4. Methods and methodology

4.1 The general methodological approach

As outlined in the introduction, this study endeavors to provide a thorough analysis of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, encompassing many aspects of its workings. From a methodological point of view, the best suited means of investigating a research topic from head to toe is the case study. According to Snow and Trom (2002, 147), case studies include the "(a) investigation and analysis of an instance or variant of some bounded social phenomenon that (b) seek to generate a richly detailed and 'thick' elaboration of the phenomenon studied through (c) the use and triangulation of multiple methods or procedures that include but are not limited to qualitative techniques." This study ticks all the boxes suggested by Snow and Trom, (1) investigating the case of an anti-LGBT social movement with a politically and religiously conservative background in a non-western context, (2) offering a comprehensive analysis of the movement's characteristics, actions, and context, and (3) triangulating diverse qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis, providing the basis for a holistic investigation.

My study is thus a single-case study of a *typical* or *representative* case, in that the Korean anti-LGBT movement has a similar background as other movements that fight against LGBT rights, that is, belonging to the right-wing political spectrum and featuring a conservative Christian basis (cf. e.g., Strube et al. 2021; Hark & Villa 2015; Fetner 2008; Herman 1997).[1] This assumed typicality notwithstanding, the study strives to also carve out the specifics of the Korean case. Moreover, the study analyzes the anti-LGBT movement as a phenomenon that is closely embedded in the Protestant Right. In this sense, the particular research design of this investigation can also be regarded as a *synecdochical* or *revelatory* case study: "a detailed, holistic study of a specific case is used as a springboard, in almost a synecdochical fashion, for gaining insight into and understanding of the larger movement of which it is a part, and is presumably revelatory as either a representative or critical case" (Snow & Trom 2002, 162). Relatedly, the analysis of the Korean anti-LGBT movement serves for theoretical refinement in the field of conservatism

1 For an overview of the types of case studies in the field of social movement studies, see Snow and Trom (2002, 157–163).

studies, as already mentioned before. The generalizability of this study is thus situated on the theoretical level. The goal of a case study "is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)" (Yin 1989, 21; quoted in Snow & Trom 2002, 164). This makes sense when considering that social movement studies mainly generate and promote middle-range theories rather than "grand theory" or mere empiricism (Klandermans et al. 2002, 317; cf. also Ayoub et al. 2014, 72).

The concrete methods of data collection and analysis of this study were chosen to cater this goal of theoretical refinement and, of course, to best answer the broad primary research question and to live up to the standards of a case-study design. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies find usage, following the tradition of methodological pluralism (della Porta 2014) and confirming the "absence of methodological dogmatism" (Klandermans & Staggenborg 2002, xii) in social movement studies. Such a triangulation of methodologies serves to develop a deeper understanding of complex phenomena, to contribute to theory-building, and to answer different aspects of a research question (Ayoub et al. 2014, 68; 71). This study has an *exploratory sequential mixed-method research design*, in which "the researcher starts by qualitatively exploring a topic before building to a second, quantitative phase", with the goal to "generalize qualitative findings based on […] the first phase to a larger sample gathered during the second phase" (Creswell & Clark 2011, 86).[2]

In an initial fieldwork phase, I spent a total of seven months in Korea, including a short trip in August 2018 and a longer one from March until August 2019. I went to field with the goal of collecting data on the general characteristics and workings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement to answer the main research question of this study, which has remained unchanged. My original approach thus followed the traditional lines of social movement research, attempting to delve deeper into the actors, resources, mobilization strategies, and arguments used by this specific phenomenon of collective action. For this purpose, I opted for interviewing activists and conducting participant observations. My field research had an exploratory basis in the sense that I was, of course, not only open to new insights, but also in that I was looking for worthwhile avenues to extend, change, or narrow down my research focus. I soon came to the realization that many aspects of the study needed closer scrutiny, which is why I widened the methodological repertoire to also include a small survey of protest participants. This latter research method already indicated a shift towards a more quantitative approach, and towards what would become the primary unit of analysis: protest events.[3] After the fieldwork phase, I conducted

2 According to Ayoub et al. (2014, 69), mechanism-driven research (cf. McAdam et al. 2001) tends to prefer the opposite, that is, *explanatory sequential research designs*, in which quantitative data is collected and analyzed in the first step to build upon this, in a second step, a qualitative methodology to help explanation. I argue that my research design can still fulfill the task of explaining mechanisms, since the quantitative part of the protest event analysis also includes qualitative elements, particularly the frame analysis, which allows for a detailed inductive and interpretative analysis.

3 Protest events are not the only unit of analysis, though. Depending on the focus of the respective sub-questions, one can discern other, secondary units of analysis. Among these are social movement organizations, (counter-)countermovements or in general opponents, movement leaders, and political parties close to the movement, the network that these actors create, reported behav-

a comprehensive protest event analysis (PEA) in order to build a sufficiently large and detailed database to confidently answer the research questions. The PEA, in fact, is the core method of data collection and data analysis of this study. In the following, I shortly present each of the methods applied and their respective operationalizations in the research process of this study.

4.2 Methods of data collection and data analysis

Semi-structured qualitative interviews

Interviewing is a common research method of social movement studies, for it especially allows to gather insights into the motivations, identities, agency, and contextual embeddedness of movements in general, and activists in particular (Blee & Taylor 2002, 93–97; cf. also della Porta 2014). I have conducted 34 semi-structured qualitative interviews and two short written interviews via e-mail, mostly with important anti-LGBT activists, but also with pro-LGBT activists, non-Protestant religious actors, journalists, and researchers. Some of the interviewees have additionally answered the questionnaire that I had sent to them in advance in written form. A list of the conducted interviews can be found in the appendix (A.1). I used two basic versions of questionnaires, one for explicitly anti-LGBT actors and one for pro-LGBT interviewees and other actors. The questionnaires were modeled to cover the main spheres of interest, as in the case of anti-LGBT activists starting by inquiring general information on the interviewees and the organization(s) they belong to, and continuing to ask about their cooperations, concrete action forms and disseminated contents, the communicative means used, reasons and motivations for getting active, and their positioning within Korean society and politics. I slightly adjusted the questionnaires for each new interviewee, for example, according to their area of expertise, but mostly by integrating questions on interesting aspects that had come up in previous interviews. The semi-structured quality of the interviews allowed me to both systematically cover all areas of interest of the study, and at the same time react spontaneously in case new aspects got mentioned or more detailed information was needed (cf. Blee & Taylor 2002, 92).

In a first step, I selected the anti-LGBT interviewees by looking for key informants (cf. Blee & Taylor 2000, 105–107). Practically, I sought out leading figures who often appeared in media coverage on opposition against LGBT rights. In a second step, I relied on snowballing, asking the interviewees who they cooperate with or who they think is an important actor in the field. On the pro-LGBT or neutral side, I mostly looked for actors who had directly or indirectly been involved (e.g., as targets) in episodes of contention or who I expected could help me with their professional and activist expertise. Initially, I also contacted and interviewed representatives from the Catholic church, intending to also analyze their actions and perspectives concerning LGBT rights – a line of research

ior, frames (or rather: the statements and propositions made), and protest participants (and their opinions and motives). PEA data covers all these aspects.

that I decided to relinquish since no mainstream Catholic organizations had been involved in the Korean anti-LGBT movement. In total, I have contacted 56 individual or institutional actors, which amounts to a response rate of 64.3 percent.

The interviews were transcribed and systematically analyzed using qualitative content analysis, which is a rule-based and thus replicable technique to analyze different types of communication (Mayring 2015, 468). I followed Kuckartz' (2014) approach, building categories both deductively, based on the existing literature and the study's theoretical and conceptual approach, and inductively to guarantee openness for new findings and theorization. I have coded the dataset accordingly, using the MAXQDA software. This approach is an explicitly qualitative one, since it does not quantify textual units, but rather aims at focusing on the concrete content of the original text while at the same time taking into consideration its communicational context (Mayring 2015, 469).

Participant observations

Participant observations constituted the second method of data collection. The merits of participant observation include the possibility of collecting firsthand data, which allows the researcher to gain deep knowledge and familiarity with the instances of collective action studies. What is more, participant observation enables researchers to actually *experience*, to "understand events through the perspective of the people one studies", and through being close to them, to better grasp their thoughts, beliefs, and behavior (Balsiger & Lambelet 2014, 145f.). Participant observation entails further benefits, such as understanding the symbolic dimensions of protest, revealing heterogeneity within movements, and unveiling inconsistencies between ideology and practices (Balsiger & Lambelet 2014, 147–150).

I observed ten events organized by the anti-LGBT camp, for example, 'educational' events and rallies against several governmental and non-governmental institutions, with various issues as bones of contention. A difficulty for me as a noticeably non-Korean observer was the requirement of blending in (Balsiger & Lambelet 2014, 158). At one event, for instance, I was publicly welcomed by the moderator who must have assumed that I share the event's anti-LGBT orientation. This happened despite the fact that I presented myself neutrally as a researcher at the registration and tried to keep low-key throughout the event. One person even approached me asking whether I was available for a newspaper interview, which I kindly declined. My experience was that participant observations can become particularly challenging in research on movements that cultivate hostility against certain groups of people, making the whole endeavor even risky at times (cf. part 4.3 of this chapter). An overview of the 11 (participant) observations conducted during fieldwork in Korea can be found in the appendix (A.2).

Survey of participants at an anti-LGBT rally

The third method of data collection is a small survey that I conducted among participants of an anti-LGBT rally. During fieldwork, I felt the need to also investigate the micro-level of anti-LGBT activism, that is, the involvement of individuals in protest events and taking the participants as unit of analysis. Andretta and della Porta (2014, 308–310) recom-

mend this method, for it complements the field's general focus on macro- and meso-level analyses, and allows to gather data on individual participation – for example, concerning attitudes, and the socio-demographic and political backgrounds. While sampling strategies, the question of representativity, and the collection of data in a "highly emotionally charged environment" (Andretta & della Porta 2014, 324) may pose problems in survey research, I argue that the gathered data can still be helpful to better understand the individual motivations and backgrounds of protest participants.

For reasons of self-protection and access (for further explanations, see section 4.3) I decided to conduct the survey among protesters at one event only, the 2019 *Citizens' Rally against the Homosexual Queer Festival* (*2019 nyŏn tongsŏngae k'wiŏ ch'ukche pandae kungmin taehoe*) on 1 June 2019. This event was the fifth edition of the biggest anti-LGBT event in Korea in terms of participants, taking place on the same day as, and just across the street of the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival*, Korea's biggest LGBT event. I had prepared a semi-standardized questionnaire beforehand, featuring standardized, closed questions on the interviewee's sociographic features: age, sex, place of residence, occupation, and also on the political party mainly supported by the interviewee, and the frequency of attending religious services. Additionally, the questionnaire included partly open questions on the main areas of interest: the religion and denomination the person belongs to, the reasons or motivations for taking part in the event, how they got to know about the event, if the interviewee was active in anti-LGBT or related organizations, and if yes, in which, and how many times he or she had already participated in anti-LGBT events, if at all. For the standardized questions, I adapted questions from established polling projects conducted by *Korean Gallup* and *World Value Survey*, for example, on the sociographic data and party allegiance, while coming up with the open questions myself. A translation of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix (A.3). Since it was a one-time event, I was not able to conduct a pre-study to test my questionnaire, but by partly relying on existing questionnaires, I hoped to engender a certain level of robustness. Since I wanted the interviews to last not too long in the bustling environment of a rally, I had to fit everything on one A4 sheet of paper. This is why I could only include a small selection of questions into my survey.

Approaching people was not easy, for there was a lot of flow during the event, which was attended by several thousand people. Also, many people were either skeptical about my intentions and consequently refused to answer my questions or started to try to convince me of their opinions rather than participating in my survey, which cost a lot of time. Since it was very loud at the venue and I could thus not understand very well, I had some interviewees fill out parts of the questionnaire themselves, especially the open questions. Although I tried to cover women and men equally, as well as to include people from all age groups, systematic sampling (as e.g. suggested by Andretta & della Porta 2014, 319–324) was, unfortunately, not possible. In the end, I was only able to have 26 people participate in the survey. Nevertheless, I argue that there are some clearly observable trends which I will explicate in greater detail in chapter 9.

Protest event analysis plus frame analysis

Finally, the fourth type of data collection mainly uses media sources. I started collecting these data mostly after I came back from the field, choosing the methods of data collection and analysis building upon what I found during fieldwork – that is, as already mentioned, I specified my research design in a sequential manner. The data I collected in this phase serves the purpose of conducting a combined *protest event analysis* and *frame analysis*.

The first main data source consists of articles from Kukmin Daily (*kungmin ilbo*), a conservative Christian daily newspaper, which I consciously chose for its frequent and negatively biased reporting on LGBT issues, presuming it covers many instances of LGBT-related contention and related journalistic pieces. I collected all the articles including the search term '*tongsŏngae*' ('homosexuality') for the period from January 1990, from which point the Kukmin Daily online archive is accessible, till the end of April 2020, when the elections for the South Korean National Assembly took place. In total, I found around 4200 articles including the term 'homosexuality' in this period. In a second step, I sorted out the most important articles for closer analysis. For the 1990s, I kept all articles because there was only minimal coverage on the topic. From the year 2000 onwards, I started selecting the most important articles, in particular those that included coverage on concrete protest events (adopting a broad definition, see below), opinion pieces (editorials, special contributions), articles in which politicians comment on the issue of homosexuality, articles on opinion surveys, as well as articles that cover international developments in terms of LGBT issues, especially regarding foreign churches. To accomplish this selection, I read the headings of all articles and when I deemed the article important, I read a bit into it and if the article indeed proved important, I included it in the list of selected articles with short summaries per year. I also collected all the press statements of the *Korean Association of Church Communication* (KACC) in which the term 'homosexuality' can be found, in total of 185 press statements from 2006 until April 2020. For the KACC data as well, I created a list with short summaries for each press release.[4]

Building upon this twofold data basis, I conducted a protest event analysis (PEA). PEA is a research method mainly used in the area of social movement studies, representing a type of (mostly: quantitative) content analysis mapping "the occurrences and characteristics of protests across geographical areas, across issue/movements, and over time" (Hutter 2014, 336). Various types of PEA have been developed over the years, with comparative data sets covering protests on many different issues in several countries (Hutter 2014, 340), but also including PEAs on single countries and single-issue movements (cf. e.g., O'Brien 2012 on environmental protests in New Zealand). In general, "PEA provides a solid ground in an area that is still often marked by more or less informed speculation"

4 While these two data sources represent the most relevant empirical data of this study, especially for the PEA, I also gathered complementary data like books, booklets and leaflets published by anti-LGBT activists. Moreover, whenever I needed to go into further detail, for example on certain episodes of contention or concerning specific actors, I resorted to additional sources, either from the respective groups' websites or from news articles other than those provided by Kukmin Daily.

(Koopmans & Rucht 2002, 251), which suits the case of Korean anti-LGBT activism well since a systematic analysis of it has been lacking.

The PEA in this study has a narrow focus in that it considers the actions of the anti-LGBT movement in South Korea only. Concerning the primary unit of analysis I take into account a broader set of protest events hosted by anti-LGBT activists, not only looking at 'traditional', demonstration-type forms of protest, but also incorporating petitions, litigation, the publication of press statements, and 'educational' events. The decision to include the latter events, too, arises from my fieldwork insights. As mentioned in the introduction, I argue that a superior objective of the Protestant Right is to reach or recreate hegemony. To achieve this goal, the anti-LGBT movement and Korean conservative Protestantism at large resort to diverse action forms including, but also going beyond concrete protest. Through a protest event analysis, I can fill the gaps that my fieldwork research could not address in a sufficient manner. I am able to observe past issues of contention, action forms, actors and their targets in a systematic way. Comparisons over time are possible, as well as detecting campaigns, protracted episodes of contention, and noteworthy phenomena to be analyzed in detail that my interviews had not unearthed yet. The professionalization process of the anti-LGBT movement can also be investigated by using PEA.

Recent developments of PEA see a broadening of the unit of analysis, going beyond the narrow scope of protests, including other forms of claims making as well (Hutter 2014, 338). I also pursue such a path by including frame analysis into PEA. Koopmans and Statham (1999) proposed a similar approach, combining PEA with political discourse analysis, which they called "political claims analysis". I explicitly focus on the frames used by actors of the anti-LGBT movement, following the approach developed by Benford and Snow (2000). This type of frame analysis common in social movement studies fits well into this study. It "zooms in on how particular ideas/ideologies are used deliberately to mobilize supporters and demobilize adversaries vis-à-vis a particular goal" (Lindekilde 2014, 200), thus looking at the strategic side of actors' statements and claims. The particular frames of this approach are called collective action frames.

> '[C]ollective action frames' function by focusing attention, combining events, situations, and social facts, and transforming the understanding of aspects of social reality, but they put more emphasis on the agentic and innovative side of 'framing' – the conscious signifying work carried out by social movement actors. (Lindekilde 2014: 201)

Collective action frames are often analyzed asking whether the framing efforts are resonant among (potential) publics, that is, whether the frames succeed in creating a consensus on a specific topic (Benford & Snow 2000, 619–622), which is akin to Antonio Gramsci's thought on the 'war of position' and 'common sense'. Perceiving and creating political opportunity is another task frames should be able to accomplish (Lindekilde 2014, 202) – making the framing approach compatible with the contentious politics perspective on attribution of opportunity and threat, which was also outlined in the theory chapters.

Over the course of my study and its constituting chapters, I will show that frames and protest events can be both dependent and independent variables. With respect to certain frames, for example, I investigate where exactly they originate from (ideology, transna-

tional learning, etc.) and analyze how framing activities differ depending on the public the activists are addressing (cf. Lindekilde 2014, 222), making them dependent variables. At the same time, I will illustrate what effects or resonance specific frames actually have, for instance in terms of an institutionalization of anti-LGBT attitudes within Protestant denominations, indicating that these frames are independent variables.

Operationalization of the protest event analysis

Regarding the concrete application of PEA and frame analysis, I take both the Kukmin Daily and KACC data to gather and analyze data from protest events. Although the KACC press statements can be regarded as a kind of protest event themselves – the KACC being the main mouthpiece of conservative Protestantism in Korea – it will principally serve to analyze the frames in use. Editorials and special contributions in Kukmin Daily will also be used for the latter purpose, as well as claims by anti-LGBT actors during protest events. I will proceed 'traditionally', in that I investigate the "core framing tasks" proposed by Benford and Snow (2000, 615–618): *diagnostic framing* (identifying the problem), *prognostic framing* (proposing solutions to the problem identified), and *motivational framing* (indicating a rationale for taking action). There are more types of frames (e.g. 'master frames') and processes of frame alignment (Benford & Snow 2000, 623–625), which are not explicit parts of the PEA, but that I will integrate into the general analysis and look out for while conducting the frame analysis within PEA.

The coding process for PEA and frame analysis has been predominantly deductive, adopting suitable items from existing PEA projects, especially from *Prodat*, a research project that has been ongoing since 1993 to systematically document and analyze protest events in Germany.[5] Inductive coding has also been applied, though, in order to keep flexibility for new insights, especially for the framing part. In the initial phase of the coding process, for instance, I realized that the three core framing tasks were not sufficient to cover the whole range of frames used. I therefore included a fourth category, symbolic frames, which consist of metaphorical or symbolic statements rather than elaborate arguments (cf. Koopmans & Statham 1999, 207).

The concrete operationalization of the PEA as conducted for this study is as follows. The Kukmin Daily articles and KACC press statements were coded to cover diverse items, putting numerical and textual data in a large Excel file. First, a protest event number (PEN) was assigned. Then the date of the protest event was noted, as well as a short summary of what happened, and the source (Kukmin Daily or KACC). Further items include the place of protest, the province or city in which it took place, the number of participants, the participating groups, the function that each group assumed, the total number of groups participating in the event, the party politicians present, as well as their political party and the party or governmental function they have. The names of important

5 For further information, e.g., including datasets, code sheets, and claim lists, refer to the website https://www.wzb.eu/de/forschung/beendete-forschungsprogramme/zivilgesellschaft-und-politische-mobilisierung/projekte/prodat-dokumentation-und-analyse-von-protestereignissen-in-der-bundesrepublik.

individual actors (mainly activists) and their functions were also recorded. Then the topics of the protest were coded, as well as the targets, and the action forms. The items also included questions on whether the protest event was part of a campaign, whether it engendered counter-protest or was itself a counterprotest, and whether there were other consequences after the event. The final coded items are the already mentioned types of frames.

In most cases, the coding process involved assigning codes, i.e., numbers to the items under investigation. In some cases, these codes were straightforward, as in the case of province or city where the protest event occurred. In other cases, the code lists were more open or, in fact, created completely on an inductive basis like in the cases of the participating groups, the topics, and targets of protest, as well as the frames employed. The general codesheet can be found in the appendix (A.4). Besides the codes, the table also includes textual data in many cases in order to facilitate the final analysis, for instance, of the framing strategies.[6] For each category, only a set number of columns was available. As a rule of thumb, I selected those groups and people that were mentioned first assuming that they are the most important actors, unless other actors were named later, that had turned out to be important figures of the movement in the previous coding process. In the case of frames, I applied a similar selection strategy, except in cases where new frames appeared.

The PEA found a total of 513 protest events analyzing the Kukmin Daily data. When including the KACC data as well, the number of analyzed events stands at 693. In the following analytical chapters, I am going to analyze the PEA data mainly using descriptive statistics. While the frame analysis included in the PEA also produced quantitative data, these data in particular will be analyzed qualitatively as well. The PEA dataset will also be used as a foundation for another analytical method, namely network analysis. The methodological details on this will be explicated in chapter 10.1.

4.3 Methodological intricacies

Let me address some problematic aspects of the presented approaches of data collection and data analysis. PEA is, essentially, a quantitative approach, turning words into numbers (Hutter 2014, 336). Frame analysis, in contrast, relies on the interpretation and inclusion of longer extracts of textual data, which cannot be easily integrated into Excel tables. I solve this problem by conducting both PEA and frame analysis in 'one go' to save time and energy, but keeping the two approaches analytically apart. Replicability is another concern. As demonstrated, the detection of codes for several items is relatively straightforward. Regarding frame analysis, however, there is more room for interpretation. I attempt to remedy this critical point by providing the above explanations, clearly demonstrating how exactly I inductively identified the categories and codes. This way, I

6 For the frames, the original Korean quotes are given as well as a translation that was made using online tools for translation such as the website https://papago.naver.com/. The translation was done to enable non-native speakers of Korean to also grasp the rough content of the statements made. The accuracy of these translations, however, needs to be checked in each case.

hope to ensure that (inter-coder) reliability is high, even though I did not have the financial and thus human resources to have my data coded by another person.

Finally, the selectivity and bias of media data have to be addressed.[7] Newspapers do not cover all protest events that happen, neither do press agencies nor press departments of organizations. They normally choose for reporting those events that have high news value, or in the case of KACC, phenomena that it wants to comment on critically from the perspective of conservative Korean Protestantism. As already mentioned, I chose Kukmin Daily explicitly for its connection to the Korean Protestant Right and for its biased, predominantly negative reporting on LGBT issues. Kukmin Daily is also one of the bigger Korean daily national newspapers and as such quite widely read and accessible in full online (as of April 2023). I argue that the bias of Kukmin Daily can indeed benefit my study. I assume that this newspaper provides a more profound and less 'filtered' depiction of anti-LGBT actors' attitudes and arguments. Moreover, Kukmin Daily's selectivity in terms of LGBT issues presumably means that it covers related topics more comprehensively than other newspapers. This is why I decided to only rely on this one traditional media source to conduct the PEA.

My position as a researcher investigating a sensitive topic

Reflecting upon my position as a researcher, I had to consider several problematic issues before and during my fieldwork trips. First, as a non-Korean cultural outsider, access to the field posed potential problems. In retrospect, however, I can say that me being a white European person could even have benefitted my research. While many anti-LGBT actors declined being interviewed, those interviewees that accepted my requests have been astonishingly open in telling me about their motivations and tactical choices. Perhaps they thought that I would not be threatening their activities as a foreigner writing my book in English and not in Korean, thus with less of an impact in Korea. Another reason for this openness may also be found in the fact that many of them asked me during the interviews if I was a Christian myself, which I affirmed. I belong to the Roman Catholic church. I had the feeling that many of my interviewees then regarded me as a kind of ally, although I never mentioned anything that could have led them to such thoughts beyond the fact that I am a Christian. In order to enable access at all and for the sake of objectivity, I did not disclose my personal value conflict and – perhaps even more importantly – I decided to disclose my sexual orientation only when asked about it. Only one interviewee of the anti-LGBT camp did ask me, resulting in several precaution measures on their side like also recording the interview. They also tried to convince me of the alleged dangers of homosexuality and indirectly tried to talk me into conversion treatments.

Such situations and the perpetual identity negotiation put me under a lot of emotional stress. Doing research on sensitive topics including antagonistic actors can represent significant strains for researchers, before, during, and even long after the field (Maguire et al. 2018). I tried and am trying to not suppress these emotions while coping

7 For general overviews on the selection bias in the selection process for media data, see Hutter (2014, 348–353); for the selectivity and robustness of media data, see Koopmans and Rucht (2002, 246–251).

with the obvious requirements of both self-protection and objectivity. I hope that laying bare these considerations will make clear my research process, for example, to better understand why I refrained from conducting more interviews with anti-LGBT actors from a certain point. Another potentially problematic issue concerns investigating "absolutist" religious groups (Chong 2008). On the one hand, one needs to take their religious belief seriously, but on the other hand, the researcher also has to keep an openness for possible 'hidden agendas' that do not (only) relate to questions of doctrine and faith. Walking the fine lines of these methodological and ethical intricacies is a challenge that, I am sure, other researchers of right-wing religious movements have also experienced. I hope that by making explicit reference to these difficulties, I contribute the overall objectivity that this study strives to guarantee.