroup is a collection of MEPs who meet regularly with NGOs in order to attain policy advice and up-to-date information on the treatment of LGBT individuals in Europe. The counsel and information the Intergroup receives is conveyed to the rest of the European Parliament (EP) and is used to monitor the Commission's responsiveness to LGBT concerns. The intergroup was behind initiatives that raised parliamentary awareness of Serbia's LGBT rights abuses, which ensured the issue remained on the EP's agenda.[66] It also took the Commission to task over its failure to condition the accession of Balkan countries on the basis of progress made against homophobia. This pressure drew the Commission to publically account for how it would better monitor LGBT rights standards in those societies.[67]

Finally, a level of networking existed between activists and state actors. As images of Serbia and Croatia's antigay violence were spread around the world by human rights organisations and international advocacy groups, foreign diplomats and politicians began marching at parades in solidarity with the LGBT population. This was witnessed at Pride parades held in Split and Belgrade, which were attended by ambassadors from the United States, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the EU, along with elected representatives from the EP.[68] The involvement of foreign dignitaries and the intensified international glare cast on the parades amplified pressure on local authorities to ensure the safety of marchers when there would otherwise have been few incentives to do so.[69]

The impact of discursive pressure

An assessment of the impact of these discursive interventions reveals a high degree of variation between Serbia and Croatia. In Croatia, LGBT activism coincided with tangible transformations towards pronormative behaviour, with political elites going against the grain of public opinion and the wishes of powerful national institutions to enact LGBT reforms. Moreover, these actions were justified with reference to Europe. Political elites upheld Europe as a prescriptive identity when communicating with their domestic audiences, invoking it to affirm the validity of LGBT reforms and to present them as congruent with Croatian values.

[66] Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 'Belgrade Pride banned for third year sends wrong signal for accession, MEPs say' (30 September 2013), available at: {http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/belgrade-pride-banned-for-third-year-sends-wrong-signal-for-accession-meps-say/} accessed 11 February 2015; European Parliament, 'European Parliament Resolution of 18 April 2013 on the 2012 Progress Report on Serbia' (Strasbourg: 2013).

[67] European Parliament, 'Hate Violence During Pride Event in Split, Croatia: Impact on Accession. Question for Written Answer' (2011).

[68] Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 'Unsafe Pride event in Croatia'; Balkan Insight, 'Belgrade Pride 2014: Live blog', *Balkan Insight* (28 September 2014), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgrade-pride-2014-live-blog} accessed 11 February 2015.

[69] Ayoub, 'Contested norms in new adopter states', p. 19.

By contrast, the impact of transnational networking activity on Serbia's ruling elite was marginal. Politicians in the highest echelons of government continued to be negatively predisposed towards LGBT concerns, rejecting the merits of those concerns and maintaining an uncritical stance towards the most rabidly homophobic sections of society. Moreover, in contrast to Croatia, where European identity was mobilised to stimulate perceptions of complementarity with LGBT reforms, it was mobilised for the opposite purposes in Serbia, with politicians referring to Europe (and therefore LGBT rights) as diametrically oppositional to Serbian values.

Stalled LGBT recognition in Serbia

Despite condemning antigay violence, Serbia's leadership did not take it upon itself to generate public acceptance towards the LGBT population. On occasion, it was complicit in its very demonisation.

The evasiveness of politicians and their inconsistent line on homophobia were apparent during the 2012 national elections. When the advocacy group 'Gay Straight Alliance in Serbia' invited all competing political parties to declare their position on LGBT rights, only one party responded, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Its leader and prime minister of Serbia at the time, Ivica Dačić, admitted there was a problem of antigay violence in the country, and that authorities needed to do more to promote toleration.[70] However, this apparent sympathy for the cause of rights campaigners from the state's highest office did not translate into a sustained reform initiative. Dačić's rhetorical stance on LGBT recognition was notoriously erratic, oscillating wildly from guarded approval in one instance to explicit opposition in another. Thus, barely a year after his response to the afore survey, he joined the company of homophobes, asserting homosexuality was 'not normal and natural',[71] fuelling the very intolerance he claimed needed to be stamped out.

A similar reluctance to generate LGBT acceptance was observed in the actions of Aleksander Vučić, leader of the centre-right Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), after he succeeded Dačić as prime minister. In 2014, Vučić justified his government's decision to lift successive bans on Pride parades with carefully chosen words that avoided affirming homosexuality or implying any convergence of values with the EU. As he put it: 'We have not done this for the EU, or because we respect the gay population more than the church, but because of our constitution, law and respect to human rights, despite this [not being] in accordance with our personal beliefs.'[72] In fact, far from seeking to favourably shape public opinion on homosexuality, Vučić was at pains to distance himself from LGBT objectives. When asked if he would be attending the parade, he expressed a barely disguised disdain for the event, responding, 'I really cannot march, I have other things to do instead of marching … Even if I didn't have things to do, I wouldn't march. That is my choice.'[73]

[70] Bojana Barlovac, 'Serbian parties shun grilling on Gay rights', *Balkan Insight* (25 April 2012), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-political-parties-requested-to-reveal-stance-on-gay-rights} accessed 11 February 2015.

[71] Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 'Belgrade Pride banned for third year'.

[72] Bojana Barlovac, 'Croatia gives Split Pride heavy police guard', *Balkan Insight* (5 June 2012), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/police-to-secure-threatened-croatian-gay-pride} accessed 8 June 2014.

[73] Maria Ristić, 'Serbian PM to give Gay pride a miss', *Balkan Insight* (25 September 2014), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-says-no-to-belgrade-pride-march} accessed 11 February 2015.

In addition to its reluctance to endorse LGBT rights, the government made no concerted attempt to publically confront the actors behind the toxic political commentary fuelling public anger towards LGBT individuals. This was most apparent in the absence of any official denunciation of the Orthodox Church over its antigay diatribes and incitements to violence. For example, in the lead up to the 2014 parade, the Church issued a written statement comparing homosexuality to paedophilia and incest that was imported from the West. When called upon by the media to give his views on these incendiary comments, Vučić stopped short of calling out the Church. He merely emphasised that it was the government and not the Church that was in charge of policy, but also added that he respected the Church's views.[74]

The government also maintained a combative relationship with actors advancing LGBT equality. It regarded their involvement in political life as an illegitimate intrusion and impediment to national objectives. The most pointed contempt was set aside for advocacy groups. Their demands for greater action against LGBT hostility were characterised as lofty aspirations that placed excessive burdens on the state and ran counter to the public interest. For example, when five of Serbia's biggest NGOs issued a report in 2012 documenting a negative trend in the country's protection of human rights, Vučić's political party, the SNS, accused the NGOs of 'abusing' Human Rights Day – the occasion of report's release – by allegedly using the day to score political points. In the same statement, the party also accused the NGOs, rather bizarrely, of undermining Serbia's 'fight against corruption'.[75]

Finally, the government's rejection of LGBT reforms was often framed in a manner that implied a disjuncture existed between its own values and those of the European actors advocating reform. For example, irritated at the EU's criticism of the 2012 Belgrade Pride ban, Dačić lashed out at the organisation, stating: 'Screw the kind of Union for which gay pride marches are the entry ticket.'[76] During a subsequent display of defiance, he reasoned: 'I know that it is a constitutional right of every person to express his diversity, but it is my right not to go to [the parade] … Do I need to be gay [in order] to be pro-European?'[77] Dačić's scorn for the EU and his haste to position his preferences as diametrically opposed to those of the organisation's highlights the role identity divergence was having in diminishing the effectiveness of criticism and shaming strategies in stimulating norm adoption.

Accelerated LGBT recognition in Croatia

The impact achieved by LGBT networking in Croatia is witnessed through the government's increased preparedness to enforce laws designed to protect LGBT individuals, its sustained effort to generate societal acceptance of LGBT sexuality, and the declining expression of hostility towards public displays of non-heteronormativity.

As Croatia drew international opprobrium for failing to punish homophobic hate crimes, authorities responded by enforcing laws against such transgressions. In February 2008, Croatia's first hate crime

[74] Ibid.

[75] Bojana Barlovac, 'Criticism of Serbia's rights record upsets progressives', *Balkan Insight* (11 December 2012), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-ngos-criticize-govt-over-human-rights} accessed 11 February 2015.

[76] Andrew Rettman, 'Gay rights not decisive for Serbia-EU talks', *EU Observer* (4 October 2012), available at: {https://euobserver.com/enlargement/117756} accessed 11 February 2015.

[77] Nielsen, 'The cyclical farce of Serbian Gay Pride'.

conviction was handed down. The individual at the centre of the conviction was sentenced to 14 months in jail after police discovered he was carrying a homemade bomb during the 2007 Zagreb Pride parade. A total of eight arrests were made at the event for the instigation of violence as marchers were attacked and subjected to homophobic slurs by counterdemonstrators.[78]

In the period that followed authorities began to actively pursue homophobic hate crimes. In the aftermath of the rioting at the 2011 Split parade, 137 people were arrested and 7 convictions were handed down.[79] Influential members of society were not spared in the clamp-down. In July 2011, the president of the Croatian Football Federation, Vlatko Marković, was fined €10,000 after he stated he would not allow gay players on the national team on the grounds that 'only healthy people play football'.[80] Earlier that year, a Catholic priest, Franjo Jurčević, was given a three-month suspended sentence for publishing hate speech on his blog in relation to the 2010 Belgrade Pride parade.[81] By 2013, Croatia was receiving positive appraisals from LGBT advocacy groups for the initiative it was showing to stamp out homophobia.[82]

Also emblematic of the spread of LGBT norms in Croatia was the transformation undergone by public institutions and spaces. These became more inclusive of non-heteronormativity, witnessed through the ways LGBT perspectives began to shape shared understandings of political correctness. For example, the police academy incorporated LGBT material in its official curriculum for the first time and the government proposed removing degrading and offensive references to homosexuality in biology and religious education textbooks used in primary and secondary schools.[83] Similarly, the media began to give increased attention to the human rights concerns raised by activists.[84] This was a stark contrast to the coverage of the 1990s, when homosexuality was characterised as shameful and despicable, and activists were treated as curious spectacles deserving of ridicule.[85]

A further example of the trend towards inclusiveness was the declining controversy courted by open displays of homosexuality as they became more commonplace. In this environment of growing acceptance, the Zagreb Pride parade began to pass without violent incident. It was attended by a record 15,000 marchers in 2013, who were met with applause and waves from onlookers.[86] Gay clubs and saunas, along with gay friendly bars and cultural venues hosting queer gatherings, began dotting Zagreb's social landscape. This punctuation of a historically hetero-dominated space enabled a sense of LGBT community to emerge. It also gave rise to perceptions of the city as a LGBT 'sanctuary' and a place where homosexuals could find 'freedom, security and anonymity'.[87] The newfound association of Zagreb with homosexual openness was a far cry from the grim imagery

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[78] Darby Seyward, 'Croatia: Pride and prejudice', *Transitions Online* (Prague: 2008), p. 1.

[79] Human Rights Watch, 'Croatia: Don't Force Change in Pride March Route'.

[80] International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association-Europe (ILGA-Europe), 'ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2011' (Brussels: ILGA-Europe, 2012), p. 55.

[81] Ibid.

[82] ILGA-Europe, 'ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2013' (Brussels: ILGA-Europe, 2014), p. 70.

[83] Ibid., pp. 70–1.

[84] Danish Institute for Human Rights, 'Study on Homophobia', p. 3.

[85] Sagasta, 'Lesbians in Croatia', pp. 360–1; Roman Kuhar, 'Resisting change: Same-sex partnership policy debates in Croatia and Slovenia', *Südosteuropa*, 59 (2011), p. 31.

[86] tportal.hr, 'Zagreb Pride Oborio Rekord, Okupilo se 15.000 Ljudi!' (15 June 2013), available at: {http://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/268300/Ukljucite-se-u-prijenos-Zagreb-Pridea-na-tportalu.html} accessed 11 February 2015.

[87] Hodžić, 'Queer migration in and out of Croatia', pp. 272, 274.

surrounding the city in the 1990s, when queer scholars depicted it as a place of 'silenced homosexuality', 'invisible homosexual spaces', and frequent gay bashings.[88]

Perhaps the most vivid illustration of norm adoption, and the starkest point of contrast with Serbia, was the increasing receptiveness shown by Croatia's leaders towards LGBT concerns. Whereas Serbia's government treated LGBT rights campaigners as a national nuisance, Croatia's government joined hands with them to promote homosexual acceptance. The Prime Minister, Zoran Milanović of the centre-left Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP), stepped up to unequivocally defend LGBT rights as debate on the issue polarised and the shrillness of antigay voices intensified. He encouraged critical reflection on homophobia, reasoning that the 'gay population does not threaten anyone and we just have to accept them'.[89] Moreover, in contrast to his Serbian counterparts, who characterised LGBT rights as a zero-sum trade-off with national sovereignty, Milanović sought to fit those rights with pre-existing idealisations of the nation. He described homosexual acceptance as 'standard democratic practice for Western Europe'[90] implying it was actually congruent with Croatia's prior European affinities, as opposed to an entirely alien idea.

High ranking government officials began attending LGBT events in solidarity with homosexuals. Among them were the foreign minister, and leader of the Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats (HNS), Vesna Pusić, and the interior minister, Ranko Ostojić of the SDP, both of whom joined the 2012 Split Pride march.[91] Pusić also spoke at the opening of an international LGBT rights conference in Zagreb in 2013 and also marched at the Zagreb Pride parade that year. The Prime Minister's wife, Sanja Musić Milanović, was another notable dignitary at that parade. She told reporters she was 'provoked' into attending as a result of an antigay citizens' initiative underway to constitutionally define marriage as a 'lifelong union of a woman and a man'.[92]

Again, the idea of Europe loomed large in the stated rationale for these political activities. Explaining her presence at the 2013 Zagreb parade, Pusić asserted: 'Now that we finally became Europe in a political sense, it is time to start behaving accordingly.'[93] In contrast to the defiant attitudes expressed in Serbia, Pusić's response conveyed sensitivity to European judgements. It also implied an interpretation of reputation tied to consistency with Europe's publically affirmed beliefs on LGBT issues, a notion of positive status that was rarely voiced in Serbia.

Of course, one runs the risk of overstating the impact of LGBT activism by focusing merely on its triumphs. There were also various setbacks, the most notable being the 2013 referendum amending the constitution to define marriage exclusively as a union between a man and a woman. The referendum was forced by a citizens' initiative organised by a Catholic inspired organisation called 'In the Name of the Family' and produced a 66 per cent vote in favour of the constitutional

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[88] Tatjana Pavlović, 'Women in Croatia: Feminists, nationalists, and homosexuals', in Sabrina P. Ramet and Branka Magaš (eds), *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 146–7.

[89] Bojana Barlovac, 'Croatia gives Split Pride heavy police guard'.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Bojana Barlovac, 'Second Split Gay Pride passes without incidents', *Balkan Insight* (11 June 2012), pable at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/second-split-gay-pride-passes-without-incidents} accessed 11 February 2015.

[92] Boris Pavelic, 'Thousands march for Gay rights in Croatia', *Balkan Insight* (11 June 2012), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/more-than-10-000-support-gay-rights} accessed 11 February 2015.

[93] Cited in Kahlina, 'Local histories, European LGBT designs', p. 6.

amendment.[94] While the turnout was low (38 per cent), the result nevertheless revealed that a considerable proportion of the Croatian population continued to hold homophobic attitudes despite years of campaigning by activists to overcome such prejudice.

By the same token, even though the referendum was a retrograde development, its impact was only fleeting. No sooner were the referendum's constitutional amendments introduced than the government acted to deplete their force through the adoption of legislation recognising same-sex unions. The new legislation, called the 'Same Sex Life-Partnership Act', was passed by the parliament in July 2014 with 89 votes in favour and 16 against.[95] The Act did not offer complete marriage equality, neither in legal nor symbolic terms. However, it went some way towards diminishing the discriminatory impact of the constitutional amendments. With the exception of adoption rights, the Act extended same-sex couples all the substantive entitlements available to different-sex couples and expanded the definition of a family to include life partners of the same sex.

The government's swift reaction to the referendum suggests that its pro-LGBT orientation was the result of a deeper process of norm adaptation, involving a conviction in the rightness of LGBT equality and not a superficial compliance motivated by strategic intent. Croatia had already been admitted to the EU at the time of the Act's introduction, and so there were no accession rewards at stake for passing the legislation. Furthermore, there was little to gain and much to lose electorally by following this reform path, given the widespread discontent towards non-heterosexual marriage among Croatia's voting public. The unflinching determination to institute the controversial bill in a context where the incentive structures of EU membership conditionality had become obsolete suggests that at least some of Croatia's key reformers had internalised LGBT equality norms and were promoting these norms as ends in themselves, rather than as means for securing benefits and avoiding costs.

In sum, the events surrounding the referendum indicate that LGBT recognition has remained a story of progress in Croatia, despite continuing to be a deeply polarising issue. This conclusion is supported by ILGA-Europe's country assessments. In its 2014 review, which encompassed the period immediately after the referendum, ILGA-Europe ranked Croatia Europe's fifth most advanced country on human rights protections for LGBT individuals. This result represented an upward move of six places on the previous year's assessment. By contrast, Serbia was ranked twenty-eighth, and had moved down the list by three places on the previous year.[96]

Explaining the variation

There are several ways identification with Europe was contributing to the observed variation in LGBT recognition. First, Serbia's historical enmity with European actors and its mistrust of them militated against the emergence of deliberative openness. While European advocates of LGBT reform justified their position with universalist appeals to equality and dignity, those advocates were met with suspicion by a Serbian public perceiving them to be operating with dubious intentions.

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[94] Boris Pavelic, 'Croatian PM denounces anti-Gay marriage vote', *Balkan Insight* (2 December 2013), available at: {http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatian-pm-denounces-anti-gay-marriage-vote} accessed 4 July 2015.

[95] Zagreb Pride, 'Croatian parliament passed Same Sex Life-Partnership Act', *Zagreb Pride* (Zagreb, 2014).

[96] ILGA-Europe, 'Country Ranking', available at: {http://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/country_ranking.png} accessed 4 July 2015.

This suspicion was stoked by key domestic actors such as nationalist politicians, sections of the media, and the Orthodox Church depicting LGBT advocacy as part of a Western plot to destroy the Serbian nation. Some of this commentary even went so far as to implicate LGBT campaigners in the loss of Kosovo.[97] This imagery of human rights activists and European institutions as enemies of the nation blunted their persuasiveness. Their status as threatening 'Others' deprived them of prescriptive authority, thereby discouraging public reflection on their arguments and stimulating instead a concern for national self-preservation, which was premised on a rejection of LGBT reforms.

Parallels can be drawn between the demonisation of LGBT activists in Serbia and events in Russia, where LGBT rights campaigns have also been depicted as Western imperialism and a threat to national sovereignty. As in Serbia, intense suspicion has surrounded activists, cultivated by authorities, the Orthodox Church and right-wing associations characterising them as foreign agents and homosexuality as antithetical to Russia's traditional values.[98] Against the backdrop of this narrative, activists have had limited success generating reflection on their concerns. The association of their rights agenda with 'Europe' and 'the West' – international groupings perceived as nationally threatening – has left activists lacking the legitimacy to be taken seriously.

In Croatia, the perception of European actors as trusted allies had the opposite effect of enhancing their ability to induce deliberative reflection. No doubt, it would be an overstatement to conclude that LGBT norm conformance in Croatia is reducible simply to an ethical calculation on the part of norm receivers. There were also moments when conformance was justified in the self-seeking language of national interest, such as when the foreign minister, Vesna Pusić warned further Pride parade violence might jeopardise the country's accession prospects.[99] Nevertheless, it is also the case that an ethical discourse on LGBT reform featured prominently in Croatia's public sphere. As noted above, this discourse was facilitated by domestic politicians compelling citizens to remove themselves from their prejudices and consider the rightness of reforms from the standpoint of LGBT individuals. This readiness to assess the European position on LGBT rights through a process of ethical reasoning was enabled by the empathy and trustworthiness that existed towards European representatives, which opened up the discursive terrain to the ideal role-taking and social learning definitive of deliberative persuasion.

Second, the lack of prior identification with Europe diminished Serbia's social vulnerability. While Serbia's politicians would have wished to avoid becoming European outcasts, given that they are not nationalist sociopaths and care about their reputation on a world stage, the preservation of national image was still less dependent on moving preferences on LGBT rights towards those held by European socialisers, given the weaker desire to be liked by this grouping of actors. Since sense of worth was not strongly a function of European praise, the social sanctions of shaming and criticising for being out of step with Europe on LGBT rights failed to generate conforming behaviour. Europe, with its perceived history of acting against Serbian interests, was simply not considered a credible judge of Serbian domestic behaviour. Given this, the desire to receive positive European affirmation for its own sake, rather than for the sake of material rewards, remained relatively weak.

By contrast, Croatia's intrinsic identification with Europe heightened the social sting of being outed as homophobic. Europe's status as a liked and aspirational group made it difficult for Croatia to

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[97] Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse', pp. 53, 59.
[98] Cai Wilkinson, 'Putting "traditional values" into practice: the rise and contestation of anti-homopropaganda laws in Russia', *Journal of Human Rights*, 13:3 (2014), pp. 366, 373
[99] Barlovac, 'Criticism of Serbia's rights record upsets progressives'.

dismiss the intense negative attention homophobic developments like the Split Pride violence were provoking globally. This turn of events harmed Croatia's projection of itself as part of 'civilised Europe', rather than the 'backward Balkans'. The disapproving gaze of the international community and the threat posed to Croatia's credibility as 'one of the club' raised the reputational stakes of compliance, providing one explanation for the determined stand the government took against antigay behaviour.

Indeed, the conformity eliciting effects of European identification were felt among not only Croatia's liberal politicians noted above, who were justifying LGBT acceptance as the fulfilment of a European (and therefore national) duty, but also the country's conservative politicians unsympathetic to LGBT goals. They too were encumbered by aspirations to be liked by Europe, even after Croatia had achieved full EU membership. For example, Dubravka Šuica, the vice president of Croatia's main conservative party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), expressed regret that her party's opposition to homosexuality was damaging its European credentials and felt compelled to excuse this deviation from the European norm. At a campaign for European parliamentary elections in 2014, she all but apologised for the HDZ's homophobic platform, reflecting abashedly: 'When it comes to matters of homosexuality, we have had problems. European countries have been somewhat more progressive and our attitudes have left us in the minority.'[100]

Finally, the idea of Europe as foreign and imposing in Serbia reduced the effectiveness of framing activities designed to enhance *cognitive* pressures to conform. Europe carried negative normative baggage. It could therefore be mobilised in public debate to reduce receptivity towards LGBT rights and to undermine the credibility of domestic adherents to those rights through cognitive congruence-building. That is, if Europe was supposed to be deleterious to Serbia's interests, then consistency in thought and the avoidance of hypocrisy required rejecting ideas associated with Europe.

In Croatia, identification with Europe directed the discrediting process the other way through the same compulsion for logical consistency. To the extent that a discursive hegemony existed around the idea that Croatia's rightful place was in Europe, the burden of proof rested on those wishing to see Croatia turn its back on a core European norm like LGBT rights. Europe was, to borrow Kuhar's terminology, a 'phantasmal point of reference', under which 'anything presented as "European" was more easily accepted'.[101] Thus, in contrast to Serbia, where alignment with Europe was a discursive liability, it was a discursive asset in Croatia, increasing the ease with which LGBT norms could be introduced domestically by making them appear more national and therefore more congruent with people's cognitive priors.

Alternative explanation: Ideological disposition of leaders?

I have argued that identity convergence helps to explain why the discursive interventions of international actors achieved a higher degree of LGBT recognition in Croatia relative to Serbia. A competing explanation that can be offered for this variation centres on the ideological disposition

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[100] Gordan Duhaček, 'HDZ Treba Podržati Zakon o Životnom Partnerstvu', *tportal.hr* (5 June 2014), available at: {http://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/komentari/336403/HDZ-treba-podrzati-Zakon-o-zivotnom-partnerstvu.html} accessed 3 July 2015.

[101] Kuhar, 'Use of the Europeanization frame', p. 187.

of leaders. From this perspective, enhanced receptivity to contentious ideas like LGBT equality is to be expected whenever liberal-minded or cosmopolitan politicians are in office, as they will ideologically be at one with the liberal international organisations issuing reform directives from outside. By contrast, conservative or nationalist politicians are likely to be reform averse, as their legitimacy is typically premised on standing against the directives handed down by external actors, particularly those associated with liberal ideals.[102]

However, considered in relation to Serbia and Croatia, the ideological disposition of ruling politicians fails to adequately explain the uneven flow of norms, as both countries had periods of sustained liberal and pro-European government ideal for the acceleration LGBT friendly change. In Croatia, this was during SDP led governments from 2000 to 2003 and again from 2011 until the present. In Serbia, it was during Democratic Party (DS) governments from 2000 to 2003 and again from 2007 to 2012. Furthermore, these periods overlapped with rule by presidents belonging to the same liberal parties, further reinforcing conditions ideal for norm adaptation.

And yet, even though liberal parties governed in both countries, this failed to translate into a committed programme of LGBT reform in Serbia. The DS did express principled support for LGBT rights in its rhetoric, equating them with a diversity-based notion of justice that it wished to see realised in Serbia.[103] However, the party appeared cowed by homophobic elements when forced to come good on those convictions with tangible action. Indeed, it was under a DS government that a precedent was set for banning Pride parades in the face of vocal opposition and threats of violence. Following the Belgrade Pride parade ban in 2011, the DS's leader and president of Serbia, Boris Tadić, glibly justified the measure with the statement that 'the citizens, members of the lesbian, gay and transgender population are [now] protected'.[104] Furthermore, antigay hate crimes were rarely punished by authorities during the DS's time in government. Instead, a 'culture of impunity'[105] prevailed, under which homosexuals could be vilified without fear of legal sanction or challenge from an official counterdiscourse cultivating an informed position on LGBT issues. In sum, the DS was an unreliable and unwilling advocate of the LGBT population despite sympathising with its concerns. Unlike the SDP in Croatia, the DS avoided placing itself in a position of electoral vulnerability to make LGBT rights a central policy platform and lead a public discourse on LGBT acceptance.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been twofold first, to show that discursive pressure can generate pronormative behaviour in EU accession states even when domestic opposition to a norm is strong; second, to identify the conditions under which such pressure is most likely to yield results. I argued that one such condition is shared identity, as this makes interactions more conducive to deliberative reflection, amplifies the discomfort of being ostracised and the well-being of being praised, and provides framing channels for nurturing domestic resonance towards foreign ideas. I developed this argument through a comparison between Serbia and Croatia, which revealed different levels of

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[102] Schimmelfennig, 'Strategic calculation and international socialization', pp. 836–8.

[103] Gay Straight Alliance, 'Tadic: I still support Pride, but I paid an enormous political price because of it in 2010', *Gay Straight Alliance* (12 February 2014), available at: {http://en.gsa.org.rs/2014/02/tadic-i-still-support-pride-but-i-paid-an-enormous-political-price-because-of-it-in-2010/} accessed 11 February 2015.

[104] 'Serbia bans Gay Pride parade citing violence fears', *BBC News* (11 October 2011), available at: {http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-europe-15134182} accessed 11 February 2015.

[105] Stakić, 'Homophobia and hate speech in Serbian public discourse', p. 60.

LGBT norm uptake in response to the discursive interventions of advocacy groups, the EU and existing member states campaigning for LGBT acceptance. The political mobilisation of these European actors was more effective in Croatia, as prior identification with Europe there favoured communicative, social and framing activities in support of LGBT acceptance, a key European norm that was deeply controversial domestically.

These findings prompt a rethink of the sweeping generalisations underlying some prominent models of norm diffusion that downplay the transformative capacity of discourse and civil society actors next to the materiality of political, economic, security, and geopolitical inducements delivered by the EU. A more fine-grained explanatory theory would recognise the primary relevance of both modes of power and would seek to identify the circumstances under which their effectiveness is enhanced or diminished. It would also identify how they mutually interact to enable or disable one another and would therefore avoid treating them as compartmentalised pathways of change.

In making these points, I follow a long line of scholarship that sees the circulation of ideas, the contestation of narratives, and the activities of questioning, informing, and exposing to shape the terms of discourse as central in the coordination of political action and international governance.[106] The cumulative effect of such leverage may not always be as sudden and immediately observable as the compulsory force and bribery associated with material punishments and rewards. But it can nevertheless be tangible and far-reaching, and in fact goes hand in hand with the very assertion of such material power.

Acknowledgments

Biographical information

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[106] Examples of more recent scholarship include Subotić, 'Europe is a state of mind'; Bukovansky et al., *Special Responsibilities*; Dryzek, *Foundations and Frontiers*; Ayoub, 'Contested norms in new adopter states'.