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## Abstract and Keywords

Europe matters to contemporary LGBTQ politics. This chapter maps out various political articulations connecting Europe and LGBT rights today, arguing that Europe has played a central role in much of the LGBTQ movement's history but that this relationship is complex and multifaceted depending on the vast space of what "Europe" means to many different actors. In other words, Europe has been imagined and unimagined as LGBTQ-friendly by various actors and for various purposes. In making this argument the chapter presents "Europe" from four different angles, exploring the association between the continent and "LGBT rights" in each: Europe as an institutional entity, Europe as an activist project, Europe as exclusionary, and Europe as a threat. It takes a position on how the relationship is defined in each section, highlighting both the opportunity and risk that entails for LGBT rights and people on the continent. In doing so, the chapter highlights the ways European states and institutions have gradually endorsed some activist goals, embedding LGBT rights into the version of Europe understood as an institutional entity. Problematically, however, it shows that this project also generates different forms of exclusion. Moreover, while many actors articulate an idea of Europe as associated with LGBT rights, these actors also compete to define the nature and the content of this association. Europe as an idea is thus multifaceted in its relation to LGBTQ politics, depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

Keywords: LGBTQ movement, LGBT rights, European Union, European integration, Europe, activism

Leading up to the United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on Brexit, a newly formed group campaigned to leave the European Union on the basis of LGBT rights. Called Out & Proud, the group claimed that Britain's relatively newfound status as a promoter of LGBT rights would be better served outside of the European Union. It made this claim by depicting the limited status of LGBT rights in some countries like Poland and suggesting that the domestic politics of "other European" countries threaten the standing of LGBT

people in Britain.[1] It is a surprising association given the history of Europe's role in promoting the issue on the island.

This picture painted by Out & Proud stands in stark contrast to scholarly and popular associations between LGBT rights and Europe that we had grown accustomed to over the years. Even among the most random bedfellows—from the Eurovision pop diva and bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst to members of Vladimir Putin's government to activists across the globe campaigning for and against LGBT rights—there seems to be broad agreement that LGBT rights are part of European values. Wurst's singing in Brussels, flanked by members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and EU flags, makes this clear when she says that the European Union is a "community of respect and tolerance" that includes LGBT people (FeimLive 2014; Stychin 2014). In response to Wurst's invitation by the European Parliament, Beatrix von Storch, an MEP from the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland, said the visit was unwarranted because LGBT equality was already fulfilled in the European Union: "We tolerate all homosexuals; we don't have any problems at all anymore. We keep talking about homosexuals, we talk about bisexuals, we talk about transsexuals, intersexuals, intrasexuals, and so forth… . and I have the impression that at the European level and in the member nations we've out-discussed this subject" (Riegert 2014). An equally illustrative example of a contemporary imagination of the continent's economic and social underpinnings is an October 22, 2016, tweet by the Russian embassy of the United Kingdom, which refers to the decline of the West and depicts the European continent with an image of pigs, the Euro currency, and a rainbow flag.

Despite the long and defining history that created our modern conceptualizations of rainbow "Europe," as these examples show, there is no one consensus on how to define the continent. Europeans and non-Europeans alike assume there is something distinctive about the region that confers on it some kind of unity despite internal diversities and detaches it from the rest of the world. Although they do not agree on the reasons that make Europe stand out, homophobe and homophile actors connect the alleged European exceptionality to a defense of LGBT rights. In this chapter, we examine this "special relationship" and scrutinize what "Europe" means in contemporary debates on LGBT rights. We therefore present Europe as a political imagination and analyze the struggles and contestations to define its content.

Looking back at our own 7-year-long joint inquiry into the relationship between "Europe" and LGBT rights (Ayoub and Paternotte 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2016), the varied and conflicting constructions are peculiar but not entirely surprising. That Out & Proud's misleading campaign managed to resonate with some—enough to become part of the Leave Campaign's larger rhetoric and platform—is surprising in so much as it is false. It is less surprising if we account for a history of British LGBT activists avoiding a rhetoric linked to Europe (unlike their German counterparts, for example) due to the European Union's poor salience on the Euroskeptic island (Kollman 2014). How we understand a

continent riddled with various normative underpinnings is key to understanding the relationship between it and LGBT people.

This acknowledgment leads us to both build on and step back from our previous work to construct our central claim for this essay: Europe means many things for LGBT rights depending on how it is imagined. We argue that Europe has played a central role in much of the LGBT movement's history but that this relationship is complex and multifaceted depending on our positionality toward the vast space of what "Europe" means to many different actors. In other words, Europe has been imagined and unimagined as LGBT-friendly by various actors and for various purposes. In making this argument we present "Europe" from four different angles, exploring the association between the continent and "LGBT rights" in each: Europe as an institutional entity, Europe as an activist project, Europe as exclusionary, and Europe as a threat. We take a position on how the relationship is defined in each section, highlighting both the opportunity and risk that entails for LGBT rights and people on the continent.

# Europe as an Institutional Entity

The institutional incorporation of LGBT rights in Europe has been exemplary in global comparison. This incorporation has happened in response to movement calls for greater recognition—first within a set of European pioneer states and later on the supranational terrain of European international organizations (IOs). Concerning the latter, European movements saw a role for IOs like the European Community (later the European Union) and Council of Europe (CoE) quite early on, beginning in the late 1970s. In the 1980s a series of formal and informal events began a process of institutionalization within these IOs. The CoE's European Court of Human Rights began its role as an activist court on LGBT issues with the 1981 case *Dudgeon v. the United Kingdom* (van der Vleuten 2014). The symbolic importance of the *Dudgeon* case was the message it sent: that litigation on gay rights was winnable, which was not a foregone conclusion in 1981 (Bell 2002, 90; Mos 2014, 637).

Within the European Union, the European Parliament—the democratically elected, though comparatively weak, EU body—became an early movement ally. In 1984 it adopted the Squarcialupi Report, which argued that discrimination in employment (on the basis of sexual orientation) violated the EU pillar of free movement. The report's importance rested in the fact that it boldly inserted sexual orientation into the rhetoric of the European Community as an institution, establishing a "non-discrimination norm *within Parliament* [that transformed it from] *target* to *mouthpiece* of supranational advocacy" (Mos 2014, 637, emphasis in original). It paved the way for Claudia Roth, an MEP for the German Green Party, to endorse an ambitious report with a strong activist footprint a decade later. The 1994 Roth Report, drafted by Dutch Green Party spokesperson Hein Verkerk (an active member of the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association [ILGA] and several Dutch LGBT organizations including the Cultuur- en Ontspannings Centrum [COC]), called for wide-ranging equality

measures (Mos 2014, 640). These measures, following domestic policy examples from the Nordic states, included equality in partnership and parenting, as well as anti-discrimination protections (European Parliament 1994; Kollman 2013, 76). In 1997 an intergroup on LGBTI rights was also formed in the Parliament, which included 152 MEPs in March 2017, making it the largest of the Parliament's twenty-eight intergroups. Alongside the Parliament, the relationship between the LGBT movement and the European Union intensified with ties to the European Commission, the European Union's administrative and arguably most powerful institution, in the 1990s. This included important movement meetings with the then commissioner for social affairs (Vaso Papandreou) and the president of the commission in 1990 and 1995, respectively (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014b, 13). Papandreou would contract the first study on lesbian and gay rights in the European Union (Waaldijk and Clapham 1993).

The collaboration between the movement and European institutions had tangible effects. In terms of legal standing, consensual same-sex activity was decriminalized after the 1980s in places such as Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus, and Romania due to European pressure. Europe also led the way by introducing the first internationally binding piece of legislation protecting lesbians and gay men from workplace discrimination in the European Union. This came in the form of the Amsterdam Treaty's Article 13, signed in 1997 and enacted in 1999, a directive that prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment. While there were many shortcomings—such as limiting protection to only one of four areas covered on the basis of race—it was a substantial gesture that cemented the European Union's leadership role, alongside the CoE, in the world of IOs.

ILGA would become an official partner of the European Commission, receiving its core funding from that EU institution (Swiebel 2009). This new collaborative relationship, which was supported by the Roth Report, led to rapid professionalization of the organization, which came with the ability to influence EU policymaking (Paternotte 2016). The size of ILGA-Europe's staff and budget far outpaced those of any ILGA regional branch, as well as the ILGA World umbrella IO itself. In sum, several important areas that the Squarcialupi and Roth Reports envisioned—including decriminalization of and equal age of consent for same-sex activity, equal treatment in employment, and funding for LGBT organizations—were realized in the 1990s. Importantly, it helped mainstream sexual orientation as part of official EU social policy (Beger 2004, 23). Since then, gender identity has become another ground for European action (Balzer and Hutta 2014), and the European mandate has been extended beyond anti-discrimination policy to include policy areas such as asylum (Hamila forthcoming) and the external action service (Malmedie 2016).

In other areas, European states have pioneered policy initiatives domestically that influenced (often through informal networks of diffusion) the institutional incorporation of new rights across the globe. Same-sex unions are a notable area, with Denmark becoming the first state to legally recognize same-sex couples with registered partnerships in 1989, a policy innovation that spread, initially in somewhat predictable

patterns, across all of the Nordic and Benelux states, along with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom by 2004 (Kollman 2013; Paternotte and Kollman 2013). The Netherlands opened the way to full marriage rights for such couples in 2001, which now exist plentifully on the western half of the continent as well as on other continents. As of late 2017, fifteen CoE states grant full marriage rights and twenty-seven offer some form of partnership recognition (sometimes only accessible to same-sex couples or open to all couples and with or without generous legal provisions). While this number is rather impressive in regional comparison, CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Niels Muiznieks highlighted the long road ahead, rhetorically shaming the twenty states without any provisions in 2017. He called on them "to enact legislation to create—at the very least—registered partnerships that ensure that privileges, obligations or benefits available to married or registered different-sex partners are equally available to same-sex partners" (Dittrich 2017). More so than in any other world region, LGBT rights are included both formally and rhetorically in European institutions. Europe's institutional force on LGBT rights has become a resource that can and has been claimed by activists.

# Europe as an Activist Project

The institutional standing of European states and IOs is closely tied to a long and established history of LGBT and queer (LGBTQ) movements in the region.[2] Indeed, the earliest formulations of the idea that Europe has a special relationship to LGBT rights appeared in activists' discourses long before it was adopted and championed by European and national institutions. Europe is both the birthplace of LGBTQ activism in general (Hekma 2015) and transnational LGBTQ activism more specifically. Furthermore, the history of transnational activism across the region is intrinsically linked to a certain idea of Europe as a normative anchor for the promotion and the recognition of LGBT rights. As we have shown elsewhere, activists attempted "to bypass national borders by imagining and building a new community" that would be more sympathetic to sexual rights, while "constantly displac[ing] regional borders further East, expanding Europe and reinforcing its definition as a set of values linked to universal human rights" (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014b).

The word "homosexuell" itself (first written in German) was coined in 1864, when the Hungarian journalist Karoly Maria Kertbeny used it in a letter to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (Takács 2004). Ulrichs, a German lawyer, is often considered to be the first homosexual activist; he mobilized against the extension of Prussian Paragraph 175—which criminalized same-sex intercourse—to Catholic southern Germany, where same-sex intercourse had been decriminalized prior to the German unification of 1871. By the end of that century, Magnus Hirschfeld established the first homosexual organization, the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee (Scientific Humanitarian Committee), in Berlin, which campaigned for the decriminalization of same-sex relations in Germany. Interestingly, such groups born before World War II mostly emerged in countries in which the idea of a pathology of homosexuality was reinforced by criminalization, including Germany, the Netherlands (after 1911), and the United Kingdom. The persecution of

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European homosexuals under the Third Reich—eloquently described by Christopher Isherwood in his novel *Goodbye to Berlin*—put an end to these early organizational experiments, leaving neutral Switzerland the only place where organized forms of homosexual activism survived the war (Delessert 2012). A new wave of activism, called "homophile activism," began after 1945; and groups were established in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and France (Rupp 2014). The sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s and the events of 1968 brought with them new forms of activism as gay liberation groups contested the more cautious approach of earlier homophile movements. This was the time of the first gay pride marches and the invention of the rainbow flag in the United States, when gay movements regarded gay identity as revolutionary and encouraged coming out of the private sphere for both personal and political fulfillment (Weeks 2015). With gay liberation, new groups emerged in most countries where homophile activism had developed, including the formation of national movements in Italy and Francoist Spain. Lesbians, who with few exceptions had often been absent from or made invisible in earlier forms of organizing, mobilized in increasing numbers, both together with men as well as within women's and feminist groups (Podmore and Tremblay 2015). In the 1980s, gay and lesbian organizations also formed in central and eastern Europe (Szulc 2017), but the movement there developed far more extensively after the collapse of communism (Chetaille 2011). Finally, trans rights groups began to appear in the 1990s in most European countries, blossoming at the turn of the century (Balzer and Hutta 2014). In recent years, LGBTQ activism in Europe has dramatically diversified with, among others, the development of queer collectives (Eleftheriadis 2014), groups gathered on the basis of an ethnic or religious identity, and the emergence of an intersex movement.

For many of these groups, Europe has been a propitious region for transnational activism, notwithstanding linguistic diversity. Short geographic distances and efficient transport networks have given an incentive for activist collaborations across borders. LGBTQ movements were no exception, and the first displays of transnational exchange can be traced back to the early twentieth century. Transnational activism first emerged with the organizing of the aforementioned Magnus Hirschfeld, who established the Weltliga für Sexualreform (World League for Sexual Reform) in 1928 (Kollman and Waites 2009, 3). Further attempts to build structured networks of LGBT groups across Europe occurred in the 1950s, when the Dutch COC set up the International Committee for Sexual Equality. This transnational organization met annually and included most of the homophile groups of the time (Jackson 2015). In the 1970s, radical movements such as the Italian FUORI! and the French Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire also attempted to establish transnational structures (Prearo 2012).

The first enduring transnational LGBT organization, however, only appeared in 1978, when ILGA, called the International Gay Association until 1986, was created in Coventry, United Kingdom. This organization later played a central role in the globalization of LGBTQ activism. Despite its global vocation, ILGA has long been predominantly European. It has always considered Europe a high priority, which mirrors its almost exclusively European membership for the first decade after its inception. From the start,

ILGA was also inspired by a specific idea of Europe and, crucially, of its usefulness for the progress of LGBT rights (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014a). Founding activists believed that European values held meaning for LGBT people and thought that European institutions (the European Union and CoE), along with the United Nations (UN), could be used to gain rights by increasing pressure on reluctant states. This European orientation was further confirmed in 1996 when a specific European umbrella group, ILGA-Europe, was established as a regional branch of ILGA-World (Beger 2004; Paternotte 2016). ILGA-Europe was the result of a regionalization process related to the globalization of LGBT activism and a will to improve structures in order to take advantage of emerging European opportunities. This trend toward increasing Europeanization of LGBTQ activism has been confirmed in recent years, as exemplified by a diversification of European umbrella organizations, which include groups such as European Pride Organizers Association, the Network of European LGBT Families Associations, the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups, RainbowRose, and the European network of socialist parties' LGBT caucuses.

For most activist groups, "Europe" is therefore not only a vehicle for obtaining new rights at home. It also serves as an ideal for what the continent should be and as a driver of their actions on the ground as European institutions have a reciprocal relationship with an expanding LGBT activism in the European context.

# Europe as a Source of Exclusion

Until now, Europe has been presented as a powerful vehicle for extending LGBT rights in the region. Linking Europe to LGBT rights has allowed activists to push their agenda forward. The development of a common framework operates as a driver of policy harmonization and as an equalizer among LGBT citizens, especially in the context of EU enlargement (O'Dwyer 2012; Slootmaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch 2016). Recently, however, critical voices have started to emphasize the various ways this project can generate forms of exclusion. They question the content and the underpinnings of the European LGBT project, asking if it limits who and what counts as European.

The predominantly institutional and reformist approach used by activists and a focus on discrimination have left many issues out of the debate, especially when they relate to sex. This has led scholars to insist on the erasure of sex from European citizenship and the construction of a desexualized European citizen. The defense of LGBT rights in Europe has mostly taken the path of identity recognition and the protection from discrimination rather than a more libertarian approach of a promotion of the freedoms to be who you want to be (with a proliferation of sexual identities) and to do as you wish. Sexuality is therefore confined to identity, which is a rather limited—and Eurocentric—understanding of sex that does not engage with the plurality of sexual expressions. Interestingly, institutional developments at the UN followed an entirely different path: LGBT rights first appeared on the agenda through the politicization of sexual and reproductive rights in the context of the UN women's conference (Swiebel 2009) and the HIV/AIDS epidemic

(with the establishment of UN-specific agencies dealing with HIV/AIDS) (Seckinelgin 2016). Discussions about LGBT human rights within the UN began much later and did not develop in the same way they did in European institutions (Corrêa, Petchesky, and Parker 2015).

The European LGBT project also relies on a specific experience of being LGBT, which is often reduced to one of white and middle-class gay men and reinforces the tendency to extrapolate the unique experiences of this subgroup as a universal norm (Ayoub 2018). This is illustrated, for instance, by the centrality of coming out as a compulsory transformative experience to becoming a queer subject. In many dimensions of such universalism, women's voices were long absent and trans groups only became vocal in recent years after tensions with gay and lesbian groups (Balzer and Hutta 2014). Bisexual activism remains weak (Monro 2015), and intersex people have only recently started to organize at a regional level (e.g., the Organization Intersex International Europe founded in December 2012). LGBT people who are also ethnic and religious minorities have voiced concerns, claiming that this model does not reflect their own experience as sexual individuals (e.g., El Tayeb 2011; Rahman 2014; Peumans 2017; Shah 2016; Ayoub and Bauman 2018). Scholars working on LGBT asylum seekers' issues are similarly apprehensive (e.g., Raboin 2016).

This critique—which can also be extended to other world regions, especially North America—connects to a third debate: the increasing construction of LGBT rights as a marker of European-ness. The recognition of LGBT rights is indeed increasingly used to define what it means to be European, both at the national level and more recently at the European level. This first happened in a few European states like the Netherlands, France, and the United Kingdom, where the defense of sexual rights has been used as a new foundation of state nationalism (Fassin 2010; Jaunait, Le Renard, and Marteu 2013). However, as highlighted by Francesca Romana Ammaturo (2015), a similar phenomenon is emerging at the European level, where "the insistence on a European standard of respect for the rights of LGBT persons" reinforces the civilizational grounding of European citizenship, as opposed to "a specific conception of backwardness in the context of human rights protection" (1152; see also Bilic 2016).

This new emphasis on LGBT rights intersects with the history of European civilizational rhetoric, which has painted some individuals, groups, and cultures as less civilized and thus locates them behind the European standard. This association between Europe, civilization, and LGBT rights creates new moral hierarchies, both between Europeans and non-Europeans and among Europeans. Indeed, the lack of acceptance of LGBT rights or the criticisms raised by some groups or individuals is often interpreted as a sign that those who express these views are not European enough (if they belong to Europe) or not European at all (if they are located "outside" of Europe and/or want to join). While this discourse has sometimes been employed against Russians or Poles, it is mostly used to target Muslims, who are depicted as antithetical to European modernity (Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Petzen 2012; Rahman 2014). Often, this discourse also posits that Europe should simultaneously protect Muslim women and LGBT people

generally from Muslim men, resuscitating the idea of a civilizing mission assigned to European states (Bracke 2012; Rao 2015).

This brings us to a final axis of exclusion: how this association between European-ness and the recognition of LGBT rights is used to create spatial hierarchies, both within and outside of Europe. Scholars inspired by postcolonial studies have indeed interrogated the underpinnings of the model of inclusion available to the southern and eastern peripheries of Europe. According to them, the LGBT project relies on values and experiences consolidated in northern and western Europe, while "new Europeans" from other parts of the continent were obliged to catch up with these new "European standards." This policy frame paradoxically re-enacts the binary juxtaposition of "west" versus "east" or "north" versus "south" in contemporary discourses on sexuality and confirms the subaltern nature of these peripheries (Chetaille 2013; Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011; Ponzanesi and Colpani 2016). The same norms are used to differentiate Europe from the rest of the world. A long tradition of transatlantic comparison (since Tocqueville) has been applied to issues of sexuality (Rupp 2014; Wilson 2013). However, as indicated by an extensive scholarship, sexuality has most often been used to differentiate Europe from its colonies and its eastern and southern peripheries, in a fashion deeply intertwined with dynamics of race (Bleys 1996; Aldrich 2002).

# Europe as a Threat

Finally, the idea of Europe as a champion of LGBT rights is increasingly contested, both from within and from outside of the European Union. In such discourses, Europe is framed as a moral threat to national values. The idea of a liberal and cosmopolitan Europe, in which the promotion of LGBT rights was anchored, is opposed on the basis of different understandings of what Europe should be; and LGBT rights are usually regarded as a powerful symbol of Europe's liberal project. We can identify at least three different ways of presenting Europe as a threat that increasingly interact with each other.

Putin's Russia is our first such example of opposition. As highlighted by numerous scholars (Altman and Symons 2016; Ayoub 2016; Moss 2017; Stella and Nartova 2016; Wilkinson 2014), the Russian president uses LGBT rights to present Russia as the leader of a cultural, civilizational, and political alternative to liberal Europe. Europe's liberal project, which is illustrated by expressions such as "Gayropa," is central to Russian propaganda in former Soviet republics such as Ukraine or Armenia: by coming closer to Europe, these countries would also be forced to join the decadent world of gay culture. Putin's promotion of "traditional values" is thus used to counter a Western threat to national sovereignty and cultural authenticity. Interestingly, the strategic use of LGBT rights by Putin and others to oppose Europe confirms the idea of a special relation between the European integration project and sexual equality (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014b). This critique appeals to other nations in the world, particularly in the Global South, where many regard this project as a new form of European cultural imperialism (Bracke and Paternotte 2016).

Second, the opposition to this specific understanding of the European project comes also from within Europe under the frame of national sovereignty. As illustrated by the opening anecdote about Brexit, some political and societal actors are reluctant to devolve more competencies to the European Union in matters such as anti-discrimination and fear that some rights available at the national level would be threatened by European integration. Many more, however, invoke the principle of national sovereignty in rejecting a notion of being forced to allow acts and behaviors seen as morally unacceptable in local national cultures. For this reason, countries like Malta, Poland, or Ireland have long opposed Europeanization as it pertains to reproductive rights. This, however, applies increasingly —in a different set of countries—to LGBT rights, as exemplified by the adoption of constitutional bans on same-sex marriage or of laws against so-called homosexual propaganda.

Third, right-wing populists and religiously inspired activists contest the very foundations of the European project, increasingly joining forces in recent years (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). On the one hand, the critiques of right-wing populists echo a wider political attack against "corrupt, manipulative, and out-of-touch" elites in Europe, claiming that they have imposed LGBT rights on citizens and that they use international institutions to promote their agenda (primarily through gender mainstreaming). These populists also maintain that they are fighting a new totalitarian project, especially in post-socialist countries. Such opposition intersects with forms of "gender fatigue"—the idea that society belabors an issue that is perceived to affect only peripheral subgroups of the population—and often includes a critique of sexual freedom and sexual liberation, especially in relation to children's issues.

On the other hand, scholars have observed the revival of public religion and a return to religiously inspired positions in the public sphere. While Islam is often portrayed in public discourses as the major threat to women and sexual minorities in Europe, this opposition comes mostly from Christian groups and more specifically from the Catholic Church. Under the umbrella of so-called gender ideology, this movement, which often intersects with right-wing populism (Graff and Korolczuk 2018), opposes a wide range of issues, from policy targeting gender violence to sex education and same-sex marriage (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017).

In both cases, these mobilizations articulate a harsh critique of the European project, which is connected to specific anxieties about Europe's future, especially in the context of globalization. Both present Europe as an elitist project that runs against common sense and goes against the interests of the unconsulted average citizen. Thus a "rainbow" Europe is said to threaten national interests and emasculate nations by forcing them to enter into an abstract bureaucratic project. Likewise, it is attacked for giving minorities carte blanche to use "political correctness" as a strategy to impose their will on majorities.

This increasingly common critique of "Europe" often rests on fears concerning national and racial identities, as well as on anxieties about the demographic reproduction of the

nation, particularly in the context of the refugee crisis, the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, and the deepening of globalization. This explains the centrality of the "innocent child" motif in discourses about the future of the nation and the growing concerns about who can or should reproduce (Fassin 2014; Perreau 2016). As shown by Sara Garbagnoli (2017), these are debates not only about national identities but also about the collective destiny of Europe and civilization. Against a cosmopolitan and open Europe, these opponents of LGBT rights articulate another vision of the region, one in which Europe relies on a sovereign collection of Christian and white nations.

# Conclusion

Europe matters to contemporary LGBT politics. It raises passions in the forms of love, hate, hope, and fear. In this chapter, we have mapped out various political articulations connecting Europe and LGBT rights today. We have insisted on the regional dimension of LGBTQ politics and showed how this association is often justified in the name of the specific values that underpin the European integration project. We have also highlighted the ways European states and institutions have gradually endorsed some activist goals, embedding LGBT rights into the version of Europe understood as an integrated, institutional entity. It is for these reasons that scholars and activists alike speak of a rainbow Europe. Problematically, however, we have argued that this project also generates different forms of exclusion. Moreover, while many actors articulate an idea of Europe as associated with LGBT rights, these actors also compete to define the nature and the content of this association. Europe as an idea is thus multifaceted in its relation to LGBTQ politics, depending on the angle from which we view it.

It is thus crucial to understand that LGBTQ politics remain contentious in the region and that the future of these rights remains open for debate. We therefore must move beyond naively optimistic and teleological accounts of these politics, according to which Europe charges ahead on an unstoppable path toward full equality and freedom for LGBTQ subjects. Indeed, "laggards" will not automatically "catch up" with so-called European standards of acceptability. Nor will opponents die out with the passing of time. Rather, the increasing opposition to LGBT rights in the region and alternative definitions of Europe offer another narrative, one in which LGBT rights are no longer so central to the European project. Furthermore, they unveil the fragility of contemporary achievements and the precariousness of so-called European tolerance. Finally, research has shown that gender and sexuality are also decisive fields in which other battles are fought. By using the language of LGBT rights, political and social actors do not always aim at improving LGBTQ lives but may likewise instrumentalize these issues in the name of other political projects. This complexity is crucial to keep in mind, especially at a time when the ship of the European project itself is navigating tumultuous waters.

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## Notes:

(1.) According to Out and Proud, "The legalisation of homosexuality, an equal age of consent, civil partnerships, same-sex marriage, the right to adopt, equal access to IVF and the right to change your legal gender. All these battles were won in our parliaments, decided by our elected representatives, and built on many centuries championing the rights of minority groups. Never let it be said that these rights were handed to us by the European Union, many of whose members still deny equality and decency to LGBT people. These were our victories—and we should be proud" (Out & Proud 2016).

(2.) This section relies on adapted prose from our earlier work (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014b, primarily 8–10).

**Phillip Ayoub**

Drexel University

**David Paternotte**

Université libre de Bruxelles