13. Conclusion: bringing dynamics back into the analysis of conservative movements

After 20 years of activism, the South Korean anti-LGBT movement has left its mark on Korean politics, society, and churches. The movement has been successful in preventing or abolishing numerous pro-LGBT policies, first and foremost the Anti-Discrimination Law, it has created negative attention for related topics, and it has instilled large parts of Protestant and evangelical churches – laypeople and church hierarchy alike – with active hostility towards LGBT people, the latter's political allies, and their demands for equality and non-discrimination.

This study has set out to examine this social phenomenon as an in-depth case study of a typical case, employing an exploratory sequential mixed-method research design for a single case. The protest event analysis in particular, which covers material from over 20 years (2000–2020), has provided the data basis for the detailed investigation of the action forms, framing processes, the main actors, the development, and contextual variables affecting the workings of the movement. Qualitative semi-structured interviews, (participant) observations, a survey of protest participants, and further textual material from newspapers and other sources complement the data basis of this study. This data basis has been analyzed using a novel theoretical approach, combining cues from Antonio Gramsci's political thought, the *dynamics of contention* research agenda, and conservatism studies. These theoretical and methodological tools have been selected to guarantee a reliable empirical basis and a systematic analytical framework for answering the overall research question of this study, namely why and how the Korean anti-LGBT movement renders LGBT issues contentious. In this concluding chapter, I briefly summarize the answers that this investigation has yielded, I discuss the study's theoretical and methodological contributions – especially in terms of the proposed analytical concept of *dynamic continuity* – and I outline implications of the findings and of the methodological and theoretical models in order to point towards possible future pathways in the study of politically and religiously conservative movements in general, and of anti-LGBT movements in particular.

Why (for heaven's sake)?

Before delving into the reasons for anti-LGBT activism in Korea, a caveat is in order. One should note that it is not the anti-LGBT movement alone which has rendered LGBT issues contentious in the past decades. If we understand the term 'contentious' as meaning that something is or becomes controversial, disputed, or contested in society and politics, then it was the Korean LGBT movement which, in its fight for equal rights and non-discrimination that began in the mid-1990s, has rendered LGBT issues contentious in the first place. The mere visibility of the LGBT movement and its claims are in fact a prerequisite for effective mobilization and, ultimately, success in the policy-making process (cf. Ayoub 2016). Greater visibility, however, may also entail and, indeed, provoke backlash. It is this backlash, the opposition in the shape of *negatively* rendering LGBT issues contentious and of politicizing them that this study has examined. The first instances of anti-LGBT mobilization occurred in reaction to pro-LGBT legislation. The opposition against the Youth Protection Act in 2003 was a starting point, but what really propelled anti-LGBT collective action was the Anti-Discrimination Law, which was first introduced in 2007, but failed to be passed time and again, owing to the fierce opposition mainly from conservative Protestant actors. As this study has demonstrated, however, this reactive opposition soon also developed into proactive resistance. This involved not just protests in reaction to concrete policy proposals or LGBT events, but also included an increasingly sophisticated 'sideshow', consisting of lecture events, educational forums, petitions, and media campaigns geared towards generating or reinforcing anti-LGBT sentiments in the conservative Christian constituency, but also in the public at large. Metaphorically speaking, this study argues that this sideshow has in fact entered the main program, with efforts to change people's worldviews taking a prominent position in the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Essentially, this is a strategy akin to what Antonio Gramsci describes as a 'war of position', versions of which have already been employed by right-wing populist political actors elsewhere in the world (cf. chapter 2.2). This strategy is situated on the level of ideas, ideology, beliefs, and – in Gramscian terminology – 'common sense', using bits and pieces of these ideational elements to modify the overall thinking of people in order to first achieve cultural hegemony, which Gramsci regards as a prerequisite, to then in a second step, seize political power permanently. This 'cultural war', as it has been named by Korean anti-LGBT activists themselves, is a means to the end of gaining dominance in politics and society – or, rather, *regaining* such a privileged position. A counter-hegemonial fight would presuppose that there has actually been a hegemony of pro-LGBT ideas and norms in Korean society and politics. As this study has shown, however, this is not the case: the legal and social situations of LGBT remain largely precarious – arguably also due to the workings of the anti-LGBT movement – despite some improvements in public opinion. Additionally, considering the fact that conservative governments and politicians in particular, but also large parts of the liberal or progressive political camp have shown no or only scant support for LGBT rights, categorizing the anti-LGBT movement as a counter-hegemonial force becomes dubious. Against this background, I assume the movement, and in fact, the Korean Protestant Right at large, as an actor who strives for strengthening, or *rehegemonizing* their position so that Protestants may acquire the polit-

ical clout that they had in the past as a part of the conservative historical bloc (cf. chapter 3.2).

Thus, when intending to answer the research question as to why the movement tries to render LGBT topics contentious, one answer is that these struggles are part of an endeavor to reestablish the influence of the Protestant Right over politics and society at large. Existing research has attributed the actions of the anti-LGBT movement to instrumentalization, too, arguing that activists fuel anti-LGBT sentiments to distract church members and the public at large from crises and scandals within Protestant churches themselves by creating an 'external enemy' (Siwoo 2018; Han, Ch'aeyun 2017). I am not suggesting that these insights are wrong. On the contrary, I claim that they are part of the truth, but that they have to be regarded within the context of the overall goal of obtaining political power. The Gramscian-style 'war of position' strategy that the movement is employing is one piece of evidence in support of this claim. This 'cultural war' consists of diverse elements: creating alternative 'educational' programs on the alleged dangers of homosexuality, showing presence through various media channels, disseminating framings that are fabricated in a way to cater to wide audiences, and being intent to not create a negative public image. Further evidence suggesting that aspirations for power lie at the heart of anti-LGBT movement's activities can be found in its political actions: its protests are predominantly directed against pro-LGBT policies (or policies with another focus that are likewise framed as pertaining to the promotion of LGBT rights). The majority of actors targeted by the movement consists of politicians or governmental bodies, and activists nurture close relationships with conservative Christian politicians. Most importantly, activists themselves have been part of attempts to establish Protestant political parties to enter routine politics.

The section below on the question as to *how* exactly the movement has proceeded in its anti-LGBT endeavors will offer some more details on the properties of this 'cultural war' for political and societal power. For now, let me point out two important aspects of this fight for hegemony. This study has focused on the anti-LGBT endeavors of the Korean Protestant Right. However, this topic on its own would not suffice to unfold full-fledged struggles for ample hegemony. In fact, the Protestant Right does not concentrate on anti-emancipatory endeavors in relation to LGBT topics alone. Instead, other alleged social 'ills' such as 'gender ideology', feminism, Islam, migration, abortion, and left-wing politics in general are also regularly addressed – indeed, they are frequently mentioned in one breath with hostility against homosexuality or transsexuality. Anti-LGBT press statements, lectures, speeches at protests, as well as the contents produced by anti-LGBT social media channels commonly refer to these other topics, too, creating a wide, and partly overlapping array of 'external enemies'. Within the efforts to implement a Gramscian 'intellectual and moral reform' in line with the agenda of the Protestant Right, such a broad focus can be expected to yield better results than the focus on one politicized topic alone.

Another crucial point that I want to make concerns the role of religion, which I argue plays an important part in answering the question on why the movement tries to make LGBT issues contentious. While there is, as I have shown, plenty of evidence supporting the assumption that the anti-LGBT movement acts within a larger political agenda vying for political influence, this is not an exhaustive reason. One should not rashly discard

the possibility that the movement – or at least parts of it – act out of a sincere religious concern about homosexuality and related issues. Individual believers may be led to participate in anti-LGBT protests under the impression that, this way, they act compliant to the Bible and church teachings, that they fight for moral good and against wicked behavior, and that they actually do so in order to 'protect' people from succumbing to allegedly harmful and sinful conducts – in short, they may be doing this 'for heaven's sake'. Religiously imbued framings appear frequently in the statements of anti-LGBT activists so that, over time, they may have an effect especially on conservative and pious believers. Such framings are also instructive in terms of a possible religious agenda that stands behind the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Anti-LGBT positionings definitely form part of this agenda, but other aspects like the fueling of anti-Muslim and nationalist ('chosen nation') tendencies, and of 'traditional' perspectives on womanhood and families also belong to this.

It has to be noted, however, that such an active, specifically 'Christian' hostility towards homosexuality has, for a long time, been virtually absent in Korea. Until the mid-1990s, homosexuality had been largely invisible in Korean society, as has been overt social disapproval (cf. Seo 2001). Likewise, Protestant Christians barely put any attention to these topics in the 1990s and early 2000s, as I have demonstrated through the analysis of *Kukmin Daily's* coverage on homosexuality (cf. chapter 5.1). Opinion polls on homosexuality during that period do indeed point to large disapproval rates concerning homosexuality in Korea, but this hostility seems to have existed mostly subliminally. Interestingly, therefore, both the pro and the anti-LGBT movement needed to invest in identity work to create – either positive or negative – awareness of homosexuality and thus render the topic politicizable with individuals, be they church members or not. These processes of identity shift ran parallel to one another, yet with the anti-LGBT movement 'lagging behind' the pro-LGBT movement by some five or ten years.

This study has described these identity-related processes using conceptual language from Historical Institutionalism, arguing that pre-existing identity elements (i.e., 'dormant' hostility towards homosexuality) got resurrected and re-adapted. This process was either due to environmental changes, for example, happening in reaction to the emerging LGBT movement, which is called *drift*; or else elements were revived as a strategic choice, for which the term *conversion* is used. In the case of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, this study has been able to show that both mechanisms were present in the reactivation of homo-negativity, and that they were combined with yet another mechanism: *layering*, that is, the introduction of identity components alongside existing ones as, for example, allegedly 'threatening' aspects of homosexuality that had been largely unknown or simply had not been addressed before. Religiously or otherwise influenced hostility towards homosexuality has thus become, as soon as it got newly invigorated, a considerable force in the fight against LGBT rights. This study has found that mobilization has indeed been especially successful among conservative Protestants. At the same time, however, the persuasive power of the anti-LGBT movement appears to be confined to this last-named audience, despite extensive efforts to also reach the non-Christian public. The results of this study suggest that this limited scope in terms of outreach has – different to what one may expect – not been detrimental to the movement's success. If anything, the results indicate that, pursuant to Gramsci's insights, religion continues to play an im-

portant role as a resource on the levels of ideology, collective identity, and mobilization. In this sense, the Korean anti-LGBT movement, and the Protestant Right at large can be regarded as a case in point of a resurgence of religion (cf. Berger 1999). Essentially, these efforts to consolidate and fortify the position of religion as a powerful force in society and politics represent an attempt at desecularization, partially using secular means, as I will now explicate.

How (in God's name)?

Answering the questions about the why and how dimensions separately is an intricate matter, since an investigation into how a movement functions can also hold potential for grasping the reasons as to why people get active, as argued above. Analyzing the 'how' of the contentious politics of a social movement alone may present a challenge, depending on the level of detailedness chosen. In the presentation of the results to this latter research question, I will now concentrate on two aspects: first, the actors and the networks they build, and second, the mechanisms that I have found in the workings, and particularly, in the framings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

This study has found that the Korean anti-LGBT movement encompasses a large number of collective and individual actors. In fact, movement representatives are very intent on professing support from a substantial number of church and civic organizations, as well as from an alleged majority of Koreans. When examining the actors behind anti-LGBT collective action more closely, however, it turns out that (1) the movement is almost entirely made up of groups with a Protestant background, that (2) only a relatively small number of functionally differentiated social movement organizations (SMOs) is actually very active in disseminating anti-LGBT contents and networking, and that (3) even within these groups, only a few leading figures carry out the lion's share of activism. On the one hand, the anti-LGBT movement features a considerable level of concentration, specialization, and professionalization. The movement comprises some crucial movement entrepreneurs and 'organic intellectuals', who offer their charisma and alleged expertise to the movement and who execute the key tasks of being its "constructor[s], organiser[s], and 'permanent persuader[s]'" (Gramsci 1971, 10). On the other hand, these central figures have managed to significantly enlarge the movement, increasingly integrating diverse local and regional church associations and whole denominations of Protestant churches, many of which have since actively codified anti-LGBT provisions in their church laws. Individual politicians have also been appropriated. They mainly belong to conservative political parties, they are Christians themselves, participate in protest events, and turn towards using and fueling anti-LGBT sentiments beyond movement activities, for example, in other political contexts such as their electioneering.

How, then, have SMOs and movement leaders achieved such a growth of the movement both in terms of the actors involved and the adoption of anti-LGBT sentiments by conservative churches and conservative politicians? The results of the network analysis in chapter 10 suggest that the above-mentioned central movement actors have served as *norm brokers* who create new ties, and thus also enable the flow and exchange of information, tactics, and framing strategies. In this sense, the anti-LGBT movement, and its in-

dustrious and adamant leaders in particular, work as drivers for the spread of innovation within the Protestant Right and the Korean conservative historical bloc at large. At the same time, these channels provide opportunities for (re)discovering commonalities and building solidarity. Protestantism in Korea has for a long time been suffering from fragmentation and internal division. In the face of a deliberately created 'common enemy', however, these rifts and animosities have subsided to some extent. The desire and alleged need for unity are catchphrases frequently used by activists to justify their anti-LGBT activities. That being said, this study has also shown in chapter 12 and elsewhere that fissions within the Protestant Right persist or start to manifest themselves anew. This is the case for parts of the 'ex-gay' movement, which accuses mainstream anti-LGBT activists of exploiting LGBT issues for political gain rather than out of a sincere, faith-based conviction about the need to 'help' LGBT people. Within Korean Protestantism, further rivalries have emerged. Some groups and individual pastors criticize the hostilities emanating from Protestant churches against LGBT people. The anti-LGBT movement and Protestant denominations put much effort into silencing these pro-LGBT voices within their ranks, since they have the potential of making cracks appear in the intended public image of unity. Repressive measures and campaigns against such pro-LGBT efforts from within have become commonplace in recent years. One might say that opposing desires have started to also emerge *within* Korean Protestantism.

As already mentioned, the vast majority of Protestant organizations however continues to actively support the actions of the anti-LGBT movement. This is hardly surprising, considering the original embeddedness of anti-LGBT movement leaders and SMOs in the Protestant Right. This study hence confirms Ion Vasi's (2011) claims about the conditions of spreading contention: the anti-LGBT brokers were partially successful precisely because they, at least for the most part, only connected groups and individuals within the limited spectrum of politically and religiously conservative Protestantism, that is, within their traditional support base – actors that share similar worldviews and thus feature a high level of miscibility. But the movement has failed to widely spread contention into other parts of civil society as they have not, so far, succeeded in also integrating diverse actors with low miscibility. The movement therefore appears to be, to some extent, ideologically entrenched. Yet, as I will show in the following, the movement does not display irrational, reactionary bigotry in pursuing such a seemingly intransigent ideological pathway. Quite to the contrary, their activities stand testament to an astonishing amount of strategic openness and creativity.

The *dynamics of contention* research agenda (McAdam et al. 2001) differentiates between three types of social mechanisms, that help grasp social phenomena and render them comparable across phenomena of collective action in other countries and with other foci: relational, environmental, and cognitive mechanisms. This study has found instances of all of these. Several of the mechanisms in the first category, that is, those pertaining to relational considerations, have just been summarized. The establishment of interpersonal and inter-group linkages through *brokerage* falls under this category, as does the active *appropriation* of powerful actors like church leaders for movement purposes. Further relational mechanisms observed in the movement's actions include *de-certification*, for instance, in the form of repressive measures, *strategic accommodation*, when allegedly 'apostatized' church members ingratiate themselves with anti-LGBT

forces by which they had been attacked, and *scale shift*, when the level of contention changes from being considered a local problem to a national-level issue, and when a greater number of, also high-level actors gets involved in the contention. This was the case, for example, when the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea* was drawn into a conflict at a Christian university to protect the rights of LGBT students (cf. chapter 12).

The second set of mechanisms is related to external, environmental aspects of collective action. The *internalization* of alleged threats and framings from abroad is a case in point. Activists often touch upon foreign occurrences that they either deem or present as worrisome, such as the introduction of same-sex marriage in other countries or churches that adopt pro-LGBT stances. These 'stories' get played out in Korea as well, and are packaged in a way to render palpable the 'danger' for domestic audiences. In this context, hyperbolic and inflammatory language is commonly used. Related to this is the 'modular' adoption or emulation of foreign elements. Part of this *modularity* is, for example, the usage and adaptation of the 'cultural Marxist' conspiracy theory, which had originally been developed by western right-wing thinkers (cf. chapters 7.4 & 7.5).

Finally, on the cognitive level, anti-LGBT activists have attempted to change people's perceptions, for example, by working towards *identity shift*, as explicated above. *Attribution of threat* is another important mechanism, considering that threats (or opportunities, for that matter) are not objective facts, but that they need to be actively stated when intending to create contention. Activists have presented homosexuality and similar topics as threats to children, families, health, combat power, to the nation – and centrally also to churches and God's order of creation. In so doing, they have created a basis for problematizing and politicizing LGBT issues. Such defamatory framing strategies contribute to 'othering'. They also propel another mechanism, namely *boundary formation*. Anti-LGBT activists have tried to strictly dissociate an alleged majority of 'normal' Koreans from LGBT people, depicting the latter as a morally corrupt minority unworthy of rights. This debasement of others goes hand in hand with an aggrandizement of oneself: Protestant churches are portrayed as 'saviors' in the face of inimical forces. As such, churches are claimed to feature a sense of election and duty. Aware of the risks such vilifying strategies entail, namely, that the movement itself might be regarded as overly hostile and, thus, unappealing, activists engage in *counterframing*. They do this to rebut and recast the interpretative frameworks of opponents in a way that serves their own purposes. For example, the anti-LGBT movement indulges in self-victimization framings, claiming that pro-LGBT legislation, if passed, would lead to 'reverse discrimination' of Christians. Moreover, anti-LGBT activists adopt the framing regarding the topic of love from the pro-LGBT camp ('same love, same rights'), rearranging it in a way that asserts that homosexuality can never involve real love, which is purportedly reserved to married heterosexual couples. Human rights frames are also both adopted and adapted, presenting LGBT rights as 'fake human rights', and denouncing alleged violations against the freedom and religious rights of Christians (cf. chapter 8.1).

This brief summary of the social mechanisms evinces the broad array in which the anti-LGBT movement has been rendering LGBT issues contentious. These mechanisms are, of course, not mutually exclusive. More often than not, they are employed side by side and allow for flexible usage and combination. This is why I argue that narratives directed against LGBT rights, and homosexuality in particular, have emerged as a new

master frame of the Korean Protestant Right, and, by extension, also of parts of the conservative political spectrum in Korea, where politicians have become aware of the potential of negatively politicizing this topic. This newly established master frame is, at times, powerful to the extent that activists often only mention the term 'homosexuality' without actually explaining why, in their view, it is problematic, assuming that the mere reference to homosexuality would already cause a stir and evoke disgust in their audience.

At the same time, master frames can also have constraining effects in case they only or mostly resonate with audiences that share similar cultural values, or when movements "get locked into their master frames" and therefore are rendered incapable of reacting to changing opportunity structures flexibly (Miceli 2005, 608). This constraining effect may be observable in the already mentioned limited power of persuasion, which seems to affect conservative Protestants mostly. Yet, I was able to show in this study that the Korean anti-LGBT movement does exhibit creativity and adaptability in its anti-LGBT framings. This study has found patterns that go beyond the detection of mechanisms only. I have described these patterns as *dynamic continuity* and *opposing desires*. These also pertain to answering the 'how' question of this investigation, and they also have special implications for the study of conservative movements as I will now outline.

A closer look at dynamic continuity and opposing desires

Viewed from the outside, the Korean anti-LGBT movement can in fact be called a 'conservative' movement in the strict sense of the word. As already mentioned, a central aspect in the movement's framing strategy is to claim that they fight to safeguard important social groups and values like heterosexual families, children, people's health, the military, and the nation as a whole from an alleged danger posed by pro-LGBT forces. Movement actors frequently create and/or suggestively refer back to images of a preferential status quo or long-standing legacies that, so the argument goes, one needs to protect, so that, as a consequence, activism seems both necessary and justified. However, the movement does not restrict itself to retrospection only. I have argued in this study that, as an innovative force within Korean conservativism, movement actors also bring dynamics (back) into this field of action. They do so by creatively combining elements from the past and present, and from ideologically congruent as well as incongruent forces at home and abroad – elements that have proven effective in contentions over LGBT rights and other topics and that get adapted according to the needs and strategic orientation of the anti-LGBT movement.

I have termed this phenomenon 'dynamic continuity', trying to highlight two seemingly contradictive components of social processes. When taking a closer look, it becomes clear that this dialectical combination of elements serves as a productive action form in the toolkit of the anti-LGBT movement – and, potentially, also of other politically and religiously conservative actors. Dynamic continuity may at the same time serve as a supplement to the analytical repertoire of students of conservative movements and conservatism at large. The basic idea behind dynamic continuity is not new. Early proponents of conservatism like Edmund Burke (1993 [1790]) had already realized that a stubborn, non-negotiable focus on preserving the past or the present without allowing for the possibility of at least some change would lead to a political strategy that is bound to failure. This,

of course, does not mean conversely that the anti-LGBT movement follows a full-fledged agenda of renewal and reform. While this study does provide evidence for arguing that the movement features a clearly forward-looking perspective, in that it strives for political and societal influence in order to enforce its religio-political agenda, movement actors make sure that a certain "appearance of continuity" (Oakeshott 1962, 170) remains part of their 'change management'.

Table 21: Levels and elements of dynamic continuity

Adopting and adapting		**On the temporal level**	
		New / emerging element	Long-standing / proven / reliable element
On the relational level	'Partisan' / congruent element	**Relational-congruent type** *Example: internalization of alleged LGBT 'threats' from abroad*	**Temporal-congruent type** *Example: bricolage of anti-communism and anti-LGBT sentiments*
	Oppositional / incongruent element	**Relational-incongruent type** *Example: counterframing using (human) rights frames*	[Debatable]

This study has found three ideal types in which dynamic continuity comes about. Table 21 breaks down the main types and elements of dynamic continuity, as well as the levels on which it operates in the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. (1) The *relational-congruent type* combines elements on the relational level that stem from ideologically compatible actors, and, on the temporal level, elements that are comparatively new. The continuous aspect here concerns the adoption of elements from like-minded actors, while the dynamics enter through the application and adaptation of relatively novel elements. One example for this is the already outlined transnational mechanism of internalizing threats from abroad. (2) The *temporal-congruent type* is also related to 'partisan' elements. However, these hail from the past, combining existing elements that have proven effective in the long-run with newly emerging elements. The mechanism that best captures this type of dynamic continuity is *bricolage*. Frames are being bridged and amplified, that is, they get linked and reinvigorated. Frame transformation can also occur in this context, as I have demonstrated when looking at the way the movement amalgamates anti-LGBT and anti-communist sentiments. In this example, anti-communism has not been adopted on a one-on-one basis, that is, as it had been influencing South Korean politics and society for a long time. Rather, anti-LGBT activists promoted a modified version of anti-communism, mainly the conspiracy theory of 'cultural Marxism', which they adopted and adapted from ideologically like-minded right-wing actors abroad. Thus, the first type of dynamic continuity enters this example also, indicating that there are overlaps between these categories. (3) Finally, the *relational-incongruent type* describes a situation in which elements from seemingly ideologically incompatible actors get adopted, yet are rearranged in a way that serves the purposes of the adopting actors. The dynamic part of the third category consists of the adoption of elements from op-

positional actors, while the continuous element is the 'piggybacking' on such pre-established strategies. Examples for this type include the already mentioned counterframing strategies concerning human rights and the topic of love. On a superordinate level, the adoption of the originally leftist Gramsci-inspired strategy of gaining hegemony through an ideological 'war of position' also falls into this category – presenting further pieces of evidence for the fact that conservative actors often develop their ideas, concepts, and strategies in reaction to progressive actors (Freeden 1996, 336; Tuters 2018, 33).

In the cross tabulation above, one of the four fields remained empty. It is debatable whether there is also a type of dynamic continuity that merges old with oppositional elements. Regarding human rights, for example, one might claim that the progressive political camp has been employing such a framing for a long time already. The same could be argued for the usage of Gramscian strategies. Unlike the temporal-congruent type of dynamic continuity, however, the anti-LGBT movement has turned towards using rights framings precisely *in reaction* to the opposing forces' treatment of the topic. The 'mirroring' that we can observe here therefore takes place in the present, as a more or less direct response to oppositional framings. One might claim that the relational aspect is even more important than the temporal foundation. This is also the case for the strategy of 'right-wing Gramscianism', which is a rather recent addition to the action repertoires of rightist actors worldwide (cf. Abrahamsen et al. 2020) and which the Korean anti-LGBT movement has adopted exactly from these like-minded forces, and not from the left-wing camp directly. The empirical findings of the analysis thus suggest that the fourth type of dynamic continuity is absent in the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Yet, this type may very well be found in the framings of other conservative socio-political actors.

I have introduced the concept of dynamic continuity in an attempt to offer theoretical and conceptual refinement to the analysis of conservative politics. Concerning each of the three types of dynamic continuity presented, I have not, so to speak, reinvented the wheel, but I have instead built my model on existing academic work, taking cues especially from definitional attempts in conservatism studies and from the mechanism-based approach of the *dynamics of contention* research agenda. I have systematically rearranged these theoretical and conceptual elements, subsuming them under the umbrella of dynamic continuity. I argue that this approach helps make sense of the actions of conservative movements in particular. While definitions of conservatism vary greatly, a penchant for the preservation and continuity of what is perceived as good, valuable, or simply plausible can be regarded as a common definitional denominator. At the same time, this study departs from perspectives that regard conservative endeavors, particularly in the field of anti-LGBT politics, as merely nostalgic or reactionary. In fact, the concept of dynamic continuity allows for an understanding of conservative actors as agents of both change and continuity. Through a creative bridging between established and new elements, conservative movements emerge as innovative trailblazers within the conservative socio-political spectrum at large – including its religiously conservative parts, as this study has shown.

This pioneering position, however, also comes with potential risks for movements using the strategy of dynamic continuity. This is where another pattern enters the stage, a pattern which I have frequently observed in the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement and which even made it into the title of this study: opposing desires. The sewing

together, or remodeling of originally opposing, ideologically adversarial elements may cause friction and jeopardize the logics of the framings utilized. A case in point are the framing contests between parts of the anti-LGBT movement that use interpretations of human rights that are hardly compatible: 'Ex-gay' groups actively claim the concept of human rights protection for themselves, while mainstream anti-LGBT activists aim at delegitimizing the concept as a whole. Such inconsistencies, as well as inaccuracies, and perceived incompatibilities with social realities may have diminished the success of the movement to some extent. In chapter 9, I have described these opposing desires as 'productive inconsistencies', noting that in defiance of internal rifts, argumentative discrepancies, and dissent from within and from without, the anti-LGBT movement has been successful in mobilizing large parts of conservative Protestants in Korea and in preventing and abolishing various pro-LGBT policies. However, having support from conservative Protestants *only* may pose problems in the long run. Against this background, the prospects of the Protestant Right's 'cultural war' for hegemony also among a non-religious public seem rather bleak.

Dynamism, of course, does not stop here. Recent years have seen huge mobilizations emerging from within the rightist political spectrum in Korea, featuring several newly nascent 'hot topics' such as transgender issues, anti-feminism, and the conservative turn of young Korean men. It would be a worthwhile scholarly endeavor to examine whether the Protestant Right and other conservative political actors in Korea try to lump together these comparatively new topics and established framing strategies as well. The typology of dynamic continuity may provide a systematic analytical framework for this purpose. I suggest that this novel theoretical and conceptual refinement has the potential of advancing research on conservative politics in general, and of conservative and religious social movements in particular.

Where are we at, and where are we heading? Research contributions, limitations, and future directions

This study has sought to contribute to the literatures on conservatism, contentious politics, and, of course, anti-LGBT movements. Starting off as a single-case study of a representative case of anti-LGBT activism, the study aimed at providing a broad and detailed overview of the workings of the South Korean anti-LGBT movement. The case study dealt with a representative case in that many characteristics, action forms, and framing strategies found in the Korean case can be observed in similarly oriented movements in other countries as well. In the course of the analysis, however, the Korean case turned out to be a revelatory case as well (cf. Snow & Trom 2002, 162), in the sense that it yielded results that contribute to the refinement of theoretical and methodological approaches that can be applied when studying conservative movements. The description of *dynamic continuity* and the related typology outline the central theoretical advances that this study was able to produce. The systematic analytical framework, which – counter-intuitively, one might say – made use of originally leftist Gramscian thoughts and concepts for the analysis of a conservative political actor, was conducive to discerning this pattern. The comprehensive application of a mechanism-based approach created fertile analytical soil also be-

yond strictly causal relations, adding to the fine-grained analysis of the continuous, yet dynamic actions, interactions, and networks of anti-LGBT collective actors in Korea.

This study also makes a significant empirical contribution as it is the first to apply the method of *protest event analysis* to a single national anti-LGBT movement. The PEA dataset served, along with further qualitative and quantitative data sources, as an invaluable foundation for the detailed deductive and inductive analysis of manifold movement properties. My broad and modified application of PEA in particular – including a wide interpretation of what protest events are and, especially, a frame analysis – allowed for both detecting particularities and recognizing the big picture of the Korean anti-LGBT movements' argumentative strategies. I owe the reconsideration of the importance of religion as a potentially powerful political force to Antonio Gramsci's thinking, but also, decisively, to the database that I was able to build using PEA.

Alongside its contributions, the study has also faced limitations in terms of its data basis, focus, and validity. The limitation perhaps most evident concerns the fact that this study has investigated one case only. Given the comprehensive and multifaceted, yet still restricted empirical basis of my study, its results may only be valid for Korea and not generalizable to other cases. My material and time-related resources unfortunately did not allow for the development of a comparative research design. On a theoretical level, however, this study may have the potential to produce generalizable results. One way to do this might be to apply the model of dynamic continuity to other cases of anti-LGBT movements in other countries, but also more generally, to conservative, and religious movements, and other kinds of conservative political actions, and examine whether the conceptual toolkit proves useful for these instances as well.[1] Such future research, which would apply the concepts developed in this study also to other contexts, would allow for possibly illuminative comparisons across different cases and lay the foundation for further elaborations and advancements in the study of dynamic continuity. Existing research has attended to single aspects this concept, for example, on the impact of pro-LGBT movements on anti-LGBT movements and vice-versa (e.g., Fetner 2008; Stone 2016), on the transnational influences on anti-LGBT activism (e.g., Yi, Jung, Phillips 2017; Kaoma 2009), and on the question of how anti-communism gets amalgamated with other discursive elements (e.g., Heo 2021; Cho, Min-ah 2011; Epstein 1994). This study has set as one of its goals to systematically merge these insights under the superordinate concept of dynamic continuity.

Further limitations of this study concern the scope and data of the study. Past applications of the PEA methodology have for the greater part relied on more than one source – often several newspapers – to gather data on social movements. This study's PEA also built on two sources, the conservative, Christian-based newspaper *Kukmin Daily* and press statements from the *Korean Association of Church Communication*, the central

1 The different types of dynamic continuity may also be observable in movements and other political actors from the progressive political spectrum, albeit with reverse effects on the relational level. The overall model of this study, however, has been designed specifically to fit conservative movements. For these, one might argue that the deliberate creation of an appearance of continuity is of particular importance. Progressive movements of course also draw on their legacies. For them, however, this move is arguably less crucial than it is for conservatives.

mouthpiece of the Protestant Right. The latter was mainly used to extend the data basis of the frame analysis. While these two sources were chosen specifically for their expected bias against LGBT rights, hoping to cover as many anti-LGBT protest events as possible, a diversification of the data basis would certainly have proven beneficial to further strengthen the points made in this study. Depending on the focus of interest, one could have either added another newspaper with a conservative and/or Christian orientation, or else selected a newspaper with a more progressive political inclination, in order to increase validity. However, such a broad methodological endeavor went beyond my capacities. Future research projects should strive to provide additional resources for more expanded applications of PEA so that this method might benefit the analysis of rightist movements on a grander scale (cf. also Gelashvili 2021).

Further research into the individual participants of anti-LGBT protests seems necessary as well. Again, owing to my limited resources as a single researcher, I was only able to conduct a survey with a low number of protesters at one anti-LGBT event (cf. chapter 4.2). While there were some clear trends within my dataset, such as an overwhelmingly high number of pious Christians participating in the rally, further research is needed to better understand the background and motivations of anti-LGBT protesters. Alongside survey methods, in-depth narrative interviewing could yield important insights in this respect. Researchers, however, should always keep in mind the ethical challenges as well as the personal risk they may take when exploring movements amongst whose prime characteristics is hostility against certain groups of people (cf. Toscano 2019). Such considerations have, in fact, also been a restraining factor in my own field research, which is why, at some point, I decided to refrain from interviewing more anti-LGBT activists.

The scope of this study is also limited insofar as it has predominantly focused on conservative *Protestant* actors and their activities. This is not problematic in principle, since this focus has emerged 'naturally' in the course of my data analysis. Nevertheless, there are two topics where I see a need for further investigation. The first concerns the Catholic church. In countries like France, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, the United States, Ghana, and Uganda, prominent representatives of the Catholic church have been outspoken opponents of LGBT rights (cf. e.g., Béraud & Portier 2015; Knill & Preidel 2015; Ward 2015). In South Korea, however, the hierarchy of the Catholic church has kept silent on these issues. Catholic church officials are not part of the anti-LGBT movement in Korea. Only a few individual Catholic figures and groups featuring explicitly right-wing orientations actively take part in anti-LGBT events, as well as in promoting other rightist political endeavors (cf. chapter 10.5; Schattle & Lee 2019). This begs the question why the Korean Catholic church differs from many Catholic actors abroad. Is it because of an 'un-ecumenical' unwillingness either to cooperate or be associated with Protestant churches? Is it due to a general reluctance to get involved in politics? Or are there other, internal reasons that lead Korean Catholicism to a moderate positioning towards LGBT issues? Further scrutiny of the case of the Catholic church would be of great value for a comprehensive understanding of the political positionings and actions (or non-actions) of the whole Christian spectrum in Korea.

Another aspect that needs further exploration is the concrete relations that the Protestant Right has with routine politics in Korea – also beyond anti-LGBT endeavors. Existing research focuses on the historically close connections that Protestant churches

had especially with authoritarian and conservative governments before and after democratization. This study has shown that politicians, mostly from conservative parties, have both adopted anti-LGBT stances and participated in movement activities. Conversely, the Protestant Right itself engages in concrete political endeavors as part of its anti-LGBT agenda, promoting political parties such as the minor *Christian Liberal Party* and its equally unsuccessful preceding and succeeding attempts at gaining 'Christian' parliamentary representation. In this context, the ambivalent position that the Protestant Right occupies vis-à-vis state institutions, governments of diverse political colors, and established political parties should be analyzed in greater detail. The *dynamics of contention* approach highlights the complex relations and conflicts that non-traditional political actors can have with established political actors. This study has found that populist anti-elite impulses are mainly directed against left-wing governments, while cooperation with conservative politicians seems to be commonplace or even sought after, despite the attempts of conservative Protestant leaders to establish a competitor party. Transcending LGBT topics, this conundrum calls for further analysis, which would ideally cover various policy areas, interactions, and personal overlaps in order to get a better grasp on the role religion plays in present-day Korean politics.

What remains to be said? The study of anti-LGBT endeavors in society and politics continues to be a relevant, timely, and – yes: pressing task within the social sciences. It is relevant for academic debates in that it offers new pathways for methodological and theoretical refinements, as I hope this study was able to demonstrate. The in-depth analysis of anti-LGBT politics is also timely because anti-emancipatory forces have been getting stronger in parliaments and on the streets in many countries during the last years. The specific 'cultural war' that these forces are waging against diversity of any kind seems to increasingly leave its mark on people's attitudes, as recent public opinion data suggests. One example: even though the majority of people in many western countries continue to believe that same-sex couples should have the right to get married, the support for same-sex marriage has dwindled significantly in places like Great Britain, Germany, Brazil, and the United States over recent years (Ipsos 2023). Another example: in Korea, the LGBT community had to take yet another hit in May 2023, when the Seoul Metropolitan Government decided to deny the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival* the right to take place on Seoul Plaza, a central spot in the city center that the festival had been using continually since 2015, with the exception of the years 2020 and 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, the decision-takers favored a Christian youth concert organized by a Christian broadcasting service, CTS, which is known for its vocal opposition to LGBT rights in general, and the SQCF in particular. The city government claimed it prioritized the latter event for its focus on children and youth, but the SQCF organizers called out the discriminatory practices that they had to suffer from already during the application processes of the previous years – practices which now resulted in the banishment and invisibilization of LGBT people (Yeung & Bae 2023, May 5).

The study of anti-LGBT politics, therefore, is also pressing because such developments and phenomena put LGBT people's capability to even fight for their rights as well as their physical and psychological wellbeing is at risk. In a 2017 survey commissioned by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 94.6 percent of LGBT people stated they had suffered hate speech online, 87.5 percent had also experienced hate speech of-

fline, and 49.3 percent of the LGBT people surveyed claimed they had been encountering mental health problems such as stress and depression after the confrontation with hate speech (Yonhap News 2017, February 19). This study hopes to provide cues for decision-makers and activists to better understand the workings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, also for the practical purpose that it may inhibit the normalization of discriminatory practices and harming language, and that it may help counter social developments that threaten certain people's human rights. I have not out of an activist or political intention ventured on the 'unveiling' of internal rifts, overtly hostile and violent behaviors, contradictory and deliberately untruthful framings of the anti-LGBT movement in Korea. Rather, I have conducted this study with the sincere desire to contribute to scholarly advancements in the fields of social movement and conservatism studies. However, the author of this study would not disapprove if its results also were to help stir people's hearts and minds away from 'opposing desires' and instead towards a desire to protect human rights for all.