

Hendrik Johannemann

OPPOSING DESIRES

The Contentious Politics
of the South Korean Anti-LGBT Movement

[transcript] Social Movement and Protest

Hendrik Johannemann
Opposing Desires

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[transcript]

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Dor kiek mol eener an, wat ju Sönn met ju Hölpe allet henkregen heff*

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1. Introduction

On the hot summer day of 31 August 2019, the Methodist pastor Lee Dong-hwan (*Yi Tong-hwan*)¹ entered the stage of the *Inch'ŏn Queer Culture Festival* to hold a blessing prayer for the LGBT² people participating in the event. It was the second time the festival took place in the large port city west of South Korea's capital Seoul. The year before, around 1000 Christian anti-LGBT protesters had attempted to block the festival, driving the 300 participants into a corner for hours in the hot sun, also denying them access to water and sanitary facilities. The police forces present had been reticent to avert violent assaults emanating from some of the anti-LGBT protesters. Back then, the organizers of the queer festival had already been facing problems previous to these violent outbreaks since the authorities of the district in charge had not been willing to grant permission to use the proposed location for a queer event. The district demanded that the organizers provide 300 safety guards and 100 parking spaces – conditions that had never been set for any other event before (Yi, Yu-jin 2018, September 11). Pastor Lee Dong-hwan wanted to show solidarity and set an example against such hostilities, accompanying his blessing prayer with the following words: “The world will change when you and I join hands at the moment. I oppose the stigma, hatred, discrimination and exclusion against sexual minorities and other minorities in society” (quoted in Park, Ji-won 2021, April 29). The 2019 edition of the *Inch'ŏn Queer Culture Festival* took place without clashes, also because, this

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- 1 In this study, the McCune-Reischauer Romanization system is used to render names and texts written in Korean into the Latin alphabet. In cases where other spellings are in common use, these are used as well, followed by an italicized McCune-Reischauer Romanization in brackets the first time the name appears in the text.
 - 2 There are many ways to refer to sexual minorities, including diverse sets of acronyms. In this study, I mainly employ the acronym LGBT, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. This does not mean that I exclude other sexual minorities like intersex or asexual people. However, the empirical data used for this study suggests that the Korean anti-LGBT movement mainly focuses on the fight against homosexual and transgender people and related political initiatives. This is also why I refrain from using the designation ‘queer’, which is an umbrella term carrying the risk of blurring perspectives on the specific forms of activities directed against different sub-communities within sexual minorities.

time, the police deployed 2300 officers and installed safety fences to guard the pro-LGBT crowd from the anti-LGBT protesters (Son, Hyön-gyu 2019, August 31).

For Pastor Lee, however, the festival was not without consequences. His denomination, the *Korean Methodist Church*, initiated a trial against him and found him guilty of violating a church regulation that had been introduced in 2015, according to which church members are not allowed to approve of, or sympathize with homosexuality.³ On 15 October 2021, a church tribunal decided to suspend Lee Dong-hwan for two years from his position as a pastor. The trial received much public and media attention, also because it took place amid ongoing political and societal debates over a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, which, if passed, would provide protection also to LGBT people, but which had been met with fierce and continuous opposition from conservative Protestant groups since it was first proposed in 2007. Pastor Lee appealed against the indictment by his denomination and additionally filed a lawsuit against the Korean Methodist Church in February 2023, receiving support in this endeavor from several progressive churches, civil society, and political groups (Park, Ji-won 2021, April 29; Ch'oe, Sŭng-hyŏn 2023, February 2).

This episode showcases the complex interplay among the Korean⁴ anti-LGBT movement, the pro-LGBT camps within and outside different churches, and politics in general. Different kinds of what I want to call *opposing desires* come to the fore here. The most obvious form of opposing desires exists between actors with contrasting views as to how to treat LGBT people in politics, society, and, particularly, in Christian churches. Protestant anti-LGBT forces oppose the claims, demands, and visibility of pro-LGBT groups through protesting against queer culture festivals – the Korean version of gay pride events –, which have taken place in Seoul in small scale from the early 2000s onwards, and which, by and by, grew and also spread to other Korean cities. Anti-LGBT groups have also targeted concrete pro-LGBT legislation and political actors supporting such bills. Additionally, Protestant churches have turned to attacking LGBT-friendly individuals and groups *within* their denominations in recent years, as in the case of Pastor Lee Dong-hwan.

There is, however, also another type of 'opposing desires': what anti-LGBT forces have been attempting to do in Korea (and elsewhere, for that matter) amounts to opposing the very *desires* of LGBT people. In the narrow sense, these anti-emancipatory actors fight against non-heteronormative sexual orientations, which are often referred to as 'desires' in social sciences, and especially in gender and queer studies. In the broad sense, the desires problematized and negatively politicized by anti-LGBT forces also include LGBT people's yearning for equality, emancipation, and non-discrimination, a longing to freely express their sexual identities in families, at their jobs, in churches, and in society at large.

3 Article 3, paragraph 8 of the Korean Methodist Church's 2019 version of the trial law of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (*kyori-wa chŏngjang chaep'anbŏp*) states that church members are liable to disciplinary measures "when approving of, or sympathize with the violation of the Drug Act, gambling, and homosexuality" (Korean Methodist Church 2019).

4 When using the word 'Korea' or derivatives thereof, I generally refer to *South Korea* unless stated differently.

This study sets out to investigate in depth the opposition against these last-named desires, taking Korea as a single-case study to better understand the workings of a social movement that fights against the rights of sexual minorities, a social phenomenon that I and others have referred to as *anti-LGBT movement* (cf. e.g., Lee, Wondong 2021; Johannemann 2020; Fetner & Heath 2018; Kim, Nami 2016).⁵ Korea is a worthwhile case to examine for several reasons. *First*, the Korean anti-LGBT movement has proven assiduous and durable since its first emergence in the mid-2000s, showing significant success in either preventing or abolishing numerous pro-LGBT bills on the national, regional, and local levels (Kim, Ol Teun 2021, 9–14). Especially in comparison to many western countries, where pro-LGBT legislation has, despite attempts at backlash, increasingly and predominantly prevailed in the past three decades (Kollman & Waites 2009), the successful campaigns of the Korean anti-LGBT movement require further scrutiny.

This ‘success’ is, *secondly*, noteworthy when considering that Korea had historically been relatively tolerant of same-sex sexuality. Historical records from the Silla (B.C. 57–A.D. 935) and Chosŏn (1392–1910) dynasties show evidence of same-sex desires and activities (Kim & Hahn 2006), and as late as in the 1940s, in rural regions, same-sex relationships among men were not uncommon, provoking neither moralization nor overt stigmatization (Pak, Kwan-su 2006).⁶ However, several authors have pointed out that living one’s sexual orientation freely has proven greatly precarious during post-war times in Korea, mainly owing to strong and strict heteronormative expectations within families, at the workplace, and in society at large (Johannemann 2021; Henry 2020; Cho, John [Song Pae] 2020; 2009; Bong 2009; Seo 2001). The Korean LGBT movement only emerged after democratization in the mid-1990s, but public opinion on homosexuality has still remained largely hostile since. It has to be noted, though, that a survey found that across 34 countries surveyed, Korea has shown one of highest rises in benevolent opinions on homosexuality over the past twenty years, with 44 percent of Koreans believing that it should be accepted by society in 2019 (Poushter & Kent 2019). Against this background, the role of the anti-LGBT movement in the formation of societal posi-

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- 5 Other studies use the terms “anti-gay” (e.g., Grace 2016; Stone 2016; Dugan 2004; Herman 1997) or “heteroactivism” (Browne & Nash 2017) to describe collective action directed against sexual minorities. While the authors of these studies, in most cases, did not define these terms in an exclusive way – e.g., only speaking about male homosexual men – this study opts for the more clearly inclusive term ‘anti-LGBT’, highlighting the opposition against a broader spectrum of sexual minorities. Recent studies have also turned towards using the equally inclusive term “anti-queer” (cf. e.g., Siwoo 2018). The Korean actors fighting against sexual minority rights, however, mostly stick to terms like ‘homosexuality’, which is why I decided to consciously name the identity categories included in the acronym ‘LGBT’. What is more, ‘anti-queer’ could be confused with an opposition against the premises of *Queer Theory*, which does indeed sometimes form part of activism, e.g., when vilifying the academic works of US-American philosopher Judith Butler. This, however, forms but a relatively small area of anti-LGBT activism in Korea.
 - 6 One has to be cautious, however, to define these same-sex activities and desires as ‘homosexuality’, a term for an identity category of western origin that has only emerged from the mid-late 19th century onwards. For detailed overviews of the history of same-sex and non-cis gendered phenomena in Korea, see Pak-Ch’a Min-jöng’s (2018) study on queerness in Chosŏn and Johannemann’s (2021) article on gay identity formation.

tionings towards sexual minorities, and as a counter-actor against pro-LGBT collective action should be analyzed in greater detail.

Thirdly, the fact that South Korea is a non-western and consolidated democratic state makes it an interesting case for comparison both with existing studies on anti-LGBT activism in western democracies (e.g., Fejes 2008 and Herman 1997 on the US; Strube et al.'s (2021) edited volume on several European countries) and in non-western democracies and authoritarian regimes (e.g., Kaoma 2018 on several sub-Saharan African countries; Weiss 2017 on four South East Asian countries). The historical, cultural, and geopolitical context of Korea needs to be taken into due consideration when investigating its anti-LGBT movement.

Finally, in Korean society, a comparatively large share of the population, around 27–29 percent, belong to Christian churches⁷ – actors that have been discerned as important socio-political forces in almost all existing studies on anti-LGBT activism. Historically, Protestant churches in particular have fostered close relations with right-wing governments and occupied privileged positions in the state, especially after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule under South Korea's first president Syngman Rhee (*Yi Sŭng-man*), but also during the following authoritarian regimes and after democratization (cf. e.g., Clark 2008; Park, Chung-shin 2007). This begs the question whether these political connections and power positions also get played out in the context of anti-LGBT collective action.

Based on these insights, I endeavor a richly detailed and context-sensitive analysis of the Korean case by tackling a rather large main research question: *Why and how does the South Korean anti-LGBT movement attempt to render LGBT topics contentious in politics and society?* I opt for such a wide perspective because, I argue, the existing literature has not yet found wholly convincing answers to this basic question. Previous studies on the Korean anti-LGBT movement have overemphasized an alleged instrumentalization of the issue and they have neglected, to some extent, the agency of the actors involved while at the same time overlooking parts of these actors' structural embeddedness. This latter aspect, I claim, manifests itself in an underestimation of the role religion plays in the contention around LGBT topics. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the existing literature lacks a thorough and adequate empirical basis.

Building upon R.W. Connell's concept of the crisis tendencies of the gender order and thus taking a critical feminist perspective (cf. e.g., Connell 2005), Nami Kim (2016, 26), for example, claims that conservative Protestant groups in Korea fight against LGBT rights to counteract a perceived weakening of 'hegemonic masculinity', which they wish to reestablish. Taking a materialistic lens, Nami Kim argues that, in the process of recreating dominant masculinity, these groups follow South Korea's pathway as a "subempire"

7 According to estimates from the Pew Research Center for the year 2010, the largest part of South Koreans, 46%, had not religious affiliation. 18% were members of Protestant and evangelical churches, 11% belonged to the Catholic church, and 23% identified as Buddhist (Connor 2014, August 12). According to more recent data from the *Korean Statistical Information Service's* (KOSIS) 2015 'General Population Survey' (*inguch'ongchosa*), the number of Christians stood at 27.6% (19.7% Protestant, 7.9% Catholic, 15.5% Buddhist, 56.1% non-religious).

of the United States, which had supported the former's "hypermasculine developmentalism" in the period of authoritarian rule and rapid industrialization since the 1960s (Kim 2016, 1; 2). While the alliance with the US certainly has played an important role for Korean politics at least since the Korean War, this line of argument puts the *Protestant Right* – Kim's term for politically and religiously conservative actors in Korea; a term that will be used in this study as well⁸ – into the passive position of a norm-taker and thus strips them of a great deal of agency. This claim, as well as the assertion of an instrumentalizing usage of anti-LGBT politics, is little convincing because Kim fails to provide sufficient evidence to sustain her assumptions. In fact, my study has not found evidence directly supporting Kim's argument on hegemonic masculinity.

Two further recent studies also argue that conservative Protestantism employs anti-LGBT issues in an instrumentalizing fashion. One scholarly avenue trying to account for the emergence of anti-LGBT activism in South Korea argues that while Christian doctrines and beliefs may play an important role in the fight against homosexuality, the decisive reason is to be found in the crisis of Korean Protestantism. By focusing on the opposition against LGBT issues, Siwoo's argument goes, church leaders and professionalized anti-LGBT groups try to deflect attention away from declining church memberships and scandals, such as embezzlement and sexual harassment (Siwoo 2018, 36–46). In Han Ch'aeyun's view, conservative Protestant church leaders use anti-gay rhetoric to create an "external enemy", a manufactured threat that may help increase their political leverage and at the same time decrease the divisions among notoriously fragmented denominations (Han 2017, 180–181).

All three studies deserve praise for considering contextual and historical variables alike, and for attempting to grasp the overall workings of the Protestant Right in its fight against LGBT rights in Korea. To some extent, however, the authors underrate two obvious, yet important factors, which I argue are central in driving anti-LGBT endeavors: namely religion and politics. Rather than treating religion and politics separately or considering the respectively other aspect as an exogeneous factor only, scholars of religious and conservative movements alike have repeatedly called for an integration of these two fields so as to benefit from each other's theoretical and methodological tools (Snow & Beyerlein 2019; Blee & Creesap 2010, 280; Kniss & Burns 2004, 711). This study thus seeks to reconcile these two research areas following Snow and Beyerlein's (2019, 577) recommendation to investigate the "dynamic intersection of religion and politics and its relevance to social movements".

Religion will be analyzed as a resource for anti-LGBT activism in three main respects: (1) as a mobilization resource, relying on the institutional ties and the sense of belonging of church members; (2) as a symbolic resource, in the sense that Christian doctrines

8 Other terms in common use for such actors include "Religious Right" (Fetner 2008) and "Christian Right" (e.g., Heo 2021 and Cho, Kyuhoon 2014 on Korea; Buss & Herman 2003 on the international ties of the Christian Right; Johnson 2018; Miceli 2005; and Herman 1997 on the US). These terms make sense in the respective contexts, since the authors analyze a broader range of actors including Protestants and Catholics, and also religious actors from non-Christian faiths. In the Korean case, however, the overwhelming majority of actors active in the anti-LGBT movement have a Protestant background (cf. chapter 10), which is why the term 'Protestant Right' best suits the purposes of this study.

and literal interpretations of paragraphs in the Bible on the alleged sinfulness of homosexual sex and a strictly binary gender order may act as central arguments against granting certain rights to non-heterosexual, transgender, and intersex persons;⁹ (3) and, relatedly, religion serves as a source of collective identity, which builds upon certain exegetic and doctrinal stipulations and aids the mobilization of personal and material resources. When it comes to politics, this study claims that the anti-LGBT movement does act out of a sincere (religiously imbued) concern about LGBT issues – going beyond the assumption of a merely instrumentalizing usage. However, parts of the anti-LGBT movement – and by extension, parts of the Protestant Right, in which anti-LGBT activism is largely embedded – also fight against LGBT rights for ulterior purposes, such as serving their self-interest and (re)attaining socio-political power.¹⁰ Taking a theoretical approach that builds on the political thinking of Antonio Gramsci, I argue that the Korean anti-LGBT movement strives for hegemony, pursuing a strategy of gaining the upper hand in the field of ideology, ideas, norms, and beliefs, in order to then also acquire dominance in the political realm. Generating anti-LGBT attitudes in politics and in the general public is treated as a goal in itself, but it also serves as a welcome means to the overall end of garnering political power. Religious aspects – that have also been pointed out by Gramsci – as well as a conservative, yet dynamic outlook on socio-political processes, which play crucial roles in these endeavors, are also reflected in the conceptualization of this study.

9 Several biblical passages are commonly cited when arguing against homosexual, trans, and intersex people, e.g., in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, Genesis 5:2 (“Male and female he created them”, English Standard Version), Genesis 18 & 19 (“Sodom and Gomorrah”), Leviticus 18:22 (“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”), and in the New Testament, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, 1 Timothy 1:8–11. Taking a historical-critical perspective, however, modern theology offers differing interpretations as well, arguing, for example, that the Bible does not refer to homosexuality as it is commonly understood today, but rather condemns sexual violence and a lack of hospitality, as in the account about Sodom and Gomorrah. Some exegetes also see hints at homoeroticism in certain biblical passages, e.g., in the accounts about David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1–5) or Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16–17). For further details, refer to the *Queer Bible Commentary*, which offers interpretations from a queer perspective, rebutting an anti-LGBT exegesis of the Bible (West & Shore-Goss 2020).

10 The political endeavors of the Korean Protestant Right correspond in a broad sense to the perspectives that Max Weber and Niccolò Machiavelli (2006; cf. also Nederman 2019) have on politics, in that politics centrally involves the will to acquire and maintain power. In Weber’s (2002, 311) words: politics is the “striving for a share of power or for influence on the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state.” The scheming and recklessness that inform part of a ‘Machiavellian’ type of power politics may be difficult to transfer to the analysis of social movements. However, by building upon a Gramscian approach, this study will show that strategic thinking and practice on the level of ideology does play an important role in the (also power-related) activities of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

1.1 Conceptual demarcations and theoretical refinements: introducing ‘dynamic continuity’

This study situates itself within social movement studies. It therefore analyzes the Korean anti-LGBT movement as a social movement, using methodological, conceptual, and analytical models commonly employed in this field of scholarship. While often classifying anti-LGBT activism as a movement, the studies mentioned above have, for the most part – and surprisingly so – disregarded the established tools offered by social movement studies. Before detailing the research design of the in-depth case study that I intend to conduct, it is necessary to take a closer look at existing conceptual approaches, and to answer the question as to what exactly the Korean anti-LGBT movement is a case of.

Social movements have been defined in many ways. This study shall utilize Mario Di-ani’s (1992, 13) definition, which discerns three main aspects to be met in order to be considered a social movement: “A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity.”¹¹ The question thus poses itself who exactly these networks are made up of, what the contention is actually about, and what kind of collective identity the activities build upon. Historians, political scientists, and sociologists have studied numerous social movements, starting from ‘old’ collective action like the workers’ movement, and investigating ‘new’ social movements, which have emerged from the 1960s onwards, promoting postmaterial and cultural values, as well as human and civil rights (della Porta & Diani 2006, vii). Besides this predominantly progressive and left-wing activism, however, there is also what some scholars have referred to as “bad civil society”, that is, actors who call into question liberal values and democratic principles, promoting exclusion and hatred based on, among others, racist, nationalistic, and anti-feminist ideologies (Chambers & Kopstein 2001). Such subsets of social movements have been classified using diverse labels such as ‘conservative’, ‘rightist’, ‘extreme’ or ‘radical’ or ‘populist right-wing’ – or other combinations of these terms (Blee & Creasap 2010; Gross et al. 2011, cf. also Mudde 2017). Religious movements can also fall into this category, such as the ‘new religious right’ in the United States (Kniss & Burns 2004, 699f.). This “terminological quagmire” (Mudde 2017, 1) poses problems, as the definitions of most of these terms are already individually highly contested among scholars. The term conservatism, for example, remains rather vague. It is considered by some a disposition which highly estimates the status quo (Oakeshott 1962; Beckstein 2015) and, relatedly, advocates the preservation of vested privileges (McVeigh 2009, 32). Others regard conservatism as a political program promoting certain political positions like free market capitalism or a certain moral order (Femia 2015; Gross et al. 2011, 328f; Blee & Creasap 2010, 270). Others yet again claim that conservatism is devoid of political ideals and any real contents that would qualify it as a full-fledged ideology, breaking its definition down to the motto “conservative is who calls themselves conservative” (Müller 2006,

11 Other definitions use different wordings, but nevertheless point to similar characteristics shared by social movements, like, in Sidney Tarrow’s version: “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow, 2011: 9, original italicized).

359). The same conceptual vagueness is present in the scholarly efforts to grasp right-wing populism and right-wing extremism or radicalism (and their terminological variants).¹²

This study does not intend to further complicate such definitional debates. It seems neither necessary nor wise to rigidly label the Korean anti-LGBT movement as one of the ideal types mentioned above. Rather, I take cues from each of these fields to find productive intersections and thus enhance and refine the analysis of anti-LGBT collective action. For example, when detecting violent or anti-democratic behavior, this seems to clearly point towards radical or extremist tendencies. Or when activists claim that they represent an alleged 'silent majority', populist strategies come to the fore (cf. Minkenberg 2011, 506). I shall therefore use the adjectives 'right-wing' or 'conservative' as generic terms to denote the whole spectrum presented.

That being said, this study does indeed wish to contribute to the academic debate on conservatism. I challenge perspectives that view conservatives merely as proponents of preserving a certain status quo and glorifying the past. In fact, conservative-minded political actors need, and indeed in most cases do display openness for (at least a certain amount of) change. This insight is, of course, nothing new. The very beginnings of conservative political thought have produced such views. In his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Edmund Burke famously noted that "a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation" (Burke 1993 [1790], 21). The main argument that I want to make in this study builds upon this insight. I argue that the Korean anti-LGBT is not fixated on a certain status quo or glorification of the past, nor do its actions represent irrational or reactionary bigotry – claims that have already been refuted with regard to the US anti-gay movement in the 1990s (Herman 1997). While it may be true to some extent that "[r]ightist movements tend to be known for what they are against, not for what they support" (Blee & Creasap 2010, 271), I argue that conservative movements in general, and the Korean anti-LGBT movement in particular, do have future-oriented political agendas that should not be underestimated. The Korean movement – and the Protestant Right at large – are very much interested in change, albeit a kind of change that reflects their worldviews and serves their interests. They strive for the decision-making power

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- 12 Right-wing extremism and right-wing radicalism are often used as synonyms, as both feature an ultra-nationalist ideology and hostility towards liberal democratic systems. But apart from these core 'principles', different movements or political parties of this kind take different shapes. They, for example, use different ethnic, cultural, and religious categories as grounds for exclusion and inequality (Minkenberg 2011, 509). As for right-wing populism or populism in general, Cas Mudde (2004, 543) argues that there is a Manichean core in all kinds of populism, defining it as "*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people*" (original italicized). For Jan-Werner Müller (2022, 230), populism is a type of politics that centrally includes a claim to sole representation, asserting that one speaks for, and acts in the interest of the majority, if not for the whole people (cf. also Sturm 2011, 506). There have been, however, many more attempts to define (right-wing) populism, which cannot be discussed here. For the most part, studies on these rightist phenomena concentrate on political parties rather than social movements. For detailed accounts with various foci, see, e.g., the edited volumes by Mudde (2017b) and Möller (2022, in German).

over what socio-political change looks like and how it takes effect. I assert that in order to reach this goal the movement employs a strategy that builds upon *existing* ideas, ideological elements, structures, and networks. Michael Oakeshott (1962, 170) proposed that the “appearance of continuity” plays an important role for people with a conservative disposition. As I will show in this study, the semblance of continuity is also a strategic element for convincing people of certain claims, and mobilizing them in the context of socio-political struggles.

I name this strategic combination of existing and new elements *dynamic continuity*. This new perspective is intended to contribute to conservatism studies in general, and provide a theoretical and conceptual refinement for examining conservative movements in particular. Dynamic continuity as proposed and analyzed in this study is mainly situated on the temporal, relational, and claims-making levels of collective action. Building on a thorough analysis of a broad empirical basis, I have found three main ways in which dynamic continuity gets enacted:

- 1) *temporal-congruent combination*: relating one's arguments and frames to ideologically compatible elements and parts of ‘common sense’ that have been influential in the past and still promise to prove powerful in the present and future;
- 2) *relational-congruent adoption and adaptation*: adopting action repertoires, strategies, and frames from ideologically analogous actors at home and abroad;
- 3) *relational-incongruent adoption and adaptation*: making use of strategic elements and action repertoires originally used or developed by oppositional forces.

The first type of dynamic continuity is straightforward: combining old (‘continuous’) with new (‘dynamic’) elements. In the second type, the continuous part consists of the adoption of elements from ideologically congruent actors, while the dynamic aspect concerns the adaptation according to one's needs. This means that, for example, frames from abroad are not adopted uncritically, but that they are adjusted in order to fit the domestic context. As for the third type, the adaptation of elements from opposing actors brings in dynamism, while keeping the essence of the adopted item represents the continuous facet.

Scholars have often described social movements as innovative elements in the political arena (cf. e.g., della Porta & Diani 2006, 31). These observations have mostly been confined to the analysis of progressive movements, however. I argue that conservative movements also fall into the category of innovators, breaking new ground for conservative or rightist politics. Yet, the concrete ways in which innovation comes about differ between different kinds of social movements. With regard to my object of investigation, dynamic continuity serves as a reasonable tool to turn to for conservative actors, since it allows them to draw on established and reliably resonating elements that have already proven convincing in the past with their own constituencies and the larger public. At the same time, dynamism enters the stage, allowing for creativity, renewal, and for demonstrations that they are up-to-date and forward-looking.

Besides the many advantages dynamic continuity provides, it also comprises difficulties. The three action types presented above help to manage diverging areas, be it in terms of legacies, or in regard to relations with friendly and oppositional actors. Bringing

together these elements may prove successful in convincing the public of one's agenda, in defending one's vested interests, and in preventing and abolishing pro-LGBT legislation, or preserving and newly codifying anti-LGBT sentiments. However, there is also the danger that by employing dynamic continuity, certain predicaments may emerge. This is then a third manifestation of *opposing desires*: combining 'old' and 'new' elements, and using ideologically compatible as well as adversarial strategies may create contradictions and discrepancies that are hard to communicate and justify in front of one's supporters. Taking the example of human rights framings, anti-LGBT actors actively deny LGBT people human rights, even calling them 'fake human rights', while at the same time offensively claiming human rights for *themselves*, asserting that *their* rights are being violated by pro-LGBT policies, which for them represent attacks on their freedoms of expression and religion. This study strives to shed light on this proposed complexity of conservative movement strategies.

1.2 Analytical framework and research design

For the rigorous investigation of these conservative yet innovative endeavors of the Korean anti-LGBT movement and its socio-political activities in general, I have built an analytical framework combining Gramscian concepts and established approaches from social movement studies, mainly the *dynamics of contention* (DOC) research agenda promoted by Douglas McAdam, Charles Tilly, and Sidney Tarrow (2001). The latter approach is an offsprung of social movement studies, yet it considers a broader range of actors than only social movements in what McAdam et al. call *contentious politics*. Contentious politics involve newly emerging collective actors (the 'challengers') who enter into conflict with established political actors (the 'members'), as well as individuals who are not (yet) part of these two political groups (the 'subjects'), but who the challengers wish to mobilize for their purposes (McAdam et al. 2001, 10). Analyzing this actor constellation is especially worthwhile for the Korean case. As already mentioned above, the Protestant Right has been fostering close ties with conservative governments, but conflictive ones with liberal or progressive administrations. This results in a certain blurring of the categories of 'member' and 'challenger' when trying to classify the anti-LGBT movement.

In general, the DOC approach puts greater emphasis on agency, while at the same time highlighting the structural and cultural backgrounds in which agency takes place (McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 4). In an attempt to combine these areas, DOC centrally relies on *social mechanisms* to analyze the workings of actors engaged in contentious politics. McAdam et al. (2001, 24) define mechanisms as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations". There are three overarching classes of such mechanisms: relational, environmental, and cognitive mechanisms (McAdam et al. 2001, 25f.). This study aims to discern in detail the mechanisms present in and around the activities of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

For the sake of a systematic analysis, the analytical framework utilizes concepts and themes proposed by Antonio Gramsci, laying bare the mechanisms at work in each of these focus areas. These include (1) *religion*, an area of Gramscian writing and thinking

that has been largely neglected by existing studies (Forlenza 2019; Fulton 1987), but which offers valuable insights on how to conceptualize religious actors as explicitly political actors; it therefore serves as an analytical variable underlying basically all parts of this investigation; (2) the *conservative historical bloc*, delving into the historical legacies and present status of powerful socio-political actors – regarding both the Korean circumstances and transnational relations; (3) the role of movement leaders as *organic intellectuals* in the efforts to change the ‘common sense’ of the greater public; (4) the relevance of the areas of *education* and (5) the relevance of *media* and *cultural production*. These analytical areas are not exclusive, but have many overlaps with one another. These categories shall serve as analytical orientations, and also as focus topics of some of the analytical (sub-)chapters.

The research design of this study comprises an *exploratory sequential mixed-method research design* for data collection and data analysis (cf. Ayoub et al. 2014; Creswell & Clark 2011). As a first step, this approach included exploratory methods applied during field trips in August 2018 and March–August 2019. Among the methods employed were semi-structured qualitative interviews with relevant actors, (participant) observations of anti-LGBT events, and a small survey of anti-LGBT protesters. The main data basis of this study, however, is a *protest event analysis* (PEA), which I conducted after fieldwork. PEA serves to systematically gather detailed information – commonly from newspaper articles – on several aspects relevant to the thorough case study of a social movement, for example, on the action forms and places of protests, the collective and individual actors involved, the number of participants, the targets, and the arguments or frames utilized (Hutter 2014; Koopmans & Statham 1999). Through this broad range of items, PEA allows to answer diverse sets of research questions, which is conducive to a case study, in which, overall, manifold sub-topics are tackled. In order to investigate such sub-topics, PEA data is also used for further analytical methods, namely frame analysis and network analysis. This study is, in fact, the first one to apply PEA to the study of an anti-LGBT movement in a narrow sense, hoping to provide “a solid ground in an area that is still often marked by more or less informed speculation” (Koopmans & Rucht 2002, 251). Building upon this broad triangulation of research methods, this study wishes to answer the main research question as to how and why the anti-LGBT movement renders LGBT issues contentious, encompassing diverse sub-topics and taking cues from existing research in the analytical process.¹³

13 Beyond the already mentioned research contributions, this study also benefitted immensely from previous studies, both on the Korean case and anti-LGBT activism elsewhere, as well as from both specialized studies (e.g., on particular aspects of an anti-LGBT movement), as well as from broadly conceived investigations (e.g., comparing anti-LGBT activism in several countries). I refrain from providing a detailed literature review in the introduction of this study, since critical appraisals of relevant existing research will accompany this study ‘on the go’, appearing in the theoretical and analytical chapters whenever applicable.

1.3 Plan of the book

Chapters 2 and 3 are part of the first main section of this study, presenting in greater detail the theoretical bases and delving further into the argument on dynamic continuity that this study strives to make. They introduce central concepts of Antonio Gramsci's political thinking, combining it with reflections on the meaning of conservatism, and embedding these two perspectives in the DOC research agenda in order to build a systematic analytical framework. Chapter 4 lays out in depth the methods of data collection and data analysis, expounding the concrete operationalizations of each research method. I shall also elaborate on certain methodological intricacies that I have encountered during the research process.

The second section of this study delves deeply into framing strategies of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. The section examines what some anti-LGBT activists have referred to as a 'cultural war', that is, fierce conflicts between groups that have different values, ideologies, and beliefs, involving struggles to influence, and gain dominance over public opinion and politics at large. Within this section, chapter 5 starts off with an analysis of the conservative Protestant newspaper *Kukmin Daily* (*kungmin ilbo*) and its LGBT-related coverage from the 1990s onwards, finding that the reporting turned clearly negative only in the mid-early 2000s, the time when instances of collective action against LGBT rights first started to emerge. The chapter further investigates the steep increase of anti-LGBT activism from 2013 on, discerning several 'critical junctures' that I argue have facilitated this rise. Chapter 6 then presents general movement properties of the anti-LGBT movement, like its action forms, targets, and places of protest.

The core of this section consists of a frame analysis covering the years 2000–2020 in chapters 7 and 8, which examine in detail the movement's multifaceted efforts to gain hegemony, as well as the instances of dynamic continuity and opposing desires that become apparent in these fights. In the course of this analysis, several social mechanisms come to the fore, including the attribution of threat, boundary formation, identity shift, bricolage, and counter-framing, to name but a few (for detailed descriptions of these mechanism, see chapter 2, and particularly, chapter 3). The anti-LGBT movement attempts to present LGBT people and LGBT rights as threats to children, families, health, the military, and the nation as a whole – creating a 'dangerous other' as against an allegedly endangered majority. The movement tries to render these sentiments part of individual and collective identities, and uses diverse means – both dynamic and continuous – to bring its messages across. The contention does not only take place domestically in Korea, but also encompasses relations with, and references to transnational actors. The section closes with a discussion on whether the anti-LGBT movement mobilizes effectively in this 'cultural war' in chapter 9.

The third section of this study concentrates on the actors of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, the networks they build, the communication forms they use, and the conflicts they enter into. Chapter 10 focuses on the concrete actors who form the Korean anti-LGBT movement, analyzing them as 'norm brokers' who build networks and try to disseminate anti-LGBT sentiments within churches and beyond. The chapter offers a typology of the most active anti-LGBT organizations and presents the anti-LGBT networks that formed over the past years. Chapter 10 also elaborates on the special role that move-

ment leaders play, and describes the connections these leaders have with established political actors, as well as their own endeavors to enter party politics.

The two following analytical chapters shed light on two areas that this study has discerned as crucial for understanding the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Chapter 11 encompasses a thorough analysis of the movement's activities in the areas of education, media, and cultural production. These communicative channels are important in the movement's struggle for hegemony. They are used to propagate anti-LGBT positions and serve to single out and depict important movement figures as charismatic, knowledgeable, and authentic – even though the 'expert' status of these actors is dubious, as is the truthfulness of the contents presented through 'old' and 'new' (social) media. Established educational and media institutions that provide favorable or objective information on LGBT themes are frequent targets of attacks by anti-LGBT activists. Chapter 12 revisits the eponymous 'opposing desires' of this study by analyzing the animosities that exist within Korean Protestantism itself. Building on the movement-counter-movement approach (Meyer & Staggenborg 1996), this chapter examines several cases of rifts among 'mainstream' anti-LGBT actors, moderate church representatives, and explicitly pro-LGBT actors within Protestantism, arguing that the Protestant Right deliberately creates 'internal enemies' to invoke threats that serve to close ranks internally.

Finally, in chapter 13, I summarize my findings and discuss the benefits that I argue dynamic continuity offers for the study of conservative and right-wing movements. I ponder on the generalizability and implications of this theoretical and conceptual refinement, and I discuss the relevance of the insights gained in this study for a world where anti-emancipatory endeavors are on the rise again in many countries.

Section 1: Theoretical and analytical frameworks, research methods

2. A strategic 'war of position' for hegemony: 'Dynamic continuity' and right-wing Gramscianism in Korea

This and the next chapter provide a theoretical and analytical framework that, I argue, is better suited than others for the analysis of conservative and religious right-wing movements, and for the Korean anti-LGBT movement in particular. In addition, I argue that the main research question of this study – *why and how the Korean Protestant Right renders LGBT issues contentious* – can be best answered using a Gramscian lens. More specifically, Gramsci's conceptual take on how to achieve cultural and political hegemony, his conception of civil society and recognition of historical blocs, and the important role he grants to intellectuals, education, and media outlets contains all the key analytical building blocks necessary for the analysis of anti-LGBT activism and its embeddedness in transnational – and indeed global – networks of right-wing Protestantism. This chapter will discuss, first, the applicability of Gramscian theory to the analysis of religious right-wing movements. In a second step, it evaluates key concepts and ideas of Gramscian thinking and links them conceptually with contemporary concepts drawn from social movements studies. Finally, Gramsci's endorsement of historical legacies and their importance for concrete conscience and action will be considered in synopsis with other, conservative thinkers' takes on the relation between conservation on the one hand, and change on the other. This leads to a proposal for partial conceptual innovation, in which I posit the descriptive and analytical term of 'dynamic continuity' as a dialectical means of overcoming this seeming contradiction.

2.1 Applying Gramscian thinking to the study of religion-based right-wing movements

It may seem paradoxical to use a left-wing thinker and outright Marxist like Antonio Gramsci¹ for analyzing phenomena of right-wing activism.² Therefore, a caveat seems in order before proceeding to discuss Gramsci's take on religion and civil society. I argue that applying Gramscian analytical concepts to the study of religious right-wing movements makes sense for four main reasons: first, Gramsci's non-prescriptive conception of 'civil society' transcends the inclination of political sociology to predominantly analyze so-called *progressive* movements. Secondly, his extensive dealings with religion offer valuable insights for the study of religiously based social movements. Thirdly, right-wing movements and political actors themselves have borrowed freely from Gramscian strategic thought to disseminate rightist worldviews – strategies that have been adopted by many right-wing actors worldwide, exemplifying the increasingly transnational interconnectedness of conservative and extreme right movements. Finally, Gramsci's rather undogmatic theoretical approach will serve, in turn, as a guideline for applying his key concepts in a 'pragmatic' way.

This study employs Gramscian thought in a non-Marxist way, employing the basic concepts of Gramscian thinking without its normative inscription. It analyzes religious right-wing movements "going beyond Gramsci's letter, but following his spirit", as Carlos Nelson Coutinho (2014, 74) aptly puts it. In fact, Gramsci's writing is – despite its astute socio-political and historical analyses – not very straightforward. He rarely provides clear definitions of his concepts and, in other instances, works with partially conflicting definitions at the same time.³ Rather than as a shortcoming, Fredric Jameson regards this characteristic of Gramscian thought as an asset and argues that "it is precisely the

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- 1 Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was an Italian Marxist, co-founder of the Communist Party of Italy (*Partito Comunista Italiano*), its party leader 1924–1927, and a member of parliament from 1924 onwards. The Fascist regime under Benito Mussolini arrested and imprisoned Gramsci in November 1926 despite his parliamentary immunity. During his imprisonment, Gramsci wrote the so-called *Prison Notebooks* (*Quaderni del carcere*), which would lay the foundation for his fame as an eminent Marxist thinker. Gramsci was released from prison in 1935 and transferred to a clinic to treat his ill health, which had plagued him his whole life. He would not recover from his condition and ultimately died on 27 April 1937 (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 7–23). For a detailed account on Antonio Gramsci's life, see, e.g., Pearmain 2020.
 - 2 Conversely, political philosophers with a leaning to the left have utilized elements of right-wing thought. Chantal Mouffe (2005), for example, builds on the conservative political theorist Carl Schmitt's understanding of 'the political' as the distinction between friend and enemy to argue for the importance of partisan (Left/Right) conflict for the parliamentary system and for instilling political passion in people. Mouffe, however, criticizes Schmitt's rejection of pluralism and his following argumentation on the political, according to which adversarial political relations can and, if need be, should be played out using violent means.
 - 3 Gramsci's partly incoherent development of thought is of course also due to the extremely difficult situation in which he ventured on his vast philosophical project, being a captive of an inimical Fascist regime for years, always fearing (and also being forced to anticipate) censorship. What is more, for his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci did not have access to other writings and often quoted passages from his memory (Hoare and Sperber 2016, 21).

ambiguity of Gramsci's analyses of this or that issue or topic that makes for the richness of his work and its urgent relevance for us today" (Jameson 2020, xii). He continues:

[Gramsci's ambiguity] renews old problems in new ways, it restructures the historical contexts against which political and cultural positions are to be read, and last but not least, it makes Gramsci's texts available for parts of the world in which, once unknown or only representative of a single, univocal position, they have now come to have their own history no less complex and interesting than that internal to the West and its various national components. (Jameson 2020, xii)

Another useful aspect of Gramscian conceptual language is that it can be fruitfully applied in the analysis of non-western contexts. The concepts redirect our perspective towards the particularities of historical legacies and present-day power structures, and they have the potential of transcending the left-right spectrum, as I will argue and elaborate in greater detail below.

Gramsci himself may be called a rather unorthodox Marxist. It is true that his approach also entailed a certain determinism: attaining communism was the ultimate goal of his actions and philosophical thought. Unlike other Marxist thinkers and political figures of the Third International of his time, though, Gramsci was a critic of dogmatic economism and naïve historical fatalism. While acknowledging the great importance of the material basis of society, it was highly doubtful for him whether the economic structure was the one and only determining factor for all social relations, including cultural and political power relations. Gramsci also criticized the class-based reductionism⁴ and the high level of abstraction of traditional Marxist theory, which he tried to remedy by integrating a context-sensitive, historical perspective on power structures in capitalist societies, as well as a nuanced outlook on the complex conflicts present in civil society (Bieling 2015, 450f; Hoare & Sperber 2016, 100).

Along with Gramsci's non-dogmatic usage of Marxist thought, his non-normative conception of 'civil society' also contributes to the applicability of his approaches to the analysis of rightist religious movements. There are two main understandings of civil society in the various fields of social sciences. While one group of scholars highlights the normative aspect, with civil society seen as peaceful social interactions aiming to achieve the 'common good', the other side emphasizes an empirical conceptualization of the term, according to which civil society is defined as the sphere of organized groups that act either beyond the state or interact with the state and the economy in the interest of specific groups (Kopecký 2003, 7; Teune 2008, 18; Putnam 1993). Gramsci's conceptualization of civil society broadly corresponds to the latter, non-normative definition:

Civil society is understood by Gramsci to comprise all social relations and organizations that do not participate either in the economic reproduction of society or the life of the State. Thus, civil society is the 'private' institutions of a given society, including

4 While applauding Gramsci for overcoming Marxist economic determinism, post-Marxist authors have, in turn, criticized Gramsci for retaining a privileged role for the working class and thus essentializing the polarity between the latter and the bourgeoisie (Laclau & Mouffe 1985; Bieling 2015, 470f).

religious organizations (such as the Catholic Church), unions and political parties, cultural institutions (such as the media or publishing houses) and in general any freely formed association of citizens. Gramsci conceives of civil society as a social terrain on which rivalries and struggles of a cultural and ideological nature are played out and decided among social groups. (Hoare and Sperber 2016, 56)

Gramsci defines civil society as the 'playing field' where conflicts over which cultural and political agendas prevail take place. His conceptualization goes beyond normative definitions of civil society as the arena where people and organizations fight for desirable, 'good' causes. Civil society for Gramsci is not neutral. As Hoare and Sperber (2016, 57) point out: "Gramsci rejects the liberal assumption of the political neutrality of civil society; Gramsci instead starts from an affirmation of the political substance of all social life." Therefore, the scope of civil society actors is very broad in Gramscian terms. Progressive actors, but also conservative, right-wing extremist, or fundamentalist religious groups can be part of civil society – and thus also be analyzed using Gramscian concepts.

At this point, it becomes evident that Gramscian conceptual language offers great potential for social analysis. Broader interpretations and developments of Gramscian approaches have indeed proven productive in diverse fields of social inquiry. Neo-Marxist and post-Marxist scholars, for example, have built – not necessarily in uncritical ways – on Gramsci's pioneering advancement of Marxist thinking (e.g., Poulantzas 1978; Laclau 1977; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). But also beyond strictly political affinities, Gramsci's oeuvre and concepts have impacted social scientific scholarship. In political science, 'Neo-Gramscianism' finds application in the fields of international relations and European integration theory (Bohle 2005; Gill 1993; Cox 1983). Social movement scholars also acknowledge Gramsci's contribution to their field, especially regarding the contentious politics approach (Tarrow 2011, 19f). They have applied Gramscian concepts in manifold ways on diverse cases of social movements worldwide, benefitting from the analytical strength that these concepts provide (cf. e.g., Dainotto & Jameson 2020; Søndergaard 2020; Meek 2011).

Gramscian approaches have also found their way into studies on Korea, even though they represent a late theoretical addition to analyzing Korean historical, socio-political and economic phenomena. Kevin Gray (2018), for instance, takes a look at Cold War legacies and traces the reaction of the conservative *historical bloc* to democratization and efforts for reconciliation between the two Koreas – taking his cues from Gramscian analytical tools. Relatedly, Yong Sub Choi analyzes the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s as an *organic crisis*, which resulted in failed counter-hegemonic efforts by liberal nationalists to substitute the 'division bloc' (Choi, Yong Sub 2020; 2017a). Other investigations focus on the Korean economy. Kevin Gray (2011), for instance, investigates the neoliberal transformation of South Korea as a *passive revolution* and Kyung-Pil Kim (2019) shows how Korean large industrial conglomerates (*chaeböl*) undergo a crisis of authority, an authority which they try to reestablish using a *hegemonic strategy* to instill the belief in people that *chaeböl* interests are everyone's interest. And Yong Sub Choi (2017b) investigates how the North Korean regime exerts *hegemonic rule* through Juche (*chuch'e*) ideology and through the communist party in times of economic crises (Choi, Yong Sub 2017b).

Struggles for hegemony, historic bloc, organic crisis, passive revolution – the above overview illustrates that Gramscian concepts have been employed for numerous national and international contexts in order to analyze diverse historical and socio-political phenomena. Many of these concepts are also material for this study. I will explicate them in detail below and show how they can, and why they should be used as the conceptual backbone of this study. Prior to this, though, let me insert an important parenthesis: Gramscian concepts have not only been used for analytical purposes in social and historical sciences, but also as a political strategy – not only by Marxist or left-wing politicians and activists, but increasingly also by those on the right-wing political spectrum.

2.2 New Right activism and the usage of Gramscian strategies

Since the 1970s, ideologues of the New Right have appropriated Gramscian thinking, starting from the French *Nouvelle Droite* in the 1970s (Bar-On 2013). The French right-wing thinker Alain de Benoist, in particular, has called for working towards a “cultural revolution” emanating from the rightist political spectrum (Benoist 1975). Proponents of such ‘right-wing Gramscianism’ argue that fundamental changes only happen after preceding changes in thought and culture.

Like Gramsci, they hold that revolutionary change occurs not through traditional parliamentary or extraparlimentary confrontation (a ‘war of movement’) but rather through ‘a war of position’ – a more protracted, deeper process of constructing a new ideology that resonates with, and yet modifies, ‘common sense’ [...], forming the basis for a counterhegemonic project. (Abrahamsen et al. 2020: 96)

Such a counter-hegemonic strategy is referred to as ‘metapolitics’ by French right-wing thinkers. Guillaume Faye, a co-founder of the French right-wing think tank *Groupe d'Études de Recherches de la Civilisation Européenne* (GRECE, Research and Study Group for European Civilization),⁵ describes ‘metapolitics’ as “the social diffusion of ideas and cultural values for the sake of provoking profound long-term, political transformation” (Faye 2011, 190; cited in Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 96).

Such ‘metapolitical’ endeavors have not only been developed by borrowing freely from Gramscian thinking. The French *Nouvelle Droite* has also been influenced by intellectual currents as diverse as the New Left and the so-called ‘Conservative Revolution’. The latter is a term coined by the rightist philosopher Armin Mohler to denote a form of German

5 GRECE was established in 1968 by Alain de Benoist and 40 other extreme right nationalists as the principal think tank of the French *Nouvelle Droite*. Tamir Bar-On delineates four main goals of the think tank: first, a reorientation of the notoriously disunited French ultra-nationalists; second, a rejection of the dominant political strategies of the right; third, seizing power through a right-wing Gramscian strategy; and fourth, rethinking the extreme right's ideological legacy, which was, in the view of GRECE, overly focused on ethnic nationalism and militaristic expansionism back then (Bar-On 2011, 203–204). For a more detailed account of the early history of GRECE, see Duranton-Crabol 1988.

non-Nazi fascism in the period between the First and Second World Wars. The Conservative Revolution was an ideology combining “German ultra-nationalism, defence of the organic folk community, technological modernity and socialist revisionism, which valorized the worker and the soldier as models for a reborn authoritarian state superseding the egalitarian ‘decadence’ of liberalism, socialism, and traditional conservatism” (Bar-On 2011, 200; cf. also Mohler 1972). At the same time, the *Nouvelle Droite* has also been influenced by ideas of the New Left. With Alain de Benoist leading the way, the *Nouvelle Droite* argues that one has to transcend the traditional right-left political divide. Bar-On (2013, 49) gives an example of such thinking: “Right and left meant very little, reasoned the ND [Nouvelle Droite], if both right and left supported liberal multiculturalism.” In fact, the *Nouvelle Droite* and the New Left have several positions in common, for instance their disdain of political elites, a rejection of unrestrained global capitalism and neo-liberalism, as well as a geopolitical anti-Americanism (Bar-On 2013, 55).

Of course, this is an account of the intellectual basis of new right thinking and strategizing in France. While many new right intellectuals and activist groups across Europe, for example, the *Neue Rechte* in Germany or the *Nuova Destra* in Italy have adopted similar ‘metapolitical’ strategies (Abrahamsen 2020, 96), it has to be stressed that these strategies depend on country-specific and, in fact, group-specific contexts, and its ideological elements thus take effect in diverse ways. Stuart Hall (2017 [1979]), for instance, argued that a distinctive feature of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom consisted in using Gramscian strategies to gain political hegemony. Hall thus showed that ‘metapolitical’ tactics can not only be applied in extra-parliamentary settings but also in the arena of ‘traditional’ politics, at the heart of parliamentary democratic systems. What is more, not all ideological elements fit all contexts. Consider the *New Right* in the United States, which has been engaging in metapolitical struggles against what they regard as the liberal hegemony promoted by the political establishment (Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 96), however, of course *without* the French version’s anti-Americanism. Quite the opposite, fierce nationalism has been a common denominator in US-American right-wing politics ever since. In a similar vein, the outspoken secularism of the French *Nouvelle Droite* is out of question for religion-based right-wing actors like the Christian Right in the USA.

Such caveats are due also for the context of this study, the Korean Protestant Right and its anti-LGBT branch. As in the case of the US-American New Right, faith is an important element of their activism and mobilization strategy. Moreover, unlike the French *Nouvelle Droite*, the Korean Protestant Right displays staunch pro-American convictions, given its historically strong ties with their Protestant and evangelical US brethren and the importance of the United States as a political and military ally. I will detail these aspects in the analytical chapters of this study. Suffice it to say at this point that transnational connections between right-wing actors not only do exist, but they also become manifest in the strategies applied by these actors. Along with the strategy of constructing a common enemy (Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 99f),⁶ an inegalitarian version of the Gramscian ‘war of position’ represents the strategic core of large portions of right-wing activism worldwide.

6 See also chapter 12 for a more detailed account on the “power of enmity” (Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 95).

A Gramscian lens is helpful for understanding the innovative role of right-wing movements within the greater arena of conservative politics as set out in the introduction. As a matter of fact, right-wing ideologues are well aware of the mobilizing potential of 'metapolitical' strategies. In this context, Greg Johnson, a US-American right-wing thinker, provides an astute description of metapolitical actors:

We metapolitical radicals must think of ourselves as the vanguard of our people, as a political avant-garde. We are the ones who must summon our courage, take the risks, blaze the trails, and lead our people toward their salvation. Vanguardism must be repeatedly emphasized, because the instinct of every politician seems to do the exact opposite. Politicians are inveterate panderers and flatterers of the public mind, which unfortunately has been completely moulded by our enemies for generations. Politicians follow the people. Vanguardists seek to lead them. Politicians take public opinion as a given. Vanguardists seek to change it. (Johnson 2018, 74; cited in Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 96f)

While the concrete goals of such right-wing 'vanguardists' differ from country to country, and not all of them build on the 'philosophical' basis of the French *Nouvelle Droite*, the New Right does share core elements that transcend purely national concerns. As argued by Abrahamsen et al. (2020, 97), these elements are (1) a similar "international political sociology" which serves as an "analytic framework, strategic guide, and rhetorical device", and (2) a fierce conviction of one's own superiority and a keen will to power – even though power would only be seized after long-term efforts, through 'metapolitical' detours.

However, the fact that right-wing actors actively and consciously adopt Gramscian political strategies is not the main reason for choosing Gramscian analytical concepts. As I have outlined above and will continue to do so in greater detail below, there are good methodological reasons for applying a Gramscian-inspired analytical framework to the study of anti-LGBT activism in South Korea. At the same time, it would be wrong to prematurely discard the possibility that Korean anti-LGBT activists themselves adopted Gramscian strategies. In fact, the Gramscian 'war of position' was mentioned by an anti-LGBT activist during one of my research interviews (Interview 7). Be that as it may, I do not aim to 'unmask' or expose the right-wing's use of originally left-wing strategies. Rather, I apply Gramscian concepts for their actual analytical value irrespective of whether they have been chosen as a political strategy by the Korean Protestant Right or not. Following Abrahamsen et al.'s (2020) insights concerning the international political sociology of the New Right, though, I investigate the adoption of Gramscian strategies by Korean right-wing actors as an instance of transnational diffusion of ideological elements and strategic ideas among increasingly interconnected and globally active right-wing actors.

2.3 Gramsci on religion

The relevance of a Gramscian analytical toolkit for this study also becomes manifest in Gramsci's writings on religion. For a long time, these have largely been disregarded due

to the preponderance of the secularization thesis in the field of sociology of religion and the resulting underestimation of religion. It was, moreover, uncritically assumed that Gramsci, as a Marxist, was a proponent of the famous assertion that religion was “the opium” of the people, that is, a false consciousness that needs to be eradicated (Forlenza 2019, 1f).⁷ The strong anti-clerical attitudes of the Italian Communist Party leadership after World War II also further influenced the neglect and misreading of Gramsci’s writings on religion (Fulton 1987, 201). Gramsci himself displayed a critical stance towards religion, especially concerning Roman Catholicism in Italy. His early writings in particular have a pronounced anti-religious tone to them. But as Fulton (1987, 201) highlights, “as with most of the subject matter Gramsci treats, this represents one end of a spectrum of comments”.

Religion, in fact, plays an important role in Gramsci’s thinking.⁸ Gramsci develops many of his central concepts by building on an astute analysis of Christianity or, more precisely, Roman Catholicism. Paradoxical as it may sound, for Gramsci, Catholicism represents a model for reaching his ultimate goal, the introduction of Marxism. John Fulton elaborates this point:

[Gramsci] admires religion for two reasons: he esteems the Roman Catholic Church’s historical organization and long enduring hegemony in European society, to the extent that there are aspects of it which he sees as models for Marxist praxis; and he sees religion as a *rival* to socialism precisely because it is itself *a form of total social praxis*.” (Fulton 1987, 202)

Gramsci conceived of Marxism as a ‘secular religion’, which, so he thought (or wished for), would ultimately replace Christianity (Forlenza 2019, 3–5). This conception corresponds to his wider definition of religion as “any conception of the world that puts itself forward as an ethic” (Gramsci 1995, 352) and “a conception of the world which has become a norm of life” (Gramsci 1971, 344).⁹ These secular definitions of religion encompass tradi-

7 One has to be cautious, though, to not misunderstand Marx’s famous statement from his *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* as an analysis of religion as mere alienation. When reading the dictum in its textual context, it becomes clear that Marx regards religion rather as a – potentially positive or at least functional – means to deal with the hardships of life: “The wretchedness of religion is at once an expression of and a protest against real wretchedness. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” (Marx 1994 [1844], 57; cf. also Forlenza 2019, 18, endnote 1)

8 Already in his early writings, Gramsci acknowledges the importance of religion, while at the same time pointing towards his actual goal of replacing religion with a functional equivalent, i.e., Marxism, as the following quote shows. “The religious indifference of normal times, the absence of cultic practice, is not independence or liberation from idolatry. Religion is a need of the spirit. People feel so lost in the vastness of the world, so thrown about by forces they do not understand; and the complex of historical forces, artful and subtle as they are, so escapes the common sense that in moments that matter only the person who has substituted religion with some other moral force succeeds in saving the self from disaster.” (Gramsci 1975, 71, translation taken from Fulton 1987, 202)

9 Gramsci also provides a definition of religion closer to the ‘traditional’ religious core. He writes that religion “presupposes the following constitutive elements: 1) belief in the existence of one or more personal divinities that transcend earthly and temporal conditions; 2) man’s sense of dependence

tional forms of religion as well as modern political ideologies. Gramsci here builds on the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce's idealistic project of replacing traditional religions with a secular humanism, which Croce called the 'religion of liberty'. Gramsci, however, rejects Croce's version of liberalism since, he argues, it remains rooted in impractical intellectual abstractions that would not have the potential of seriously challenging Catholicism and of convincing the masses of the need for concrete political struggles (Gramsci 1971, 393; Forlenza 2019, 6f; on Croce, cf. also Copenhagen & Copenhagen 2015). It is exactly this element of struggle, of politics, which distinguishes Gramsci's take on religion from Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, other early sociologists of religion (Forlenza 2019, 3).¹⁰

As Fulton claims, "religion is always political for Gramsci" and gains its appeal from the potential of being a "considerable hegemonic force" (Fulton 1987, 202, 199). Forlenza (2019, 2) concurs with this perspective, stating that "Gramsci places his sociology of religion within a conflictual view of society in which classes (interest groups) constantly struggle for power and hegemony." For Gramsci, religion is not only a forceful ideology, but also a socio-political player, a "social movement" (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 95). Gramsci deals with "the problem of religion taken not in the confessional sense but in the secular sense of a unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct" (Gramsci 1971, 326). In his analysis of religion, key elements of strategic thinking come to the fore: the role of hegemony and, relatedly, the nexus between ideology (or in Gramscian terminology *Weltanschauung*, i.e., worldview), disseminators of such worldviews, and practical action. Gramsci illustrates this interdependent relationship by referring to Jesus Christ and Paul the Apostle.

Christ – *Weltanschauung*, and St. Paul – organiser, action, expansion of the *Weltanschauung* – are both necessary to the same degree and therefore of the same historical stature. Christianity could be called historically 'Christianity-Paulinism', and this would indeed be a more exact title. (It is only the belief in the divinity of Christ which has prevented this from happening, but the belief is itself an historical and not a theoretical element.) (Gramsci 1971, 382)

Religion, as an organized form of social interactions, provides and perpetuates the rules and norms of conduct (and, in fact, of thinking and believing), which create a sense of belonging, but also a sense of hierarchical order. Rosario Forlenza aptly summarizes this social – and power – relationship: "The *Notebooks* suggest, time and again, that religion and faith are not additional factors of human societies, but rather the structural cement

on these superior beings, who totally govern the life of the cosmos; 3) the existence of relations (a cult) between men and gods." (Gramsci 2007, 32)

- 10 In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim focuses his analysis on the general attributes and functions of religion, which he sees in serving basic human needs and differentiating between the profane and sacred parts of life (Durkheim 1968 [1912]). Max Weber's famous essay collection *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, concentrates, as the title suggests, on how the Protestant (particularly Calvinistic) work ethic centrally influenced the development and consolidation of capitalism in Northern Europe (Weber 2010 [1904/1905]). Both sociologists, Durkheim and Weber, thus disregard the role religion or religious organizations can (and in fact did and still do) play as concrete actors in politics and socio-political struggles – a gap that their contemporary Antonio Gramsci fills.

that renders a multiplicity of individuals into a cohesive social group.” He continues: “Persons and institutions in which human beings have faith, and whose cultural values are followed spontaneously and without constraint, are people and institutions that, possessing prestige and inspiring trust, exert hegemony” (Forlenza 2019, 4).

For the purpose of this study, these basic Gramscian insights on religion are crucial in at least two regards: first, while Gramsci aims at paving the way for his ‘philosophy of praxis’, i.e., Marxism, it is of course possible that his stratagems prove popular with non-Marxist circles as well – and even anti-Marxist ones, as the previous subchapter on the right wing’s usage of Gramsci has shown. This wide applicability with diverse actors comprises also religious actors. To make my point clear: Gramsci advises to take religion – especially Roman Catholicism – as a model for achieving counter-hegemony, also in an effort to overcome the hegemony of that very religion. In the case of this study, though, I argue that religious forces themselves use Gramscian strategies to gain or recreate cultural and political hegemony – an irony which can hardly be denied.

Secondly, and relatedly, Gramsci’s analysis of hegemonic rule in religious contexts provides the – also metaphorical – basis for many of his central concepts and strategic thoughts. Among them are, for example, the ‘intellectual and moral reform’, the ‘religion of the people’ and the ‘religion of the intellectuals’. Several attributes of religion and religious actors as outlined by Gramsci have to be taken into consideration. Gramsci observes these attributes in Italian Catholicism but recognizes that they represent potential assets in any struggle for hegemony.¹¹

One important attribute of organized religion is its focus on unity in terms of doctrine and faith. Religious leaders in fact go to great lengths to preserve such unity in order to maintain hegemony over exegesis, and, ultimately, over the faithful. Religion, from a Gramscian perspective, however, is not a monolithic entity but represents itself as “a field of tension in which beliefs, symbolism, and practices are open to antagonistic interpretations, and so, to a struggle for meaning and power” (Forlenza 2019, 2). Such conflicts are of course problematic since they may endanger the ideological unity of the religion (Gramsci 1971, 420). Religious groups, therefore, face the task of

preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and to unify. The strength of religions, and of the Catholic Church in particular, has lain, and still lies, in the fact that they feel very strongly the need for the doctrinal unity of the whole mass of the faithful and strive to ensure that the higher intellectual stratum does not get separated from the lower. (Gramsci 1971, 328)

11 John Fulton argues that Gramsci’s insights on Roman Catholicism in Italy can be fruitfully applied for the investigation of other countries and religious actors (Fulton 1987, 198). Gramsci’s analysis does not focus so much on doctrinal particularities, but rather on the general attributes of religions and religious institutions, and especially on their inherent power structures and strategies, which is why I argue that the analysis of similarly organized groups such as Protestant churches will benefit from a Gramscian perspective.

It is one assumption of this study that a similar pursuit of unity can also be observed in the anti-LGBT endeavors of the Protestant Right in Korea.¹²

Key actors for preserving the ideological unity are the representatives of the 'religion of the intellectuals', as Gramsci called the official religion. The religion of the intellectuals consists in "the religion of priests and theologians, dogma and liturgy, institutions and organization" and "is a detailed intellectual system and, consequently, a source of hegemony and domination over the members of a society" (Forlenza 2019, 10). On the other side, there is the 'religion of the people', "the beliefs, morals, and practices which express in a religious way the needs and experiences of various groups of people [...]. It is thus 'spontaneous' also in the sense of being 'obvious'" (Fulton 1987, 203). According to Gramsci, the religious intelligentsia must be committed to active preaching, teaching, and persuasion in order to keep the religion of the people under control.

Religion, or a particular church, maintains its community of the faithful (within the limits imposed on it by the necessities of general historical development) in so far as it nourishes its faith permanently and in an organised fashion, indefatigably repeating its apologetics, struggling at all times and always with the same kind of arguments, and maintaining a hierarchy of intellectuals who give to the faith, in appearance at least, the dignity of thought." (Gramsci 1971, 340)

The strategy of incessantly repeating certain convictions to maintain one's 'flock' or win over people for one's goals is of course also practicable for non-religious actors, since "repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality" (Gramsci 1971, 340).

The fact that socio-political mobilization against LGBT rights in Korea actually has a religious, that is, a Protestant background makes Gramsci's insights all the more relevant for this study. If religion-based actors want to politicize relatively 'new' issues like homosexuality, they can, on the one hand, rely on existing organizational structures and, more importantly, human resources for mobilization. On the other hand, they can – and in fact *must*, according to Gramsci – build upon, and be compatible with the beliefs, norms, and ideological bits and pieces existent among the faithful and people at large. In the case of homosexuality, for example, certain interpretations of Bible passages are commonly used to suggest that homosexuality and homosexual sex represent immoral acts running counter to God's creation order,¹³ a strategy which may especially appeal to devout Christians. But it is also secular elements like a deeply rooted anti-communism or nationalism, as mentioned before, which may serve the purpose of relating to the 'popular religion' and, relatedly, to 'common sense' and 'folklore', important Gramscian concepts that will be explained in the next subchapter. Thus, the dissemination of certain world-views through social movement entrepreneurs – or intellectuals, as Gramsci would call these functional equivalents – to 'lower strata' does not function without frictions.

12 The aspect of conflicts over LGBT issues internal to Korean Protestantism and, relatedly, the apparent need of preserving unity will be investigated in detail in chapter 12.

13 Such literal or fundamentalist interpretations of Biblical texts have been challenged by liberal theology in recent decades. For more details, refer to footnote 9 in the introduction, p. 5.f.

In the Gramscian elaboration, the religion of the people does not simply mechanically articulate and reproduce the religion of intellectuals at a lower level. People on the ground are not simply passive recipients but also active appropriators and re-creators of elite culture and religion, which they combine freely with an eclectic range of sources that are rooted in their mentalities, world-views, and lived experiences – thus with bits and pieces of common sense and folklore. (Forlenza 2019, 10)

Concerning this intricate process of aligning the popular religion with that of the religious leadership, Gramsci points to an important difference between Marxist practice and that of Catholicism.

Whereas the former maintains a dynamic contact and tends continually to raise new strata of the population to a higher cultural life, the latter tends to maintain a purely mechanical contact, an external unity based in particular on the liturgy and on a cult visually imposing to the crowd. (Gramsci 1971, 397).

Gramsci's remark suggests that it is impossible for traditional religion to educate people so that they develop critical thinking and a free mind since this would endanger their superior position and privileges (Hoare and Sperber 2016, 97). It is questionable, though, if present-day religious movements still pursue such a strategy of preventing people from gaining a 'higher conscience'. As I will show in chapters 7 and 8, the Protestant anti-LGBT movement in Korea, rather on the contrary, makes their adherents believe that it is actually them who engage in critical thinking. Activists depict anti-LGBT sentiments and activities as 'rational' resistance against purportedly 'ideological' pro-LGBT activists, politicians, and governmental institutions.

The great merit of Gramsci's perspectives on religion consists in acknowledging religion as a thoroughly political entity and, as such, a strong hegemonic – and importantly – counter-hegemonic force.

[T]he religion of the people contains [...] the seeds of resistance and opposition to the dominant culture. The lived and unstructured religion of the masses is fragmentary and incoherent, but it is intrinsically political and, in specific conditions, can challenge dominant hegemonies and create an oppositional and confrontational culture. Religion, in other words, possesses a counter-hegemonic, revolutionary, and transformative potential as an incentive to action and mobilization. (Forlenza 2019, 12)

Gramsci's insights on religiously infused political strategies will benefit the analysis of Protestant anti-LGBT activism in a number of ways. For example, they play an important role in the analytical framework which will be outlined in the next chapter. Before going into the details of the concrete analytical framework, however, I will now outline in some detail the central Gramscian concepts and political strategies that he deems important for achieving cultural and political hegemony. The actors and specific tools involved in this process will be explicated as well. All these aspects inform the analytical framework of the present study.

2.4 Cultural and political hegemony, and how to achieve it

As noted before, one of Gramsci's central philosophical endeavors consisted in paving the way for an eventual Marxist seizure of state power. Writing in times of great socio-political upheavals, during and after the First World War, Gramsci wondered why socialist revolution was successful in Russia, but failed in other European countries such as Italy and Germany. He blames Marxists for relying too heavily on historical determinism and revolutionary spontaneism (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 79). More importantly, Gramsci argues that the main reason for the failure of Marxist revolutions lies in insufficiently taking into account the structural differences between 'the East' (read: Tsarist Russia) and 'the West', i.e., modern industrialized states. The strength and development of the civil society in the West as opposed to the virtually absolute power of the coercive state in the East are factors that, according to Gramsci, have to be duly considered when striving for state power (cf. Coutinho 2012, 93).

In the East, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying – but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country. (Gramsci 1971, 238)

This perspective is noteworthy in two respects. First, Gramsci juxtaposes civil society and political society. "As opposed to civil society, which is an open field for debate and the exercise of persuasion, political society is the domain of coercion, constraint, naked domination and the exercise of military, police and juridical-administrative force" (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 56). The interplay of civil and political societies is important for the achievement of hegemony, as will be outlined below. Secondly, Gramsci makes use of military metaphors. He elaborates on civil society:

at least in the case of the most advanced States, where 'civil society' has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic 'incursions' of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.) [...] the superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare. (Gramsci 1971, 235)

Gramsci here introduces two distinct concepts to differentiate between the strategic options available in 'the East' and in 'the West'. In Russia, Gramsci claims, a 'war of movement' (also called a 'war of maneuver'), that is, a strategy using frontal attacks and active class struggles was successfully used to initiate the revolution and overthrow the Tsarist empire. In the West, however, Gramsci argues that a 'war of position' would be more conducive to seize state power: "battles must be fought first within the context of civil society, aiming at obtaining positions and spaces [...], politico-ideological leadership, and the consensus of major groups of the population" (Coutinho 2012, 93; cf. also Gramsci 1971,

229–238). Winning this politico-ideological and cultural leadership in the arena of civil society is key for subsequently conquering concrete political power.

[T]he supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership’. A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to ‘liquidate’, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to ‘lead’ as well. (Gramsci 1971, 57–58)

As Gramsci notes, in contrast to a ‘war of movement’, this strategy of first winning the “intellectual and moral leadership” is “complicated, difficult, and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness” (Gramsci 1971, 239), but it is worth the efforts, since “the ‘war of position’, once won, is decisive for once and for all” (Gramsci 1971, 239). Even though this last claim may seem far-fetched and is, in fact, contradicted by Gramsci himself in other parts of his vast oeuvre, it does point to the importance Gramsci accords to the ‘war of position’ strategy within his theoretical writings on the conditions of the seizure of power.

The arguably most fundamental Gramscian concept in this context is that of *hegemony*. In Gramscian terms, hegemony is the pre-condition and, once political power has been captured, the underlying requirement for political domination, as the above quote from the *Prison Notebooks* suggests (Gramsci 1971, 57–58). Gramsci’s conceptualization of hegemony thus goes beyond the traditional understanding of hegemony as the result of successful coercion in the political arena.¹⁴ “Gramsci sees hegemony not just as the exercise of leadership but also as a fundamentally cognitive and moral process” (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 125). Hegemony, for Gramsci, is procedural in the sense that it needs to be reproduced consistently in order to retain effectiveness – or to achieve hegemony in the first place (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 127). Moreover, hegemony mainly operates on the ideological, or in Marxist terminology, on the superstructural level. For Gramsci, however, ideology does not represent a ‘false consciousness’ or distorted knowledge. It is, rather, “an active part of political praxis” (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 92), and as such, “something that transcends knowledge and connects itself directly with action that aims at influencing the behavior of other people” (Coutinho 2012, 72). In short, “ideology is the *medium* of hegemony” (Coutinho 2012, 73).

As indicated above, the arena in which ideology gets enacted and where hegemony is pursued is civil society. But who or which entities do actually exert hegemony? In the pre-

14 ‘Hegemony’ derives from the Greek *hēgemonía* (ἡγεμονία) and traditionally denoted the predominance of one of the ancient Greek city states over the other. In modern political science, the term ‘hegemony’ is mainly used in international relations (IR) to refer to a similar constellation, i.e., the predominance of one actor (mainly states) over others. Gramscian ideas have also influenced IR theory. Robert Cox founded the so-called neo-Gramscian IR school, taking a materialistic perspective on IR and conceiving the state-society complex as the central actor rather than the state alone (Overbeek 2011; Cox 1983).

vious subchapter, the Catholic church was presented as a considerable hegemonic force to the extent that Gramsci took Roman Catholicism as a model for his theoretical-practical insights on hegemony. As we have seen, in religious contexts it is the clerics who try to impose their 'religion of the intellectuals' on the lay people to exercise control and, ultimately, remain in a position of power. In other contexts, such as the state as a whole, Gramsci speaks of the ruling class in governing functions taking up this role. Having control over the governmental apparatus, however, is not sufficient for possessing and exercising power. For this purpose, also the control over the "private' apparatus of 'hegemony'" within the civil sphere is indispensable (Gramsci 1971, 261). In a famous passage, Gramsci defines the state in the following, algebraic manner: "State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armor of coercion" (Gramsci 1971, 263). If political society (domination) and civil society (consent) coincide, Gramsci speaks of the 'integral state' (*stato integrale*), a definition of the state that makes it almost synonymous with power itself (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 57). The integral state thus includes "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only maintains its dominance but manages to win the consent of those over whom it rules" (Gramsci 1971, 244). Gaining consent from the ruled, the "auxiliary forces", is an essential condition for achieving hegemony (Hoare and Sperber 2016, 122).

The ruling social groups' hegemonic position as well as their ideology are not engraved in stone, but rather themselves part of a dynamic process. We need to remember that Gramsci did not only embark on analyzing existing power structures. His principal objective was to substitute hegemonic forces and thus pave the way for communism. Gramsci's goal is in fact a full-fledged "recomposition of culture" (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 126, original italicized), an "intellectual and moral reform" (Gramsci 1995, 24–27; 1971, 132f.),¹⁵ for which he provides strategic guidelines. Such substituting efforts are often referred to as 'counter-hegemonic', a term which Gramsci himself had not used. It was coined by Gramscian scholar Carl Boggs (Boggs 1984, xi) and was readily adopted in neo-Marxist and social scientific research and theorization.

For Gramsci, the central counter-hegemonic actor is, of course, the communist party, to which he – in a way to circumvent fascist censorship, and based on Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe* – generally refers to as the "Modern Prince" (Gramsci 1971, 132f). The communist party needs to win "auxiliary forces", the "subaltern element", that is, the working class if it wants to be successful (Gramsci 1971, 336f).¹⁶ However, as noted before,

15 Gramsci here borrows again from the religious world when aiming for an "intellectual and moral reform". In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci explicitly refers to the Lutheran Reformation and to "British Calvinism" (apparently following Max Weber's account on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*) when stating – with regret? – that such an "intellectual and moral reform" had never taken place in Italy (Gramsci 1995, 24). Gramsci took the idea for such a "transformation of popular consciousness" (Fulton 1987, 199) from the French scholar Ernest Renan's book *La réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1967 [1871]) who, in turn, adopted this concept from the French economist and sociologist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (Gramsci 1995, 26; cf. also Fulton 1987, 199f).

16 However, it is not sufficient to just win over subaltern groups. They also need to be educated and trained to actually become protagonists of their own: "if yesterday the subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but an historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible, because 'resisting' a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because

Gramsci's strategic thinking can also be fruitfully applied to other contexts of counter-hegemonic endeavors. Gramsci calls the strategy for achieving hegemony the 'philosophy of praxis' – yet another code word which Gramsci often used to denote Marxism. Gramscian scholars, however, agree that the philosophy of praxis is not just another pseudonym necessitated by censorship, but that it is a theoretical and strategic concept in its own right, representing a departure from traditional Marxism (Haug 2000, 5–7).

The philosophy of praxis centrally comprises the critique and subsequent recomposition of 'common sense' (*senso comune*). Gramsci sees common sense as a kind of popular conception of the world, which includes all the ideas, opinions, superstitions, and folklore that affect people's lives (Gramsci 1971, 419f). Common sense consists of the "heterogeneous beliefs people arrive at not through critical reflection, but encounter as already existing, self-evident truths" (Crehan 2016, x). It includes "that comforting set of certainties in which we feel at home, and that we absorb, often unconsciously, from the world we inhabit" (Crehan 2016, 118). Common sense is not a unified or immutable concept: "Common sense' is a collective noun, like religion: there is not just one common sense, for that too is a product of history and a part of the historical process" (Gramsci 1971, 325f).¹⁷ Common sense in a Gramscian sense is thus distinct from its general usage in the English language: "The English term, with its overwhelmingly positive connotations, puts the emphasis, so to speak, on the 'sense,' *senso comune* on the held-in-common (*comune*) nature of the beliefs" (Crehan 2016, x). The 'religion of the people' encountered in the previous subchapter is also part of common sense. Common sense is highly significant because if certain (political, philosophical, moral, etc.) ideas 'make it' into common sense they become "deeply-embedded in the fabric of social relations and national traditions" (Boggs 1984, 161). In short, they become hegemonic.¹⁸

Whoever sets out to influence common sense as part of their counter-hegemonic efforts has to engage with people and try to build a political and collective self-consciousness. Such a consciousness must be critical of the existing circumstances: "A philosophy of praxis cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world)" (Gramsci 1971, 330). If the establishment of collective and political iden-

it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative" (Gramsci 1971, 337). This point will be explicated further below.

17 In the original Italian, Gramsci writes about "*un divenire storico*", i.e., "a historical becoming", which has been translated to "historical process" here (Gramsci 1971, 326, footnote 419).

18 In the social sciences, there are similar concepts to the one of *senso comune* as proposed by Gramsci. The concepts of 'institutions', for example, was developed in the organizational studies. While putting different emphases depending on the institutionalist school of thought (rational choice, historical, sociological, and discursive institutionalisms), a common denominator is that institutions influence human thinking and behavior in social settings (cf. North 1990; Mahoney 2000; DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Schmidt 2010). According to Jepperson (1991: 149) "institutions are socially constructed, routine-reproduced [...] program or rule systems. They operate as relative fixtures of constraining environments and are accompanied by taken-for-grantedness accounts." Of the different institutionalisms, Mahoney and Thelen's (2009) theory on gradual institutional change will be used in chapter 7.3 to help explain the mechanism of identity shift, or rather, the way that the anti-LGBT movements strives to achieve a certain identity shift.

tities proves successful, encouraging people to engage in concrete political practice and activism is the next step.

Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political 'hegemonies' and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. (Gramsci 1971, 333)

This unity of theory and practice is crucial for counter-hegemonic projects. While Gramsci grants an important political and strategic role to the intellectuals, the "permanent persuader[s]" (Gramsci 1971, 10), he also famously acknowledges that "everyone is a philosopher" (Gramsci 1971, 323) and has to be taken serious in this capacity to modify common sense through their practices. "Every man, in as much as he is active, i.e. living, contributes to modifying the social environment in which he develops (to modifying certain of its characteristics or to preserving others); in other words, he tends to establish 'norms', rules of living and of behaviour" (Gramsci 1971, 265).

Gramsci deserves praise for highlighting the importance of 'winning the hearts and minds' of people when striving to influence socio-political affairs and to seize political power. Hegemony is, in this context, a crucial concept which Gramsci describes as an end rather than a means of politics (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 119). Influencing hegemony requires efforts on various levels. It includes diverse actors, it necessitates sophisticated strategic planning and perseverance, and it has an important ideological element. In summary,

[h]egemony is thus for Gramsci a truly multidimensional concept. It serves to denote not just the political leadership of a social group, but also the strategy of alliance vis-à-vis the auxiliary group or groups, the symbiosis of coercion and consent as the fundamental mechanics of power, the recasting of the ideological landscape and of cultural life, the formulation, expression and construction of a political project in a universalistic and 'ethical' form, an original educational relationship and the moral and cognitive mutation of consciousness. (Hoare & Sperber, 132)

Adopting Gramscian insights for the study of the Korean anti-LGBT movement

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, one of my main arguments is that the Korean anti-LGBT movement acts in a way that – so they assume or hope for – would lead them (back) to a dominant position in Korean society, which, subsequently, would grant them political leverage and power. Speaking in Gramscian terms, Korean anti-LGBT activists engage in a 'war of position' to influence public opinion, the 'common sense' in relation to homosexuality and related issues. They strive to render anti-LGBT positions mainstream in the general public to then exercise influence. This intended influence is aimed, first, at preventing concrete LGBT-related legislation (cf. Kim, Ol Teun 2021), but, secondly, also has the purpose of getting hold of political power in general.

This study focuses on the anti-LGBT endeavors of the Korean Protestant Right. This is only one aspect of this collective actor's vast array of political concerns such as trying to retain the religion-related legal privileges and fighting against migration, refugees, Islam, feminism, communism, the left-wing in general – to name only a few 'external enemies' (Kim, Nami 2016; Cho, Min-ah 2011). As I will show in the analytical chapters, these politicized topics are not mutually exclusive. Rather, we can observe frequent overlaps. The case study of anti-LGBT activities, which have been particularly strong, well organized and sustained over the past 15 years, will shed a light on the general strategies of the Korean Protestant Right. In particular, this study will show how certain issues are made contentious in the first place, and how this process builds upon 'traditional' political elements as well as new additions that are being adopted – also from abroad, highlighting the transnational impact of anti-LGBT endeavors.

South Korea is a highly industrialized country which developed into a liberal democracy featuring a rather strong civil society (Oh 2012; He 2010).¹⁹ Given these conditions, a Gramscian 'war of position' is a viable strategy to gain hegemony and political power in the long run. It is not so obvious, however, that one can call the Protestant Right's political struggle a counter-hegemonic fight. Even though these religio-political actors are not in governing positions and, in fact, actively fight politicians in power as well as government institutions and policies that they, allegedly, promote, I argue that one should not situate the Protestant Right outside the hegemonic complex. This is because, historically, the Protestant Right held a powerful or at least privileged position during the authoritarian regimes of Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee and his successors (Park, Chungshin 2003, 202; 2007). While one can observe a certain degree of socio-political and demographic decline of Korean Protestantism after democratization (Cho 2014, 317f.; Lee Easley 2014), Protestant denominations and affiliated organizations are far from being underprivileged or even oppressed parts of Korean society. Compared to other religious affiliations in Korean society, for example, Christians have been overrepresented in the National Assembly and often hold high political offices (Kang, In-Cheol 2009). As I will argue in the context of this study's analytical framework, the Protestant Right forms part of what Gramsci would call a conservative 'historic bloc' which still possesses considerable political clout. This begs the question whether one can actually label the Protestant Right's socio-political endeavors counter-hegemonic in the strict sense of the word. 'Re-hegemonizing' efforts may be a more fitting designation.

It would be overly simplistic to regard the Protestant Right's activities as an evidence of reactionary bigotry. I argue that – even though right-wing Protestant actors seem to miss the 'glorious past' – they also and importantly have forward-looking goals and strategies. While relying on ideological elements of the past, they also turn towards new

19 Even though civil society struggles existed even before democratization in South Korea, many scholars point out that Korea's history was first and foremost characterized by a strong and dominant state unfavorable of civil society (Koo 1993; Choi, Jang Jip 1993). Civil society was only able to sustainably develop after democratization. This does not mean, however, that civil society is always politically successful. Kalinowski (2020), for example, argues that the Korean environmental groups have been rather weak and therefore also unsuccessful in the political arena.

ideas and thus 'modernize' Protestant political activism. In this respect, I perceive potential synergies of scholarship on conservatism and conservative movements, including their religious components on the one hand, and Gramscian insights on the other. I will now introduce this perspective in greater detail.

2.5 'Dynamic continuity': Historical legacies, present challenges, and future visions of conservative activism

As I have outlined in the introduction, defining conservative movements and conservatism at large is an intricate matter (Müller 2006, 359). While some regard conservatism as a disposition which highly estimates the status quo (Oakeshott 1962; Beckstein 2015) and, relatedly, advocates the preservation of vested privileges (McVeigh 2009, 32), other perspectives focus on conservatism as a political program or ideology, for example, in favor of free market capitalism or of a certain moral order (Femia 2015; Gross et al. 2011, 328f; Blee & Creasap 2010, 270). Others again claim that, rather, a lack of political ideals as well as risk aversion lie at the heart of conservatism (Clarke 2017). Michael Freeden argues that conservatism is marked by a distinct "mirror-image characteristic", in that conservatives "develop substantive *antitheses* to progressive core concepts" (Freeden 1996, 336).²⁰ These approaches are not mutually exclusive, but the authors here clearly display different emphases on what the essence of conservatism is, and on which level it manifests itself. I do not aim at contributing to this scholarly debate on the essence of conservatism. I call attention to one aspect which I argue is important for the analysis of conservative *movements* in particular, especially when adopting a Gramscian analytical perspective.

One could say that a common denominator for most of the above approaches is the critical attitude that conservatives take in respect to social change.²¹ Edmund Burke, an Irish-born British politician and early precursor of conservative thought and politics, laid the ground for such a positioning in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (Burke 1993 [1790]). While passionately rejecting the revolutionary ongoing in France, Burke himself had been a reform-minded Whig politician before (Ballestrem 2007, 364; Bourke 2015). This perhaps explains his famous argument that "a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation" (Burke 1993, 21). Other thinkers of conservatism argue in similar ways, in the sense that even though the status quo should ideally be preserved (some) change is inevitable. In his essay *On being Conservative*, Michael Oakeshott accordingly claims that a conservative person "will find small and slow changes more tolerable than large and sudden; and he will value highly every appearance of continuity" (Oakeshott 1962, 170).

20 Freeden (1996) also discerns two further core features of conservatism. First, he claims that conservatives show a preference for "organic change" (333) rather than man-made changes and, secondly, conservatives share "a belief in the extra-human origins of the social order, i.e. as independent of human will" (334).

21 This observation is well reflected in the etymology of the term 'conservative'. It derives from the Latin verb *conservare*, which means 'to keep', 'preserve', 'guard'.

The fact that conservative politics are not manageable without change may appear to be a truism when seen from a common knowledge perspective. This insight, however, is important for the argument that I want to make. I argue that the Korean anti-LGBT movement (1) is not entirely fixated on a certain status quo, nor rooted in irrational reactionary bigotry (cf. Alexander 2016, 223). On the contrary, (2) the movement is very much interested in change and, more importantly, in being in charge of how this change exactly looks like and comes about. It is a misconception to regard the movement as a passive onlooker who merely reacts to changes. Rather, it actively tries to influence the pathways social change takes. In order to successfully exercise influence, then, (3) the movement embarks on a strategy that builds upon *existing* ideas, ideological elements, as well as structures and networks. The “appearance of continuity” as proposed by Oakeshott (1962, 170) is thus not only important for actors with a conservative disposition themselves, but also as a strategic element for convincing people about certain issues and mobilizing them for socio-political struggles.

I call this strategic and procedural phenomenon *dynamic continuity*. I introduce this conceptual lens to overcome a seeming contradiction. While the conservative actors in question do promote political issues that are commonly regarded as conservative such as a heteronormative sexual morality and the protection of vested interests, I argue that they do so in rather dynamic and innovative ways. They refer back to established frames and thus, on the outset, appear like traditional conservatives. At the same time, they try to create new connections, for instance, between ‘old’ anti-communist impulses and rather recent LGBT issues. The conservative actors do so in a strategic move to actually advance a future-oriented political program, a vision of politics and society that serves their purposes and worldviews. They are thus not mere ‘agents of continuity’, but also – somewhat surprisingly from a common knowledge perspective – ‘agents of change’, a term commonly utilized in social sciences (e.g., Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010; Ghorashi 2005; Doh 2003).²² As I will show below, Antonio Gramsci’s strategic thought on how to reach socio-cultural hegemony also centers on combining ‘old’, existing elements with ‘new’ ideas in order to persuade and win over people.

Further scholarly and literary reflections on dynamic continuity

For the US-American context, Didi Herman (1997) came to similar conclusions regarding anti-LGBT activism in the 1990s and before. In *The Antigay Agenda*, she describes the theological roots, as well as the depictions of lesbian and gay sexuality by the United States’ Christian Right. Herman departs from stereotypical perspectives of anti-gay activism as

22 Regarding conservative actors as potential agents of change complicates the view on conservatism as promoted by Oakeshott. His famous characterization of conservatism is in fact in conflict with such a perspective. He writes: “To be conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to Utopian bliss. Familiar relationships and loyalties will be preferred to the allure of more profitable attachments; to acquire and to enlarge will be less important than to keep, to cultivate and to enjoy; the grief of loss will be more acute than the excitement of novelty or promise” (Oakeshott 1962, 169).

homophobic "religious bigotry" (Herman 1997, 7). While keeping a critical overall stance, Herman carves out that anti-gay debates rather rely on 'reasonable', secular arguments. It is therefore wrong to merely frame the Christian Right as proponents of backlash. Quite to the contrary, Herman argues that the Christian Right is a historically embedded entity belonging to the establishment rather than representing a counterforce of any sort. She notes: "demands for lesbian and gay equality are an attack upon the hegemony of heterosexual culture" (Herman 1997, 196), which the Christian Right tries to defend. At the same time, the Christian Right has its own future vision of what represents the good life (Herman 1997, 194–200). Herman here presents an analysis which I claim contains several elements of Gramscian thought but does not build a consistent analytical model – a lacuna which I strive to fill with this study.

An important perspective on the nexus between dynamism and continuity has been developed by German sociologist Hartmut Rosa and collaborators. In his book *Alienation and acceleration – towards a critical theory of late-modern temporality*, Rosa (2010) observes a phenomenon in modern societies which he terms "dynamic stabilization". Rosa argues that acceleration is at the core of many social developments and takes diverse facets in modern times, e.g., in terms of technology and social change. It is the capitalist imperative to increase which causes most of the acceleration. Paradoxically, though, all this acceleration is happening just so that we can keep the status-quo of our human development. Rosa calls this odd state a "high-speed standstill" (*rasender Stillstand*), which ultimately leads to the alienation of individuals, who become increasingly unable to orient themselves in an ever-accelerating world and fail at leading meaningful lives as a consequence (cf. also Rosa et al. 2017, 59). The approach promoted by Rosa et al. has a very broad scope, featuring an analysis of modern, capitalist societies and the effects recent socio-political and economic developments exert on individual lives. This is of course not applicable to the analysis of religiously influenced conservative movements. However, it shows in an analogous manner that the seeming contradiction of dynamic continuity is being observed and analyzed in other social scientific contexts as well. The focus of Rosa et al. on stabilization will not play a huge role in this study, though. It is the dynamics, the actual (attempts at) change that this investigation is most concerned with.

The literary world has also contributed to the idea of dynamic continuity: Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's famous dictum from his novel *The Leopard*, in which the 19th century Sicilian aristocracy – desperately and vainly – tries to defend its vested privileges in the turmoil of Italian unification, at first sight concisely summarizes the notion of dynamic continuity: "If we want things to stay as they are, everything must change." (Tomasi di Lampedusa 2007: 28). Here, Tomasi di Lampedusa's literary character, the young aristocrat Tancredi, acknowledges the centrality of change, even for conservative-minded people fearful of losing their basis of existence. In this sense, change is not so much a phenomenon to be 'suffered'. Rather, it is regarded as innovation which can be actively influenced and forged (Oakeshott 1962, 169). Tomasi di Lampedusa's dictum, however, does not fully do justice to the notion of dynamic continuity promoted in this study. He focuses on the desire that things "stay as they are". My approach stresses the dynamism rather than continuity. Continuity is the strategic background variable that certain conservative actors hope helps them reach their minor and major political goals. Viewed from this angle, I propose that we can adapt Tomasi di Lampedusa's statement in the fol-

lowing manner: *Everything must change, but we need to make sure that it appears as if nothing changes at all.* Or, put in less absolute terms: *The changes we strive for need to give the impression of continuity.* In a sense, the ‘we’ in these phrases, the conservative actors – or rather the strategy they adopt – could be regarded as ‘conservative in name only’, as ‘make-believe conservative’. With this claim, I do not want to suggest that there is actually no consolidated conservative disposition or worldview underlying their activism. In the case of this study, for example, I do not claim that the anti-LGBT movement is merely exploiting the topic for other purposes. I believe that many anti-LGBT activists are very much convinced of the ‘wickedness’ of homosexuality. Rather, I want to draw attention to the way they approach politics in many cases. That is, taking instrumental recourse to historical legacies, to existing structures and conservative ideas to actually conquer ‘new frontiers’. These frontiers can include single topics such as the LGBT issue, but they do not foreclose a broader socio-political agenda and consequential attempts at fundamental political transformation.

Dynamically towards a regressive transformation?

In an extension of Oakeshott’s definition of conservatism as a disposition, James Alexander (2016) delineates a dialectical perspective which captures the contradiction inherent to conservatism. Starting from Oakeshott’s definition, he states: “Conservatism is holding onto what we have, where what we have is of the past as well as of the present” (Alexander 2016, 220). He then focuses on how conservatives deal with socio-political ruptures and argues: “Conservatism involves an acceptance of the rupture; but it also involves a denial of the rupture” (Alexander 2016, 223, original italicized). While Alexander’s focus on ruptures, i.e., revolutions and fundamental political transitions rather than change in general is questionable, his main insights support the postulation of dynamic continuity. He continues:

This ambivalence runs throughout conservatism. It accepts the rupture, and does not attempt to overturn it; yet it is committed to the ideals – the only ideals it has – of an uninterrupted, an unoverturned world, and so, vestigially, and perhaps only imaginatively, and possibly only unconsciously, holds onto the ideal of overturning the established order for the sake of return to an older one. (Alexander 2016, 224)

Applied to the Korean case, one might claim that the Protestant Right accepts the rules and processes of the political order established after democratization in the late 1980s. At the same time, it holds on to the privileges as well as the values and ideology it had cherished already under the authoritarian regimes, like anti-communism, nationalism, and ethno-centrism. Such a conservatism

tacitly accepts the enlightened ideals which justified the rupture; however, in its practical politics, it attempts to hold onto as much of the *status quo* as possible and this means opposing the parties which are in favour of a politics carried out in terms of the same enlightened ideals and which in the name of those ideals favour further reform or revolution. (Alexander 2016, 231, original italicized).

Very much like Gramsci's 'war of position', Alexander here highlights that actors have to come to terms with the systemic conditions surrounding them. Gramsci, however, also takes the next step and describes how exercising influence, fundamental change, and the seizure of power can actually take place under such circumstances. Alexander emphasizes the importance of ruptures, but does not fully consider the possibility that conservatives themselves can aspire to such socio-political ruptures.²³

At this point, terminological problems arise. The definitional intricacies concerning conservatism and the right-wing political spectrum in general have already been covered above. The openness for rupture, for fundamental political changes, however, begs the question whether it would be more appropriate to define the Korean Protestant Right as a whole, and the anti-LGBT movement in particular, as belonging to the radical right-wing within the political spectrum rather than 'just' calling them conservative. The designation 'radical' would be fitting in a sense that – at least so I argue – they aim for ample socio-political changes while working within the existing democratic system to achieve this goal (cf. Griffin 2000; 1999). They do not – by all appearances as far as my research shows – strive for a complete overthrow of the constitutional and democratic order, which would be an extremist rather than a radical position (Carter 2017, 30–32, 35).²⁴ The observation that the phenomenon at hand is a 'radical' one certainly holds analytical value. As regards the notion of dynamic continuity, however, the exact political and ideological allegiances of the actors involved are not that important at this point. I want to emphasize that conservatism, be it as an ideological, dispositional, or relational basis of action, includes both preservation and innovation. Whether conservative activism involves the pursuit of extensive socio-political ruptures is of secondary importance to my argument. Rather, the topics of radicalness and innovation are especially important for the study of social movements as I will elaborate now.

Dynamic continuity and social movements: towards a typology of dynamic continuity

Social scientists have highlighted the innovative potential of social movements in many areas and on diverse levels of society and politics. Social movements can, for example, provide innovations for deepening democracy (della Porta 2020), they give new impulses

23 This is surprising insofar as Alexander, in another research paper, claims – somewhat in accordance with Clarke (2017) – that conservatism is actually a blank slate and that "it can conserve anything" (Alexander 2013, 603). Interestingly, then, conservatism can ultimately mean to even preserve progressive achievements. Fear (2020, 198f) criticizes this argument for ignoring the ideological contents commonly associated with conservatism.

24 Roger Griffin argues that the contemporary *radical right* makes "a conscious effort to abide by the democratic rules of the game and respect the rights of others to hold conflicting opinions and liver out contrasting value systems" (Griffin 1999, 298). According to Elisabeth Carter, the *extreme right* is defined by two elements: "(1) a rejection of the fundamental values, procedures and institutions of the democratic constitutional state (a feature that makes right-wing extremism extremist); (2) a rejection of the principle of fundamental human equality (a feature that makes right-wing extremism right wing)" (Carter 2017, 31).

to policy areas like educational systems (Maldonado-Mariscal 2020) as well as to companies to become more sustainable (Carberry et al. 2019), and they instill innovation into religious groups (Ozzano 2019). Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (2006, 31) summarize this insight: “Movements represent innovative, sometimes radical, elements both in the way in which the political system works, and in its very structure.” These perspectives, however, predominantly focus on progressive social movements. I argue that conservative movements indeed play a similar role within the conservative or right-wing spectrum as a whole. They also come up with new issues suitable for politicization as well as innovate action repertoires and frames for rendering these issues contentious.

At the same time, social movements relate this innovation to existing elements of institutionalized culture in a given social context: first, they draw inspiration from cultural heritage in their respective country. Secondly, movements make reference to their own heritage, and thirdly, they adopt elements from oppositional movements while recreating them for their own purposes (della Porta & Diani 2006, 83). Ann Swidler, in this context, coined the perspective of culture as a ‘tool kit’: “culture influences action not by providing the ultimate values toward which action is oriented, but by shaping a repertoire or ‘tool kit’ of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’” (Swidler 1986, 273). Culture here figures as “the cognitive apparatus which people need to orient themselves in the world”, rather than just consisting of values which people uncritically abide by (della Porta & Diani 2006, 73).²⁵ Social movements, also those on the right-wing spectrum, thus possess diverse cultural resources that can enhance their concrete struggles. Dynamic continuity is a mode of action also present in social movements. Della Porta and Diani (2006, 84f.) point out:

collective action is both a creative manipulation of new symbols and a reaffirmation of tradition. The insurgence of a new wave of mobilization does not, in fact, represent simply a signal of innovation and change, in relation to the culture and the principles prevalent in a given period. It is also, if to a varying extent, a confirmation of the fundamental continuity of values and historic memories which have, in recent times, been neglected or forgotten.

The perspective on ‘dynamic continuity’ is thus nothing new to social movement studies. It has, however, not yet been spelled out in detail as an analytical concept to apply to the study of collective action. This study seeks to remedy this, at least in part. While the general properties of the dynamic continuity perspective certainly apply to progressive movement as well, this study focusses on conservative movements to carve out the particularities that these collective actors display in their both dynamic and continuous socio-political struggles.

25 The role of values in political and social processes has been stressed in the area of modernization theory. Particularly, the shift from material (in the sense of economic and physical self-preservation) to postmaterial values (i.e., e.g., self-expression, autonomy, equality) has found considerable scholarly attention. This perspective on value change also affected social movement studies, which increasingly turned their interest toward ‘new social movements’ promoting said postmaterial values (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart & Welzel 2005; cf. also della Porta and Diani 2006, 67–73).

Dynamic continuity, in summary, consists of three broad bases upon which conservative movements build their concrete actions:

- 1) *temporal-congruent combination*: relating one's arguments and frames to ideologically compatible elements, parts of 'common sense' that have been influential in the past and still promise to be powerful;
- 2) *relational-congruent adoption and adaptation*: borrowing action repertoires, strategies, and frames from ideologically analogous actors at home and abroad and adjusting them according to one's needs, for example, drawing on the strategies of what I will call a 'transnational conservative historical bloc';
- 3) *relational-incongruent adoption and adaptation*: making use of strategic elements and action repertoires originally used or developed by oppositional forces, commonly the political left.

The first, and perhaps most evident, category of dynamic continuity presented above is situated in the temporal level. 'Old', longstanding narratives represent the continuous element, which gets enriched with new discursive aspects bringing in the dynamism. The second and third aspects of dynamic continuity, that is, borrowing and adapting strategies and action repertoires from ideologically congruent, but also from oppositional actors are situated on the relational level of collective action. The second category is continuous on the ideological level and dynamic concerning the adaptation of these foreign elements according to the movement's domestic needs and interests. Reversely, the dynamic part of the third category is the adoption of oppositional frames, while the continuous one consists of piggybacking on such pre-established framing strategies proven to be effective. This third category reflects Freedman's (1996, 336) "mirror-image" perspective on conservatism. The *contentious politics approach* (McAdam et al. 2001; Tarrow 2011; Tilly & Tarrow 2015) highlights, among others, the relational mechanisms at work in contentious socio-political interactions and will thus benefit the analytical framework of this study. I will present this research agenda in greater detail below in the chapter on the analytical framework.

All the categories build upon the cognitive level of collective action, that is, the way perceptions influence concrete actions, but also, in turn, how beliefs, convictions, and ideas can be actively influenced. I make use of the *framing approach* to cover this cognitive level of social movement activism. In this approach, frames are defined as "schemata of interpretation" (Goffman 1974: 21). Within social movements studies, frames have been specified as 'collective action frames', that is, "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)" (Benford & Snow 2000, 614). Frame analysis takes into account that strategic, discursive, and diffusion processes play a central role in generating movement-specific collective action frames (cf. Benford & Snow 2000, 623–628). Thus, it fits in well with the theoretical framework of this analysis in general and will benefit the analysis of dynamic continuity in particular. The strategic processes of frame alignment are, as I will show, of special importance in this context (cf. Benford & Snow 2000, 623–625). Chapters 7 and 8 will delve into the details of the framing approach and into the concrete frames deployed by the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Let me point out four important caveats at this point. (1) The three aspects of dynamic continuity should not be understood as exclusive categories. In fact, overlaps between the first and second aspects in particular seem to represent ‘natural’ combinations when, for example, the Korean anti-LGBT movement adopts action frames from foreign actors who have built said frames on an ideological fundament similar to the one their Korean allies have. (2) Concerning the third category, it becomes evident that ‘opposing desires’ are present in dynamic continuity as well. The opposing desires concern, in the antagonistic sense, the fact that right-wing actors adopt left-wing strategies – for instance Gramscian tactics for obtaining hegemony, but also specific frames. At the same time, the contradiction of making use of left-wing strategies as a conservative actor brings to light an internal conflict, yet another kind of opposing desire. This contradiction is, however, normally not openly addressed by the right-wing activists since this would endanger their credibility – and, by extension, their mobilization potential. Taking the risk of ideological inconsistency is, I argue, more acceptable for right-wing actors when the strategic level is concerned, not so much if the ideological core itself were affected.²⁶ (3) Relatedly, even though right-wing activists borrow frames, strategies, and action forms from external actors – be they oppositional or not – they do not do so uncritically and without adapting them according to their specific circumstances and needs. Acharya (2004), for instance, observes that “norm localization” takes place when domestic actors adopt and simultaneously adapt foreign elements (cf. also Westney 1987). Dynamism – when it comes to adopting left-wing or external actors’ strategies – is only compatible with right-wing or conservative movements’ actions if they manage to guarantee and uphold the image of consistency and, ultimately, continuity. (4) Finally, dynamic continuity can also be observed in other aspects of collective action. One is identity, for example when adherents’ collective identity changes in a way that builds upon or reorients pre-existing identity elements but also inserts new aspects (cf. chapter 7.3). This type of dynamic continuity is, however, rather an effect – also of the categories presented above – and not an action repertoire in the strict sense, which is why it is not included in this typology.

Dynamic continuity through a Gramscian lens

Antonio Gramsci’s insights on ‘common sense’ along with his emphasis on historical legacies, affiliations, constraints – but also opportunities – provide a perspective on how elements are adapted and adopted in socio-political struggles. As will become clear, the Gramscian approach also supports the idea of dynamic continuity, namely, in the shape of the two aspects introduced above: cognition and relations. At this point, I focus on the cognitive, ideational side and will shortly outline how Gramsci conceives of the *senso comune* in a way that is dynamic and at the same time embedded in its historical legacies. I will address the second aspect, i.e., the historically grown and ideologically based concrete relations with other actors, in the chapter on the analytical framework below,

26 Several scholars have done research on the question which effects opposing movements wield on each other. Whittier (2004), for example, provides a general summary on the consequences social movements have for each other. Tina Fetner (2008) has an explicit focus on how the Religious Right in the United States shaped gay and lesbian activism.

namely when elaborating on the concept of the 'organic intellectuals' as coined by Gramsci (chapter 3.3).

As elaborated above, common beliefs, opinions, and conceptions of the world – or 'common sense' as Gramsci refers to them – are not immutable facts cast in stone, but rather malleable ideational ensembles. In the course of history, common sense has been subject to diverse influences.

Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'common sense': this is the document of its historical reality. Common sense is not something rigid and static; rather, it changes continuously, enriched by scientific notions and philosophical opinions which have entered into common usage. (Gramsci 1992, 173)

In order to gain hegemony common sense needs to be influenced. Modifying common sense requires a smart strategy and long-term efforts. However, Gramsci claims that it is not sufficient to just criticize the existing common sense or elements thereof. On the contrary, one has to positively refer back to parts of common sense to establish a dialectical bond between 'old' and 'new'. As a consequence, people can identify more easily with a certain socio-political issue or project and perceive themselves as active parts of a political struggle.

A philosophy of praxis cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world). First of all, therefore, it must be a criticism of 'common sense', basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity. (Gramsci 1971, 330f)

In other words, "a counter-hegemonic movement needs to work from within the common sense itself, rescuing those elements of it which are familiar and which can be progressive, in order to make them coherent" (Rose 2013: 66). The term 'progressive' fits the context of conservative movements as well, since, as I have shown, it is also conservative actors who pursue future-oriented, potentially far-reaching socio-political changes.²⁷ Forlenza explains Gramsci's take on the dynamic potential of past elements within common sense akin to the cultural 'tool kit' argument seen before (Swidler 1986): "The past cannot be easily set aside or escaped; instead, it is to be engaged with fully as the material to transform and elaborate through a free act of will in the present, which critically

27 The term 'progressive' is, in fact, a rather ambivalent one. Of course, it can take the meaning of espousing modern, i.e., non-traditional socio-political ideas and advocating such ideas in the political realm. 'Progressive' can, however, also imply that a process of change is happening gradually. In this sense, it incidentally fits quite well the Gramscian 'war of position' strategy. Yet another meaning of 'progressive' can be found in linguistics: in terms of grammar, 'progressive' means 'continuous' (e.g., the present progressive tense in English). This latter meaning makes evident the contradictory, and yet dialectical quality of 'progressive' politics in the guise of conservatism and vice-versa.

evaluates the past through the philosophy of praxis” (Forlenza 2019, 5). The great potential of referring back to familiar bits and pieces of common sense to actually promote a political project of a different kind then lies in the agency evoked through this strategy. When Gramsci claims that “‘everyone’ is a philosopher” he grants a similar importance to the convictions of the people as to those of the intellectuals (cf. also ‘the religion of the people’ and ‘the religion of the intellectuals’ elaborated above). In fact, these observations describe the central aspect of what Gramsci names ‘the philosophy of praxis’, his ultimate strategy for achieving socio-political transformation.

The philosophy of praxis presupposes all this cultural past: Renaissance and Reformation, German philosophy and the French Revolution, Calvinism and English classical economics, secular liberalism and this historicism which is at the root of the whole modern conception of life. The philosophy of praxis is the crowning point of this entire movement of intellectual and moral reformation, made dialectical in the contrast between popular and high culture. It corresponds to the nexus Protestant Reformation plus French Revolution: it is a philosophy which is also politics, and a politics which is also philosophy. (Gramsci, 1971: 395).

Dynamic continuity, understood as the recognition and usage of history as important elements of (counter-)hegemonic strategies, is thus an important concept, also from a Gramscian perspective. It is a strategic move combining the ‘philosophical’, i.e., the ideological and cognitive aspects of meaning-making with concrete political practice. This adoption of past and/or existing elements of common sense would, however, hardly be successful without wise adaptation. In an analysis of the nexus between ideology and hegemony in Gramsci’s writings, Chantal Mouffe (1979, 193f.) coined the term “rearticulation” for such an adaptive process. Forlenza characterizes rearticulation as

a crucial process that operates by liberating existing cultural forms and practices (or superstructure) from historical fixity and from a hegemonic system cemented by a common ideology, by combining them into new patterns, and by giving them radically new and potentially revolutionary connotations and meanings (Forlenza 2019, 12).

In the social sciences, a concept similar to rearticulation is known as *bricolage*. I will now introduce this important social mechanism,²⁸ which further elucidates how the concept of dynamic continuity can be understood and deployed for the analysis of social movements.

A mechanism to grasp dynamic continuity: bricolage

Bricolage is French for ‘do-it-yourself’ (‘DIY’) and has first been introduced to social sciences by the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966). For Lévi-Strauss, bricolage is the practice of a *bricoleur*, “a practical problem-solver who uses only the materials and tools

28 Mechanisms will be defined and explained in greater detail below in the chapter on contentious politics and on the concrete analytical framework of this study, where mechanisms will play an important role.

he has at hand. He operates with and redeploys heterogeneous 'fragments' from the past" (Samuels 2003, 7). Richard Samuels (2003), in turn, redeployed Lévi-Strauss' concept of bricolage for the analysis of large-scale political transformations in Japan and in Italy from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Samuels highlights the role of political leadership in these transformative processes and observes that, rather than plotting radical changes through revolution, combining traditional and modern themes is a – indeed very effective – method for achieving change espoused by political leaders. But why do leaders choose to pursue this strategy? Samuels argues that political actors expect to garner legitimacy by referring back to traditional elements. He elaborates:

In the political world, where transformational leaders stretch constraints, those fragments of the old can be extremely valuable as repositories of the acceptable. They contain *legitimacy* as well as constraints, and are tools of creative reinvention and change. Political bricoleurs reassemble and deploy fragments of legitimate action as they search for a useable past. Indeed, because legitimacy is so precious and elusive, the deeper and more ably the political bricoleur reaches back to secure a serviceable history, the surer may be his grip on the future. (Samuels 2003, 7)²⁹

The concept of bricolage has also been adopted in social movement studies (Tarrow 2011, Clemens 1996, 206–208). In the context of collective action, bricolage serves as a mobilization mechanism, which, according to Sidney Tarrow, can attract diverse constituencies due to the ambiguous and multivalent meanings created (Tarrow 2011, 146). "Familiar themes are arrayed to entice citizens to become supporters; and new themes are soldered onto them to activate them in new and creative directions" (Tarrow 2011, 146). Bricolage is of particular importance in the framing efforts of social movements. "Bricolage pulls together accepted and new frames to legitimate contention and mobilize accepted frames for new purposes (Tarrow 2011, 146). Bricolage thus legitimates not only the political leaders who promote dynamic and coincidentally continuous frames. It serves also to legitimate collective action and its content itself.

Snow, Tan, and Owens (2013) set out to refine the concept of bricolage and at the same time provided a new take on what I describe as dynamic continuity. They offer a framework to analyze the framing efforts of social movements to reach change. The authors argue that social movements do so by altering and, simultaneously, reaffirming certain cultural elements. Snow et al. argue that two kinds of change processes can be observed in this context: *cultural revitalization* and *cultural fabrication*. "Revitalization involves the

29 In stressing the important role bricolage can play for political leaders, Richard Samuels refers to Niccolò Machiavelli who "had warned against the sudden rejection of the past in the construction of the future" (Samuels 2003, 8). Machiavelli's position thus reflects the central properties of dynamic continuity as outlined in this study, in particular from a leadership perspective: "He who desires or proposes to change the form of government in a state and wishes it to be acceptable and to be able to maintain it to everyone's satisfaction, must retain at least the shadow of its ancient customs, so that institutions may not appear to its people to have been changed, though in point of fact the new institutions may be radically different from the old ones. This he must do because men in general are as much affected by what a thing appears to be as by what it is" (Machiavelli 1986, 175). The role of the leadership of the Korean anti-LGBT movement and its application of dynamic continuity will be treated in greater detail in chapter 10.

resuscitation of forgotten or buried cultural elements and their linkage to current issues or events” (Snow et al. 2013, 225). Dynamic continuity is apparent in cultural revitalization, but it only comes to fruition when combined with fabrication – which is, according to Snow et al., frequently the case. “Fabrication involves the melding together of different cultural elements in a *bricolage* fashion to create new ones. While conceptually distinct, the two often work in tandem” (Snow et al. 2013, 225). As seen above with *bricolage* alone, these two processes also serve to create cultural resonance and legitimacy (Snow et al. 2013, 238). The mechanisms through which these changes occur include, according to Snow et al., *frame articulation* and *frame elaboration*. Frame articulation is the ‘bricolage’ mechanism, consisting of “the connection, or splicing together, and coordination of issues, events, experiences, and cultural items, including strands of one or more ideologies, so that they hang together in a relatively integrated and meaningful fashion” (Snow et al. 2013, 229). Frame elaboration “involves the process by which some issues or topics are accented and highlighted in contrast to others, making them more salient in the array or hierarchy of group-relevant topics or issues” (Snow et al. 2013, 232). This latter mechanism can, for example, be measured through analyzing how much “discursive space” a certain topic takes up, in other words, how frequent a specific frame is used (Snow et al. 2013, 232).

In summary, one can say that dynamic continuity is not a completely new idea in the study of conservative thought and activism. However, it is still quite unclear which processes and mechanisms it exactly involves. I aim at providing an analytical model which will help understand conservative movements from such a ‘dynamic continuity’ perspective. In this context, the *bricolage* perspective and its elaboration by Snow et al. will serve as an important tool to analyze dynamic continuity. Dynamic continuity represents, however, only one component of the analytical framework that I promote for the study of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. In the following chapter, I delve further into the details of my analytical framework, which builds upon Gramscian insights and on the contentious politics approach.

3. The analytical framework: mechanisms and contentious politics through a Gramscian lens

The main argument of this study is that the Korean anti-LGBT movement – in alliance with actors from the Korean Protestant Right, of which it is part – strives for (re)gaining political and cultural hegemony. It does so by rendering contentious certain issues, which centrally include, but are not limited to LGBT-related topics. To support this argument, I apply Gramscian insights on (counter-)hegemony and on political strategizing to the analysis of the anti-LGBT movement. Furthermore, as depicted in the previous chapter, I emphasize the aspect of ‘dynamic continuity’, which also has a Gramscian grounding and which, I argue, is existent in many of the movements’ concrete actions, in its framings and its relations to opponents as well as to like-minded actors.

Mechanisms as basic analytical tools

The question then is how to operationalize these theoretical assumptions so that they can benefit this analysis. The considerations on dynamic continuity above already demonstrate a viable perspective: mechanisms. The mechanism of *bricolage*, for instance, captures well one aspect of the idea of dynamic continuity and at the same time offers the tools for analysis, that is, frame analysis (Benford & Snow 2000). Mechanism-based social scientific research represents an alternative to variable-based, quantitative methods and seeks to explain causality in procedural terms (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Tilly, 2001). Mechanisms and mechanism-based explanations have gained increasing popularity in the social sciences in recent years. There are, however, diverse approaches as to how exactly mechanisms can benefit social scientific research (Hedström & Ylikoski 2010, 50f; Mahoney 2001, 580).¹ This study follows the definition of mechanisms proposed by McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow who use mechanisms as the central analytical tool in their *dynamics of contention* research agenda. They define mechanisms as “a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely

1 For a comprehensive overview of the different usages and definitions of causal mechanisms in social sciences, refer to Hedström & Ylikoski (2010).

similar ways over a variety of situations” (McAdam et al. 2001, 24).² As explanatory tools in social sciences, mechanisms thus open the black boxes of social change and are characterized by the effects they (are expected to) yield (Hedström & Ylikoski 2010, 50f). Put simply, a mechanism-based explanation “implies that proper explanations should detail the cogs and wheels of the causal process through which the outcome to be expected was brought about” (Hedström & Ylikoski 2010, 51).

Mechanism-based explanations describe change processes selectively. That is, they do not aim at covering all possible details of a causal chain but render an abstracted account of what is relevant for change. “The relevance of entities, their properties, and their interactions is determined by their ability to make a relevant difference to the outcome of interest” (Hedström & Ylikoski 2010, 53). The outcome or *explanandum* cannot be achieved through one specific mechanism only. Conversely, one mechanism can render different outcomes under different circumstances (Tilly 2001; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010, 56). The goal of mechanisms is thus not to predict an outcome (or, vice versa, to identify independent variables) as is common in generalizing, correlation-based methods. In fact, the outcomes to be explained are already known in mechanism-based research models. Mechanisms focus on the *explanans* and its specific properties. However, such intricate methodological issues, especially in terms of measurement of mechanisms, have been largely neglected by scholars (McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 5f). Hedström and Ylikoski (2010, 64) therefore call on researchers to “pay attention to the entities that mechanisms are made of (the agents, their properties, actions, and relations) rather than treating them as opaque entities.”

While scholars agree that mechanisms are difficult to observe, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly maintain that there are ways to detect them, for example, through the use of systematic events data or field-ethnographic methods (McAdam et al. 2008, 310f). I concur with this perspective and will demonstrate how my own systematic protest event analysis contributes to carving out the mechanisms at work in anti-LGBT activism in Korea.³ When reconsidering the main research question of this study – why and how the Korean Protestant Right renders LGBT issues contentious – the usage of explanatory mechanisms is the perfect fit for answering the ‘how’ part in a fine-grained manner. Mechanisms complement and break down the broader Gramscian theoretical perspective outlined above.

Regarding the specifics of this study, three caveats have to be raised when considering mechanism-based explanations. First, as Hedström and Ylikoski (2010) point out, mechanisms possess an element of causation. This begs the question what the phenomena to be caused by mechanisms exactly is. As I have pointed out above, mechanisms – of which there are many – do not generate one single, pre-determined outcome. However, they can be strategically applied by actors to achieve certain goals. These goals, in turn,

2 In a later definition, McAdam and Tarrow speak of “changes” rather than “classes of events”, which renders the definition of mechanism clearer: “delimited changes that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations” (McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 3, original italicized).

3 Protest event analysis (PEA) is a systematic method for data collection on protest and other contentious events which I produced as the main data base of this study. I will explain PEA in greater detail in chapter 4.2.

could be regarded as the outcome, at least the outcome expected or wished for by the actors in question. In the case of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, this outcome may consist of topics as broad and abstract as achieving socio-political hegemony or as narrow and concrete as preventing pro-LGBT measures at the local level. It is then worthwhile to observe potential cases in which certain mechanisms did *not* yield the expected results.⁴

A second caveat concerns one common use of mechanisms in social sciences. Mechanisms form a central part of ‘process tracing’ (Beach 2016; Bennett & Checkel 2015a). Bennett and Checkel (2015b, 7) define process tracing as “the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case.” Process tracing with its usage of causal mechanisms is thus well suited for the examination of research puzzles. This study, however, does not aim at explaining such concrete causal paths (e.g., causal mechanisms x_1 , x_2 , etc. lead to y). I make use of social mechanisms rather as descriptive tools to substantiate, as already mentioned, the analysis of the Korean anti-LGBT movement from a Gramscian inspired theoretical perspective. This does not mean that processes are generally excluded from the analysis, though. Quite to the contrary, processes must be naturally included into the analysis since mechanisms often merge into processes. McAdam et al. (2001, 24) note that processes represent “regular sequences of [...] mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations”. I will highlight processes whenever such combinations of mechanisms materialize.⁵

4 However, in these cases the difficulty of measurement comes to the fore again. Can we actually speak of, or observe a mechanism if results fail to materialize? It is also difficult to measure what the expectations of the actors involved actually are. What is more, we need to be cautious not to assume that actors have agency over all different kinds of mechanisms. They might well dispose of the mechanism of framing, in the sense that they create and communicate certain frames which they expect to exert specific influences on (potential) constituents. Concerning other mechanisms, e.g., ‘identity shift’ on the recipients’ end, the actors cannot be sure that the desired outcome actually materializes.

5 The *dynamics of contention* (DOC) research agenda, which will be outlined in greater detail in the next section, also features processes, which conjoin to form what McAdam et al (2000) call ‘episodes’. They define episodes as “continuous streams of contention including collective claims making that bears on other parties’ interests” (McAdam et al. 2001, 24). Kriesi et al. (2019) build upon the idea of episodes in DOC to develop a methodological approach they call “Contentious Episode Analysis” (CEA). CEA aims at applying the rigor of protest event analysis to the analysis of contentious episodes to “decompose the episodes into their component elements—actors, actions, sequences of actions, pairs of actions” (Kriesi et al. 2019, 270). I refrain from applying CEA in this study since I am not so much interested in discerning the dynamics and sequences within specific contentious episodes, but rather try to carve out the mechanisms that can be observed in Korean anti-LGBT activism in general. What is more, I do not have the resources to analyze the sheer number of episodes within the time frame of this study (2000–2020). I use a modified version of protest event analysis as analytical method (cf. chapter 4.2).

Finally, mechanisms are frequently used for comparative purposes.⁶ McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), for instance, build their whole *dynamics of contention* research agenda on such comparative premises. In their paired comparisons of instances of contention, they search for recurrent mechanisms and processes that produce similar effects in the area of contentious politics (McAdam et al. 2001, 35). This study focuses on only one case, that is, the Korean anti-LGBT movement. However, since I examine the movement over a period of over 15 years, the many instances of protest and further activism will render within-case comparisons feasible. Moreover, I refer to similar foreign cases whenever appropriate.

Dynamics of contention

As already pointed out, mechanisms occupy a prominent position in the *dynamics of contention* (DOC) approach developed from the mid-1990s by Douglas McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (McAdam et al. 2001; Tarrow 2011; Tilly & Tarrow 2015). McAdam and Tarrow (2011, 3) state that with the DOC research agenda, “we tried to reach beyond the traditional structuralism of the social movement field by calling for, and illustrating, more attention to agency through a distinct focus on the mechanisms and processes of contentious politics.” The DOC agenda focuses on social phenomena where contention, collective action, and politics coincide, forming what they call *contentious politics*. McAdam et al. (2001, 5) define contentious politics as

episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.

Sidney Tarrow provides a less formalized perspective on contentious politics: “Contentious politics occurs when ordinary people – often in alliance with more influential citizens and with changes in public mood – join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents” (Tarrow 2011, 6).⁷ The DOC agenda is geared towards taking into account a broader set of collective actions, which of course includes social movements, but may also comprise rebellions, protests, and even revolutions – instances in which contentious collective action takes place. (Tarrow 2011, 7). Tarrow specifies that “[c]ollective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to representative institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims,

6 Bennett and Checkel (2015b, 19f, 29) emphasize that causal mechanisms (in the context of process tracing) can benefit Mill’s method of comparison, i.e., most-different cases and most-similar cases research designs. In cases of equifinality, i.e., if multiple ways lead to the same outcome, a thorough examination of the mechanisms involved can bear fruitful insights. The authors also recommend adopting comparative designs for process tracing to guarantee a broader basis for inference.

7 This perspective on contentious politics is also reflected in Tarrow’s general definition of social movements, which he defines as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow 2011, 9, original italicized).

and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities” (Tarrow 2011, 7).

Governments occupy a prominent role in the above definition of contentious politics. While the advocates of DOC concede that contention may as well involve situations in which non-governmental actors fight against each other, they argue that eventually governments or authoritative institutions form important parts of contentious politics (McAdam et al. 2001, 9; McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 5). McAdam et al. (2001, 6) insist that “the study of politics has too long reified the boundary between official, prescribed politics and politics by other means.” They define the latter as ‘transgressive contention’, in which said non-governmental and non-parliamentary actors (have no other option than to) apply innovative action to reach their goals. These actors often resort to forms of transgressive contention since ‘contained contention’ in the realm of institutionalized politics may not be accessible to them (McAdam et al. 2001, 7–8). What is more, governments or “polity members”, that is, “constituted political actors enjoying routine access to government agents and resources” (McAdam et al. 2001, 12), often represent declared opponents for such challengers. McAdam et al. argue that transgressive contention is thus often rooted in existing contained contention, when, for instance, governments propose a new law that is unacceptable for certain social groups who then mobilize against its adoption. This study will centrally examine the relations between the actors highlighted by the DOC approach: the *challenger* (i.e., the anti-LGBT movement), governments and related institutions (the *members*), *subjects*, i.e., “persons and groups not currently organized into constituted political actors” but addressed for mobilization by the challengers (McAdam et al. 2001, 10), and *outside political actors*.⁸ I will show that the Korean anti-LGBT movement, and by extension the Protestant Right, are characterized by highly ambivalent relations with governmental units (and the state as a whole) due to their specific historical legacies and political ambitions. In addition, I will complement the set of actors as specified in DOC by also taking into consideration the challenger’s challengers

8 The ‘theory of fields’, a recent research agenda developed by Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2012) comprises a similar set of central actors to be investigated. Building on the classification that William Gamson (1975) had introduced into the study of social movements, the two authors emphasize incumbents (which are called ‘members’ in DOC), challengers, and governance units who act within strategic action fields. A strategic action field is defined as “a constructed mesolevel social order in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationships to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules governing legitimate action in the field” (Fligstein & McAdam 2012, 9). Fligstein and McAdam’s theory is a combination of approaches from social movement studies, contentious politics, organizational and institutional studies. While several of their theoretical elements could be applied in this study as well, I argue that the present study can better be executed with the choice of approaches. DOC offers greater possibilities for combinations (e.g., with Gramscian insights). Moreover, DOC – while already representing an ambitious research agenda (cf. McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 5) – provides for more openness for unexpected research results. The ‘theory of fields’, in contrast, predetermines many constitutive elements that, in my view, render theoretical fit complicated. For a short overview of the general premises of the theory of fields, see Fligstein and McAdam (2011), for a more comprehensive coverage, cf. Fligstein and McAdam (2012).

and their relations with state actors, which I will subsume under the movement-counter-movement approach (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; cf. also Dugan 2004).⁹

The DOC research agenda helps lay bare such relations. In fact, relations represent one, if not the central aspect of the contentious politics approach. The proponents of DOC do so by criticizing the traditional social movement agenda – particularly the opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and framing approaches – for their static focus on relationships (McAdam et al. 2001, 42, 72). Concerning the opportunity structures perspective, for example, DOC does not regard opportunities as “objective structural factors”, but rather as something subject to attribution (McAdam et al. 2001, 43). In a similar vein, it is argued that specific sites of mobilization have to be actively appropriated rather than just assuming that they are readily available, pre-existing structures. Framing, finally, is not merely a strategic tool for challengers. Rather, frames are interactively created in the very relations of the challengers, be it with the state, (other) opponents, or like-minded groups (McAdam et al. 2001, 44). In short, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001, 22) “treat social interaction, social ties, communication, and conversation not merely as expressions of structure, rationality, consciousness, or culture but as active sites of creation and change.”

The DOC agenda does not reject culturalist and structuralist approaches.¹⁰ Rather, DOC points to the dynamics which link these analytical approaches to agency (McAdam & Tarrow 2011, 4). DOC focuses on three kinds of mechanisms which attend to this analytical task:

- *relational mechanisms*, which “alter connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks” (McAdam et al. 2001, 26),
- *environmental mechanisms*, i.e., “externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life” (McAdam et al. 2001, 25), and
- *cognitive mechanisms*, which “operate through alterations of individual and collective perception” (McAdam et al. 2001, 26).

Bricolage, for instance, is an important cognitive mechanism. In this study, we will come across many more of such mechanisms. I will present some of them in greater detail in

9 Chapter 12 covers in greater detail the complex interrelations between the anti-LGBT movement, its activist opponents, and state actors.

10 McAdam et al. claim that culturalist approaches “attribute causal power to norms, values, beliefs and symbols that individuals experience and absorb from outside themselves. Cultural analysts have given special attention to two sets of circumstances: explicit organization of contentious action on behalf of ideologies or other well articulated belief systems and action based on membership in culturally distinctive communities” (McAdam et al. 2001, 21f). For them, structuralist analyses “impute interests and capacities to whole collectivities – communities, classes, sometimes even those vague collectivities people call societies. They then explain the behavior of individuals and groups primarily through their relation to the collectivities in question.” (McAdam et al. 2001, 21). For extensive perspectives on culture in the context of collective action, see Johnston (1995), for a concise summary of structuralism from the perspective of social and behavioral sciences, see Barbosa de Almeida (2015).

the next subchapters on the analytical framework. Others will be thoroughly covered in the analytical chapters.

Along with its focus on social mechanisms and the broadened set of actors to be considered, the DOC approach allows me to sharpen my argument on dynamic continuity. McAdam et al. (2001, 58) note, for example, that contentious politics “never mobilize without some significant grounding in ties created by previous contention and/or routine social life.” They also claim that the innovative action forms used by challengers were rarely truly new. “Rather they were creative modifications or extensions of familiar routines” (McAdam et al. 2001, 49). Using theatrical metaphors, the originators of the contentious politics approach refer to such action forms as *modular* repertoires and performances (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 16f). They highlight the model-like character of pre-existing action forms and frames and see the benefit in their generality *and* specificity. “Seen generically, they have features that adapt to a wide variety of circumstances and have meaning to a wide variety of potential participants and audiences” (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 17). At the same time, such modular action repertoires can be adapted to the respective circumstances in which they are needed. This broadly corresponds to the process introduced above, which Acharya (2004) calls “norm localization” (cf. also Westney 1987). Modularity captures the dynamic and yet continuous processes that I argue underlie the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. This dynamism, however, does not only concern the action repertoires in the way they are used by certain actors. It is the very actors who are constituted and changed through contentious politics as well. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001, 38) summarize this point in the following way: “[...] our ultimate interest lies not in the recruitment of static, unchanging actors into single movements, but in the dynamic processes through which new political actors, identities, and forms of action emerge, interact, coalesce and evolve during complex episodes of contention.” These are also the main interests of the present study: I investigate the Korean anti-LGBT movement as a newly emerging actor who promotes identity shifts and uses innovative action forms in diverse interactions with opponents, governmental institutions, and like-minded groups.

The analytical framework

Building my analysis on Antonio Gramsci’s works on political strategy helps me to answer the first part of my main research question as to *why* the Korean anti-LGBT movement renders LGBT issues contentious. I argue that a main motivating factor for putting this topic on the agenda is to gain or regain hegemony in the political and socio-cultural arenas. The Protestant Right at large does not only do so by actively vilifying LGBTs and those politicians, groups, and institutions (allegedly) supporting them. Right-wing Protestants also turn to other politicizable topics, which often include elements of ‘othering’, for instance when mobilizing against migrants, refugees, Islam, feminists, or left-wing groups (Cho 2011, 307f.; Kim Nami 2016).

Table 1: Analytical framework: factors influencing the hegemonic endeavors and the actions of the anti-LGBT movement

Gramscian concepts	Related social movement / DOC concepts	Examples (of mechanisms)	Confer chapter
Religion	Resource mobilization	<i>Social movement bases</i> : “the social background, organizational resources, and cultural frameworks of contention and collective action” (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 11)	esp. 7, 8 & 10
	Alliance building	<i>Appropriation</i> : Protestant denomination leaders won for the anti-LGBT ‘cause’	10
	Identity	<i>Identity shift</i> : actively ‘adding’ anti-LGBT attitudes to Christian faith <i>Boundary activation</i> : creating “anti-Christian” enemies (LGBTs, political opponents, public institutions) <i>De-certification</i> : declaring opponents heretical (also: <i>repression</i>)	7.3 7.3 12
	Movement-counter-movement dynamics	- Anti-LGBT movement versus pro-LGBT civil society - Anti-LGBT movement versus pro-LGBT camp <i>within</i> Protestantism	12
(Legacies of) the conservative historical bloc	Members and challengers	Ambiguous relation to the state: anti-LGBT activists are both members and challengers	10 & 12
	Framing	<i>Bricolage</i> : combining nationalism and anti-communism with homophobia	7.4
	Action repertoires	<i>Modularity/emulation</i> : drawing on, and adapting action forms from others	7.4 & 7.5
(Organic) intellectuals	Social movement entrepreneurs	<i>Institutionalization and professionalization</i> : creating numerous rather professional anti-LGBT social movement organizations	10
	Movement leadership	<i>(Norm) brokerage</i> : creating (also new ideational) linkages with Protestant denominations and other (political) actors <i>Diffusion</i> : important role of well-known representatives/‘experts’ to disseminate anti-LGBT arguments	10 10 & 11
	Framing	<i>Attribution of threat and opportunity</i> : claiming that LGBT issues threaten churches, families, the nation as a whole <i>Radicalization</i> (of rhetoric): “gay nazis”	7.2 8.2

Gramscian concepts	Related social movement / DOC concepts	Examples (of mechanisms)	Confer chapter
Education	Learning	- 'Educational' anti-LGBT events - Problematization of certain forms of education: controversies on school textbooks including information on sexual and gender diversity	11
Media and culture	Framing	<i>Diffusion</i> : anti-LGBT movement creates its own blogs and YouTube channels to disseminate its messages; 'traditional' media like Kukmin Daily also join forces	11

In order to answer the second part of my main research question on *how* exactly LGBT issues are rendered contentious, I develop an analytical framework based on the whole range of theoretical and conceptual approaches presented so far. With this analytical framework, I provide an operationalization of the factors which I deem relevant for explaining the concrete actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. I derive these factors from Gramscian thought and substantiate them by specifying related mechanisms, as well as social movement and DOC concepts. While I do not lay claim to the completeness of the analytical factors and related concepts, I do argue after thorough data analysis that they possess significant explanatory potential for the special case investigated in this study. The five factors include (1) *religion*, (2) *the conservative historical bloc and its legacy*, (3) *the role of intellectuals*, (4) *education*, and (5) *media and culture*. In the following, I will shortly present each of these factors and complementarily describe mechanisms and further analytical tools which – as already mentioned – represent helpful analytical concretizations and at the same time facilitate the empirical observation of social phenomena in question.¹¹ It has to be noted that these factors do not represent exclusive categories that have nothing in common. On the contrary, overlaps of these categories are the rule rather than the exception as the analytical chapters will show. Table 1 provides an overview of the analytical framework, including concrete examples of mechanisms and concepts observed in this study.

11 From the perspective of quantitative research designs, the factors presented here could be regarded as quasi-hypothetical assumptions on variables influencing a certain outcome. As already mentioned before, however, this study's analytical model mainly relies on mechanisms. This study thus represents a departure from quantitative approaches which address causality using statistical methods. What is more, most of the categories such as 'religion' or the mechanism like 'identity shift' are hardly quantifiable. Finally, this study is not so much interested in specific causal links, but rather aims at providing a broader picture as to why and how LGBT issues are rendered contentious in Korea.

3.1 Religion as a multifaceted resource

As I have shown in chapter 2.3, religion plays a crucial role in the development of Gramsci's political thought. Let me briefly recapitulate Gramsci's take on religion. For Gramsci, religion is an intrinsically political force and *not* an entity detached from politics or increasingly unimportant in the political arena as has been argued by some secularization and modernization scholars in his own time and succeeding Gramsci (Weber 1968; Berger 1967; Habermas 1984: 49–52). Religious actors form part of an array of interest groups in society, which commonly enter into conflict with each other and with the state. While centrally comprising ideological elements, religion for Gramsci is not just a world-view. Its ideological fundament along with its socio-political agency make religion a significant hegemonic force.

Religion and religious ties as resources

In the context of this study, religion therefore serves as an analytical tool in three main respects, which partly intersect: religion as a mobilization resource, as a symbolic resource, and as a source for collective identity. From a resource mobilization perspective, I argue that religion works as a central mobilization basis for the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Tilly and Tarrow (2015, 11) define *social movement bases* as “the social background, organizational resources, and cultural frameworks of contention and collective action.” It has been extensively shown that religious ties and religiously politicized topics can have the potential of mobilizing effectively, for example for electoral campaigns and elections (Nastiti & Ratri 2018; Green et al. 2006; Wilcox et al. 1993). Religion can also be an important basis for social movements in terms of the organizational infrastructure the respective religious environment provides. Kurzman (1998), for instance, examines how “organizational opportunity” – the organizational equivalent of political opportunity structures – influences the mobilization levels of religious movements. Institutionalized Christianity, in fact, provides ample resources in this sense: parishes, Christian associations and clubs, the headquarters of denominations as well as cross-denominational organizations have personnel, skills, material resources and, most importantly, believers that can be mobilized for certain socio-political endeavors. Of course, religious leaders do not have these resources at their free command, but hierarchical cultures of ‘the sheep’ following their ‘shepherd’ may serve such endeavors. This is especially the case in Korea, where charismatic senior pastors occupy powerful positions in their congregations – some of which are mega churches with huge followings and considerable financial means (Lee Easley 2014; Kim, Jin-ho 2012: 69).¹²

12 Scholars point out that in comparison to Catholicism, Protestantism has been characterized by integrating Korean traditions more eagerly ever since its introduction on the Korean peninsula. Baker claims that at least until the 1960s, Korean Catholicism had been indeed more hierarchical whereas Protestantism had introduced a ‘Koreanized’ version of leadership with lay elders also playing important roles. Kim and Kim, however, emphasize that such Confucian leadership models did as well reproduce traditional hierarchies in most Korean Protestant churches where women often do not have access to leadership positions (unlike some evangelical congregations like the

This study analyzes the Korean anti-LGBT movement as a collective actor that mainly emerged from a Christian background (cf. Kniss & Burns 2004, 695).¹³ As the proponents of the contentious politics research agenda have pointed out, however, this latter fact does not mean that the resources of Christian organizations are at the movement's unfettered disposal. Rather, these mobilization structures – Christian organizations, their leadership, and the believers – have to be actively appropriated (McAdam et al. 2001, 44). This study will show how such a social appropriation and active alliance building works in the case of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

The second – partly interrelated – aspect which shows that religion can serve as a helpful analytical category is situated on the ideological level. Kniss and Burns (2004, 701) emphasize the importance of *symbolic resources* that religion has on offer. As Gramsci rightly observed, religion does not only draw its power from its organizational structure but also from its specific worldviews. In the case of anti-LGBT movements, Christian doctrines and literal interpretations of the Bible on the alleged sinfulness of homosexual sex and on the binary gender order may act as central arguments against granting certain rights to non-heterosexual, transgender and intersex persons. Such a strategy can be subsumed under the framing approach which will play a central role in all of the Gramscian-based topics of the analytical model presented here. Social movements scholars have posed the question whether the usage of religious narratives is done instrumentally, as a means to an end. Snow and Beyerlein (2019, 575f.) take the actions of ISIS in the Middle East as an example to show the intricate task of classifying a movement as purely religious or purely political. While it is true that ISIS has (geo)political goals that this group justifies by grounding them on a religious zeal, observers have convincingly demonstrated that ISIS is in fact a deeply religious organization that does not merely use religion in an instrumental way (McCants 2015; Wood 2015).¹⁴ This study treats religion as an important variable in the Korean anti-LGBT conundrum. However, it will also critically investigate to what extent religion – that is, the Christian faith – actually represents a central factor for the anti-LGBT movement.

Collective identity

Finally, the third aspect of religion concerns the *collective identity* that it potentially produces and sustains. While also interrelated with the previous points, it is necessary to carve out its specifics since collective identity is widely regarded as a crucial factor for the emergence and the persistence of social movements over time (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 430). As Gamson (1991, 27) points out “any movement that seeks to sustain commitment over a period of time must make the construction of collective identity one of its most central tasks.” The empirical evidence “overwhelmingly supports” the assumption of a

Yoido Full Gospel Church where women were actively integrated into leadership ranks) (Baker 2016, 63; Kim & Kim 2015, 218).

- 13 Of course, religion can also serve as a resource for movements that do not have a religious basis per se (e.g., when the environmental movement uses frames like the ‘preservation of God’s creation’).
- 14 This is, of course, not to say that the Korean anti-LGBT movement is similar to ISIS. The example has just been chosen to make clear the need to proceed cautiously when claiming instrumentalization of religion.

close relationship between collective identity and movement participation (Klandermans 2004, 364).

Snow and Corrigall-Brown (2015, 175) define collective identity as a group-based identity including a “shared sense of ‘one-ness’ or ‘we-ness’ anchored in real or imagined attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of ‘others’.” Collective identity scholars disagree over whether collective identity is located within the individual (Polletta & Jasper 2001, 285) or in the collective (Whittier 1995, 16). This study adopts the view that collective identity can be found in both. As Flesher Fominaya puts it: collective identity “cannot exist unless individuals hold it within their self-conceptions. But unless it is expressed through action and interaction, it cannot be generated in the first place, nor can it be constructed, maintained or developed over time” (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 431; see also Flesher Fominaya 2010; Gamson 1991). This relational perspective on collective identity fits well in terms of methodology with the contentious politics approach, which also centrally focusses on social interactions.

Interactions are also important for the question of whether collective identities are products of socialization, rationally chosen, or consciously constructed. Gamson (1991) demonstrates that, in some instances, movements can build their actions upon pre-existing group identities (which partly coincides with the ‘resource’ perspective outlined above) while in other circumstances no such identities are available and thus have to be created from scratch (cf. also Flesher Fominaya 2019, 432). Alberto Melucci (1995) introduced a theory of collective action, which takes a processual view akin to the constructivist perspective. For Melucci, collective identity is not static or monolithic but rather a result of a dynamic process of interactions. “Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at the more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of actions and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place” (Melucci 1995, 44). Collective identity involves three key elements: a shared cognition of goals, means, and the field of action; “a network of active relationships”; and emotional involvement to be able to feel unity (Melucci 1995, 44, 45). Underlying all these elements is the self-identification and identification of ‘others’ (Melucci 1995, 47). A central variable in this context is conflict. Melucci (1995, 47) argues that conflict strengthens internal solidarity, which in turn reinforces and guarantees the self-actualization of collective identity.

In this study, collective identity is taken into consideration both as given and inter-actively constructed qualities of the movement in question. Regarding the analytical category of religion, its importance as a pre-existing identity component can hardly be denied. As already mentioned, however, this does not mean that this given identity automatically leads to, or provides the basis for action (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 432). Kniss and Burns (2004: 696) caution against equating belief and action. When building collective identity on religion, it is important to acknowledge that there is not the one valid notion of religion. Christian denominations, for instance, can have vastly diverging views on certain aspects of their faith. The same is true for believers who all have their individual way of understanding and living their religion – and also of deciding whether they join collective action on a certain religious issue or not.

Therefore, in order to generate collective action, identity work is necessary, which centrally happens through interactions. The dynamic and relational approach towards identities promoted by the DOC agenda links Melucci's processual approach with the one that highlights pre-existing identities. McAdam et al. (2001, 56) present six assumptions on political identities in contentious politics:

1. participants in contentious politics constantly manipulate, strategize, modify, and reinterpret the identities of parties to their contention, including themselves
2. in a wide variety of contentious politics mobilization of identities constitutes a major part of claim making
3. while new identities emerge during contentious episodes, most individuals initially join the fray through interactive appeals to, and successful appropriation of, existing identities
4. the form, content, and effectiveness of identity mobilization strongly affect both collective action and its outcomes
5. creation, transformation, and extinction of actors, identities, and forms of action in the course of contention alter the array of actors, identities, and actions that appear in routine politics and further contention once the particular episode of contention has ended
6. when it comes to explaining contentious politics, the crucial arena for causal mechanisms lies not in individual minds but in social interaction

While I am not going to systematically test these assumptions, I do take into account their general direction for the analysis. First, I show how identity frames play an important role in the claim making of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Building on this I, secondly, demonstrate how the movement has transformed the collective identity of the Protestant Right to newly include anti-LGBT attitudes. Thirdly, I trace how this identity shift affects the movement and its closer environment but also third parties actors in the routine political arena. Fourthly, drawing on Melucci's insights in particular, I show in which way conflicts (and their construction) form an important element of the movement's actions, for example in the interaction with opposing movements or counter-movements (cf. Dugan 2004; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Finally, I identify the mechanisms that are at work in these processes.

Mechanisms related to religion and beyond: identity shift

Among the mechanisms that this study investigates is *identity shift*. Identity shift has been defined as the "formation of new identities within challenging groups whose coordinated action brings them together and reveals their commonalities." (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 37). This definition suggests that identity shift is a reciprocal, processual mechanism, in which two or more groups realize that they have common interests – often embodied by the fight against a common opponent – and shift their identities accordingly to facilitate cooperation. I want to slightly modify this definition by bringing in 'appropriation', a concept that I have already introduced before. In the context of identity shift, appropriation involves one newly emerging actor trying to reorient an existing group to a new conception of its collective purpose (cf. McAdam et al. 2001, 316). Interestingly, McAdam

et al. claim that such an appropriation does not necessarily imply a full-fledged alteration of the pre-existing collective identity (ibid.). Taking the example of Korean Protestantism, homosexuality was not an important issue at all up until the mid-2000s but then ‘rediscovered’ as a symbolic resource. Some Protestant actors politicized the topic and gradually succeeded in getting more actors ‘on board’ like whole Protestant denominations (but also non-Protestant actors) who also increasingly turned to anti-LGBT attitudes and actions.

A fruitful approach to explaining such identity changes can be found in Mahoney and Thelen’s (2009) *A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change*. Their approach stems from institutional theory, a conglomerate of theoretical schools which have productive intersections with social movement scholarship (cf. Roose 2016; McAdam & Scott 2005; Campbell 2005). I will, however, not adopt elements of institutional theory in the strict sense here, but only take the basic idea of Mahoney and Thelen’s typology of modes of change for the purpose of explaining, or rather describing different types of identity shift. My approach does thus not refer to institutions or rules as explanandum, but to collective identities.¹⁵ Mahoney and Thelen (2009, 15f.) describe four modes of institutional change which are: *displacement*, “the removal of existing rules and the introduction of new ones”; *layering*, “the introduction of new rules on top of or alongside existing ones”; *drift*, “the changed impact of existing rules due to shifts in the environment”; and *conversion*, “the changed enactment of existing rules due to their strategic redeployment”. I suggest replacing the term “rules” by “components of collective identity”, but otherwise integrate these definitions in the study’s analytical toolkit.

The above example of anti-LGBT attitudes gradually becoming part of the Korean Protestant Right’s collective identity could be described as either drift or conversion. This change can be regarded as ‘drift’ in the sense that, for example, LGBT issues have gained greater visibility in Korean society and politics, which is why conservative Protestants felt urged to step in and revive the existing but previously (at least in Korea) rather disregarded Christian understanding of the alleged sinfulness of homosexuality. When imputing strategic motives, this phenomenon could also be understood as ‘conversion’. Certain Protestant groups started using the topic of homosexuality instrumentally, for

15 Proponents of institutional theory would probably argue that institutions and collective identities are not mutually exclusive, since, in their view, institutional rules represent the basic underpinning for many social phenomena, of which the collective identity of social movements is one example. Hall and Taylor (1996, 947), define institutions as “symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the ‘frame of meaning’ guiding human action.” While I see the value of the institutionalist approach, also in that it stresses the constructed and ‘taken-for-granted’ character of social rules and norms (cf. e.g., Jepperson 1991, 149), I decided against using this approach as a central component of my study. This is mainly due to the focus of institutionalism on formal rules in organizational contexts (rules which can, and in fact often do translate into informal rules). In comparison, social movements – at least in their initial phases – are less formally organized. More importantly, if thinking in institutionalist terms, this study does not understand institutions as a given fact, but rather aims at finding out, first, what these institutions are in the first place and, secondly, how they are strategically employed to reach certain socio-political goals. The latter perspective can better be tackled by a Gramscian approach with its focus on ideology, ‘common sense’, and, ultimately, hegemony.

example to reinforce Protestant unity by creating a new contentious topic – and potentially even purposefully evoking conflicts (cf. Melucci 1995).¹⁶ If we extend our attention beyond the realm of religious groups and include, for example, political parties, ‘layering’ comes into the picture. While homosexuality had never been criminalized on the national level in Korea, except for the military where homosexual acts among men are liable to legal prosecution, homosexuality had for a long time been virtually invisible in Korea’s pervasively heteronormative society (Seo, Dong-jin 2001; Johannemann 2021). One could argue that the Protestant problematization of homosexuality during the last 15–20 years might yield an impact also on other parts of society like, for instance, political circles. In a manner of speaking, ‘active homophobia’ has been added to the already existing, ‘passive’ condemnation of homosexuality in collective identity, which may even bring about effects in terms of mobilization similar to those present in social movements, for example in the context of elections.

Speaking in Gramscian terms, one could regard processes of identity shift – if strategically invoked – as part of the (counter)hegemonic strategy of the anti-LGBT movement.¹⁷ As I have illustrated above, a central strategic move in Gramsci’s theory consists in influencing the ‘common sense’. Common sense, for Gramsci, is of course a broader concept which does not only apply to a limited subset of society like a social movement’s collective identity. Ideally, however, ‘common sense’ is modified and as such influences collective identity and, ultimately, collective action, and vice-versa. The above perspective on identity changes – mediated through social movement activities – provides a tentative conceptualization of how collective identities, and perhaps ultimately also ‘common sense’ as a whole change. Analyzing identity change through the lens of layering, drift,

16 Insinuating a purposeful evocation of conflicts for ulterior reasons is of course a tricky matter – also in terms of measurement and the providing evidence for such assumptions. It is not my aim to expose or ‘unmask’ the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Rather, I want to be open to several possible explanations – including the instrumental usage of certain topics, of which, as I have shown, previous scholarship has yielded theoretical approaches and, more importantly, also empirical evidence.

17 Gramsci has his own perspective how identities come into being. In a passage in which he explains how the personality (not of a collective but of an individual) is formed, he compares the individual to the ‘historical bloc’, a concept that also joins together ‘internal’ elements and ‘external’ legacies (the ‘historical bloc’ as an analytical concept will be introduced in detail in the next section). Gramsci (1971, 360) writes: “Man is to be conceived as an historical bloc of purely individual and subjective elements and of mass and objective or material elements with which the individual is in an active relationship. To transform the external world, the general system of relations, is to potentiate oneself and to develop oneself. That ethical ‘improvement’ is purely individual is an illusion and an error: the synthesis of the elements constituting individuality is ‘individual’, but it cannot be realised and developed without an activity directed outward, modifying external relations both with nature and, in varying degrees, with other men, in the various social circles in which one lives, up to the greatest relationship of all, which embraces the whole human species.”

and conversion¹⁸ has the potential of carving out where exactly in the social process the anti-LGBT movement gets active in their attempt of influencing society and politics.

In accordance with Gramsci, I argue that religion represents an important identity marker which can be strategically mobilized for collective action. The additional mechanisms of identity change presented here are not restricted to the topic of religion, though. I argue that they can also be used for other identity traits or rather ideological affinities which are potentially relevant for the anti-LGBT such as anti-communism and nationalism. I will elaborate on this point in the next subchapter on the 'historical bloc'. The redeployment of pre-existing elements as seen in 'drift' and 'conversion' is a way to further conceptualize the 'dynamic continuity' approach. Concretely, adding these types of change to the analytical toolkit substantiates the explanatory power of the 'bricolage' mechanism outlined above.

Remains the problem of measurement. Collective identity is not easily observable; identity shift even less so. This would require thorough interviewing of movement participants over a long period of time, for which I lack the access and resources. An approximate measure could be opinion surveys that contain questions on the religious affiliation and on the attitude towards homosexuality. What I can demonstrate, however, is the way movement leaders try to actively steer perceptions – and, I argue, by extension also collective identity – concerning LGBT issues. The framing approach will attend to this task. In this context, I investigate how exactly frames are deployed to change existing identities, but I also show how frames themselves change over time (cf. chapters 7 & 8, and chapter 3.3 on movement leaders).

Boundary work

Along with identity shift, another crucial mechanism in the context of collective identity is *boundary work* or what McAdam et al. (2001, 143) call 'category formation'. Boundary work "involves creating a reciprocal identification between group members that simultaneously expresses commonalities with and differences from reference groups" (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 435). Demarcating boundaries is important for the formation of collective identity in that this practice brings about a collective self as well as collective others through accentuating and attributing differences (Hunt & Benford 2004, 442f.; Taylor & Whittier 1992). Boundary work is not only done vis-à-vis antagonistic groups but also within social movements, when social movement organizations (SMOs) or even activists of one SMO differ, for example, in the preferences for radical or moderate tactics and framings (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 435). "The *us* is solidified not just against an external *them* but also against *thems* inside, as particular subgroups battle to gain or retain legitimate *us* standing" (Gamson 1997, 180).

18 'Displacement' is a mechanism which does not appear in this enumeration because it does not affect the collective identity I am particularly interested in in this study, i.e., that of the anti-LGBT movement, the Protestant Right, its allies and bystanders that might be drawn into the movement. The complete displacement of a collective identity with a new one is, rather, an endeavor of the LGBT movement, which fights for eradicating anti-LGBT attitudes.

In the context of religion, boundary work is straightforward at first sight: conservative Protestant groups distance themselves from LGBT people and those who support LGBT rights. According to fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible and the ensuing understanding of morality, homosexuality and related issues are regarded as immoral if not sinful and thus unacceptable. Here, religion as a symbolic resource and Melucci's take on conflict as a productive force are pertinent. Conflict is, however, also present within Protestantism itself. Korean Protestantism in particular is characterized by a high degree of splintering, including denominations with vastly differing stances on religious and socio-political matters. As Gramsci has rightly observed, religions are highly dependent on unity, or rather, on keeping up appearances of unity in order to sustain power and legitimacy. Conflicts within a faith complicate creating and sustaining an image of unity. This study investigates how boundary work is practiced in such intricate an environment.

Religion is, presumably, not the only factor influencing the practices of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Protestantism certainly represents an important mobilization basis for the movement, but it is also worth looking at it due to its longstanding eminent position in South Korean power structures. I argue that these historical legacies are influential to this day. In Gramscian terminology, one can say that the Korean Protestant Right forms part of a 'historical bloc'. I will now further explicate the importance of this analytical category.

3.2 The conservative historical bloc and its legacies

Along with hegemony, civil society, and 'common sense', the *historical bloc* is another essential concept of Gramsci's political thought (Portelli 1972). This concept refers to highly influential and powerful – or in Gramscian terms: hegemonic – social groups in the course of history. The concrete constellation of a historical bloc, for Gramsci, is characterized by the congruence of the material bases and the ideological superstructures in a society. "Structures and superstructures form an 'historical bloc'. That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production" (Gramsci 1971, 366).¹⁹

Standing in a Marxist tradition, Gramsci emphasizes the importance of controlling the material bases of a society. However, having this control alone does not suffice to actually exert hegemony. Gramsci notes:

[Marx's propositions tend] to reinforce the conception of historical bloc in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this dis-

19 The interpretation of what Gramsci exactly meant by 'historical bloc' is contested among scholars. Sotiris (2018), for example, regards the historical bloc not as a descriptive or analytical concept, but argues that it is a strategic concept which blends into Gramsci's larger strategic thinking on how to achieve hegemony. Most scholars, however, hold that the historical bloc represents an analytical and descriptive category and interpret it as a social formation in which a specific social group (or alliance of groups) dominates politics, the economy, as well as the ideological underpinnings of a given society (Choi 2020; Gray 2018; Hoare & Sperber 2016; Short 2013; Thomas 2006).

inction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without the material forces. (Gramsci 1971, 377; cited in Short 2013, 199)

These two elements – material forces and ideology – are thus not static factors independent from one another. Rather, they interpenetrate each other and are equally important for groups seeking socio-political leadership (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 106). It is important to note that a historical bloc, once it has achieved a position of hegemony, needs to be continuously reproduced to keep its eminent position. “The historical bloc is the arrangement of different historically constructed social elements and the material and ideological logics that govern the reproduction of those arrangements” (Short 2013, 199). In this context, Thomas (2006, 68) points to the centrality of the “hegemonic apparatus” of the leading group, that is, “the various institutions and practices by means of which it [the historical bloc] concretizes its hegemonic project and continues to secure both social and political leadership, that is leadership both in civil society and at the level of the state.” It is then, of course, also possible for counter-hegemonic apparatuses to engage in efforts to become a historical bloc themselves – or rather, to replace an opposing historical bloc (Thomas 2006, 68).

In order to fully grasp the workings of a particular historical bloc, it is crucial to analyze what Gramsci refers to as “the *ensemble* of the social relations” (Gramsci 1971, 366). Hoare and Sperber argue that Gramsci directs the focus on the “social whole” by introducing the concept of the historical bloc. “It is only by comprehending the relations between all of the parts within the whole that any one part can be fully understood” (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 107; cf. also Short 2013, 201). This corresponds also to the understanding of the historical bloc that Gill put forward. According to him, the historical bloc is “an alliance of different class forces politically organized around a set of hegemonic ideas that gave strategic direction and coherence to its constituent elements” (Gill 2003, 58; cited in Gray 2018, 241). A historical bloc can therefore consist of various sub-blocs. The parties to this alliance remain distinct while following the basic principles of the bloc and benefiting from its formation and maintenance (cf. Gray 2018, 241; Sassoon 1987, 121).

In this study, I argue that the Korean Protestant Right was and still is part of the ‘conservative historical bloc’ – a social formation that I will explain in greater detail below. The anti-LGBT movement, which is, in turn, part of the Protestant Right is thus also involved in this special relationship. As I have shown, the concept of the historical bloc directs the analytical attention to the relations or the alliances between actors. This study investigates the relations among people and groups of the anti-LGBT movement, but it also takes into consideration relations with actors outside the Korean Protestant Right, ranging from non-Protestant political actors in Korea to allies abroad. I contend that these connections are of great importance for the activities of the anti-LGBT movement – not alone on the level of concrete relations between actors, but especially in respect to the ideological legacies a historical bloc leaves behind – “the sedimentation of ‘common sense’” as Gramsci puts it (Gramsci 1992, 173). In redirecting the analytical focus to the relational aspects of the anti-LGBT movement, the concept of the historical bloc contributes to the ‘dynamics of contention’ approach. Moreover, by appreciating the legacies of the conservative historical bloc, this approach to influential social groups further sub-

stantiates the idea of ‘dynamic continuity’. This way, we can better understand where exactly the ‘old’ elements, which get combined with ‘new’ additions, originate from.

The conservative historical bloc in South Korea

On the ideological level, the conservative historical bloc in South Korea exerted great influence by reinforcing nationalist and, in particular, anti-communist tendencies within South Korean society (Choi, Yong Sub 2020, 1710; Gray 2018, 243). The “hegemonic conservatives” (Choi, Yong Sub 2020, 1710) needed such ideological underpinnings since they suffered from a lack of legitimacy. Many of their leading figures had collaborated with the Japanese during the period of colonial rule (Gray 2018, 243). Beyond the actual threat posed by North Korea, they created the image of an external enemy and turned this into a central trope in basically all socio-political circumstances. Anything deemed communist or just left-wing was vilified by conservative actors and demonstrated as potential security threats. In this manner, the consecutive authoritarian regimes of South Korea justified their dictatorial government styles and the oppression of civil society (Choi Yong Sub 2020, 1711). Eun-Jeung Lee refers to such practices as the “politics of fear”, which she claims even endangers South Korean present-day democracy by perpetuating deep socio-political cleavages within society (Lee, Eun-Jeung 2018; cf. also Wodak 2012; Doucette & Koo 2013).

Therefore, it “is no exaggeration to say that South Korea’s post-war history has been profoundly shaped by the conservative historical bloc that emerged following independence” (Gray 2018, 242). Gray (2018) argues that the division of the Korean peninsula along with US influence, first and foremost through supporting the authoritarian regimes led by the first South Korean President Syngman Rhee and his successors, was crucial for the significance of what he calls the ‘conservative historical bloc’ (Gray 2018, 241). Yong Sub Choi (2020) comes up with a similar argument that he builds upon Nak-chung Paik’s famous account of the ‘division system’. According to Paik, the Cold War antagonism on the Korean peninsula has had a profound impact on both political practices and people’s minds in the North and South; and this effect is still present even in the post-Cold War era (Paik 2011; 1992). “This antagonism strengthened internal domestic stability under each of the two governments, which reproduced and reinforced the division system” (Choi, Yong Sub 2020, 1708). Choi therefore uses the term ‘division bloc’ to denote the influential social formation deliberately constructed by authoritarian and conservative governments in collusion with large industrial conglomerates, the so-called *chaeböl*. As I will detail below, conservative Protestantism also forms part of this bloc.

In fact, even after democratization, the conservative historical bloc – and with it the pervasive ideologies of anti-communism and nationalism – retained most of their power. Therefore, Jang Jip Choi (2005, 247–250) speaks of South Korean democratization as a ‘passive revolution’, a Gramscian term which describes fundamental political and systemic changes enforced by the elite groups themselves – who as a result keep much of their power (cf. also Gramsci 1971, 59). The first civilian president elected after democratization, Kim Young-sam (*Kim Yŏng-sam*), a former democracy activist, even intensified the usage of anti-communist frames as a way to cope with the pressure from conservative critics (Gray 2018, 248f.). Bleiker argues that until the late 1990s, as a result, anti-

communism has been a leitmotif of every South Korean government and became deeply engraved in people's consciousness (Bleiker 2005, 12f.; cited in Gray 2018, 244). Using yet another Gramscian term, Choi accordingly claims that nationalism represents a "popular religion" in various parts of South Korean society (Choi, Yong Sub 2020, 1716).²⁰ Many observers concur with the perspective that anti-communism and nationalism have been and continue being significant ideologies in South Korea (Sung 2018; Szell 2017; Kim, Söng-il 2017; Kim, Dong-choon et al. 2015; Shin, Jin-Wook 2008; Shin, Gi-wook 2006; Pai & Tangherlini 1999).

The conservative historical bloc faced several crises from the mid-1990s onwards, first, owing to the 1997 Asian financial crisis and, second, due to counter-hegemonic efforts of the liberal Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations. The attempts to achieve inter-Korean reconciliation in the course of the Sunshine Policy endangered the power positions and the anti-communist ideological basis of the conservative bloc. Yong Sub Choi argues, however, that the counter-hegemonic social forces failed to end the division bloc because of the tenacious resistance from hegemonic conservatives including conservative media. Furthermore, the counter-hegemonic forces did not manage to establish a material basis independent from the reliance on the powerful *chaeböl* (Choi 2020, 1717).

The Protestant sub-bloc

I argue that the Protestant Right forms a sub-bloc of the conservative historical bloc in South Korea. As I will concisely present now, significant portions of Korean Protestantism have cooperated with conservative forces in the political arena and have promoted right-wing ideology over the course of the history of Christianity in Korea.

The origins of the theological and political conservatism of large parts of Korean Protestantism are manifold. Kang In-Cheol (2004) argues that this conservative tendency is rooted in the so-called *wolnamin*, i.e., Koreans that came to the South during the period between the liberation from Japanese colonialism and the end of the Korean War. The *wolnamin* promoted highly conservative views, also related to anti-communist stances, and exerted great influence on post-war Korean Protestantism. On the religious level, Korean Protestantism's fundamentalist tendencies are grounded in an even earlier period. Taking the example of the Presbyterian denomination, Hwang Jae-Buhm (2008) portrays the strong Biblicism of Korean Protestantism as reflexes of conservative US-American missionaries' influence and of theological anti-modernist stances. The 'Great Revival' in 1907 was of particular importance in this respect (Ryu, Dae Young 2004). Large parts of Korean Protestants rekindled their faith in a conservative fashion through the influence of US missionaries and in face of the increasing geo-political

20 It has to be noted that nationalism in South Korea is not restricted to right-wing actors or their ideology. Many political left-wing groups ground their nationalism in the experience of Japanese colonialism, against which they fought to regain national independence. Koreans who collaborated with the Japanese colonial regime, as well as their conservative successors-in-spirit are therefore often disparagingly referred to as *ch'in'ilp'a* ('pro-Japanese faction') by left-wing actors. Nationalism in Korea (both North and South, and regardless of right or left), in addition, has a strong ethnical component (*minjokchuï*) (cf. Yi & Lee 2020; Gray 2018, 243; Shin, Gi-Wook 2007).

uncertainties in the years ahead of the Japanese occupation and colonization of Korea.²¹ It is also in the early 20th century that anti-communist tendencies first emerged within Korean Protestantism, bringing together theological and political conservatism. This was intensified by Japanese anti-communism during the colonial period and especially in the context and aftermath of the Korean War (Ryu 2004).

The first president of South Korea, Syngman Rhee (1948–1960), cultivated Christianity as an alternative to North Korea's communist ideology (Clark 2008, 219). The separation of religion and state was written into the constitution of the First Republic under Syngman Rhee, but Jin Gu Lee (2018, 140f.) argues that, factually, Protestantism played the role of state religion. Chung-shin Park (2007) portrays the Protestant church as a “political training ground” for modern Korea, since many of the leading political figures within and surrounding the Rhee government emanated from Protestant backgrounds. After the military coup in 1961, Korean Protestantism largely continued to support the authoritarian regimes under president Park Chung-hee and his successors. Anti-communist rhetoric remained central for both the regime and its Protestant supporters. This “symbiosis of church and state” became apparent in the annual ‘prayer breakfasts’ in honor of the president, in which leading Protestant figures participated and which were encouraged by right-wing US missionaries as a prime example of Christian resistance against communism (Clark 2008, 219).

In the late 1980s, large Protestant churches discouraged their adherents to participate in democratization demonstrations, citing the separation of state and religion as a reason (Jang, Sukman 2004, 142). They thereby in fact tried to sustain the authoritarian regime but failed ultimately. In the post-democratization period, Protestantism – which had experienced a phenomenal growth in Korea until then²² – lost a great deal of its popularity due to scandals, corruption cases, and resistance to reform (Cho, Kyuhoon 2014: 317). Such ethical flaws of pastors did not fit the emerging democratic attitudes within society. Progressive theological and socio-political perspectives did exist at the margins of Protestantism,²³ but a significant number of people also left their church. This resulted in mainstream churches becoming even more conservative (Kim, Jin-ho 2012, 70f.).

The 1990s then saw an active politicization of Protestantism with new actors trying to actively influence politics, like, for instance, the interdenominational *Christian Coun-*

21 For detailed accounts on the significance of the ‘Great Revival’ – also called the ‘Great Awakening’ – (*taebuhŭng*) of 1907, see Lee, Timothy S. (2010, 15–32) and Choi, Young-keun (2010).

22 For a general history of Christianity in Korea, see Kim & Kim (2015) and Baker (2016). For various perspectives on how Christianity shaped Korea and vice-versa, see the volume edited by Buswell & Lee (2006), on the particular impact of Evangelicalism refer to Lee, Timothy S. (2010). For attempts at explaining the successful adoption of Protestant Christianity in the late-19th and early-20th century Korea, see Kim, Andrew E. (2001) and Kim, Kwŏn-jŏng (2016). For an explanatory account for Christianity's phenomenal growth after the Korean war, see Chung, Byung Joon (2014) and Kim, Byung-suh (2006).

23 Progressive Protestant churches in favor of, and actively fighting for democratization also existed. The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) in particular played an important role in promoting democratic values under the consecutive authoritarian regimes. Several of its adherents suffered from repression as a result (Chang, Yun-shik 1998). Nowadays, NCKK still represents progressive parts of Korean Protestantism, fighting for human rights in general and increasingly also for LGBT rights (cf. chapter 12).

cil of Korea (CCK, *han'guk kidokkyo ch'ong'yŏnhaphoe*) which was created in 1989. The liberal governments led by Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003) and Roh Moo-Hyun (2003–2008) faced harsh criticism and protests emanating from such conservative Protestant actors (Cho, Kyuhoon 2014, 319). The politicization of Korean Protestantism especially gained traction in the protests against the Sunshine Policy of the early 2000s. Han-jin Eom (2004) argues that these protests reflect a radicalization of conservative Protestantism and that they are part of the struggles of the extreme right in Korea to retain its long-standing hegemony (cf. also Kim, Hyŏn-jun 2017, 82f.). The hegemonic coalition between fundamentalist Protestants and conservative political forces promoting anti-communism, pro-Americanism, and religious imperialism is thus still in place (Kang, Won-Don 2008; on persistent pro-US tendencies see also: Jang 2004, 151–153; on anti-communism: Park, Young Whan 2012, 198–201).

Dae-young Ryu (2004) shows that those Protestants who engage in anti-North Korea protests have peculiar theological views. These views include premillennialism and Manichean dualism, in which the United States (along with its allies) on the one side, and communism on the other figure as the central actors in the fight of 'good' versus 'evil'.²⁴ Ryu claims that the basis underlying the emergence of right-wing Protestantism consists of a power vacuum created by cold-war-period hegemonic groups on the one side and reform-oriented groups on the other. This corresponds to the arguments seen above, according to which the conservative historical bloc as such fights against liberal and progressive forces to maintain its privileged, hegemonic position in Korean politics and society.

Ryu (2004) consequently argues that the newly emerging conservative Protestant political activism in the 21st century has a defensive character rather than being pro-active. Eom (2004), however, rejects the view that the politicization of Korean Protestantism merely represents reactionary reflexes. Despite being rooted in the traditions of conservative anti-communism and pro-Americanism, Eom claims that Korean Protestantism's political endeavors are forward-looking and, in fact, paralleled by similar developments of right-wing mobilization worldwide since the 1980s. Hyŏn-jun Kim (2017, 82f.) provides a similar perspective. According to Kim, conservative Protestants want to restore their social status and strive to achieve cultural hegemony, for which they colluded with the recent right-wing administrations and turned to 'old' anti-communist and 'new' anti-LGBT frames – an example of the *bricolage* mechanism as argued in this study. Through doing this, they have managed to create a powerful right-wing network since the early 2000s and proliferate and mobilize effectively. This study concurs with Eom's and Kim's latter perspectives, which emphasize the continuous and, at the same time, dynamic aspect of right-wing political action. In this context, Hyung Chull Jang (2018) provides a recapitulatory analysis of the Korean Protestant Right which matches the Gramscian bloc

24 Premillennialists believe that there will be a 1000-year-long reign of Christ after his return to earth. This eschatological (i.e., the part of theology that concerns the 'end times') belief is mainly built upon a literal reading of a few Biblical passages and includes a clear juxtaposition of, and battle between good and evil, out of which the righteous will prevail and be resurrected from death (Pak, Ung Kyu 2005, 6f.). For a thorough account on the origins of premillennialism in Korea, refer to Pak, Ung Kyu (2005).

and sub-bloc logic. Jang explains that the organizations of the Protestant Right belong to the conservative superstructure of Korean society and take part in reproducing right-wing ideology. At the same time, they participate in the attempt to strengthen or rebuild right-wing hegemony, thereby showing loyalty to the conservative Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye administrations (2008–2013, 2013–2017). In return, the Protestant Right hopes to maintain their vested interests and obtain further privileges from the respective governments. Chull Lee's (2018) research shows that in these struggles, conservative Christian leaders make use of diverse arguments to justify their active involvement in politics. For example, they claim that the separation of church and state should not be misunderstood in a way that applies this separation too strictly. Others cite a "spiritual war" that has to be fought in society to defeat the devil. Another justification builds on historical precedents, arguing that Christian historical figures like Calvin had also been involved in politics. Moreover, the argument goes, socio-political activism is an effective way to evangelize the masses (Lee, Chull 2018, 143).

Kyuhoon Cho (2014, 320; 322) likens these political activities by Korean Protestantism to those of professional social movement organizations and asserts that conservative Protestant churches have emerged as an active political force in Korea. This politicization, however, is not only restricted to the arena of social movements, i.e., non-traditional political actors. A significant portion of the Protestant Right endeavors to enter politics in the strict sense of the word. This became especially apparent when the conservative camp within Protestantism established the 'Christian Party for Practical Love' (*kidok sarang silchön dang*) to run in the general elections of 2004 (Lee, Jin Gu 2018, 157–161). More recently, its successor party, the 'Christian Liberty Party' (*kidok chayü dang*),²⁵ entered political competition, featuring anti-LGBT rhetoric and activism against LGBT rights as central campaign pledges and strategies. It received 2.63 percent of the votes in the 2016 general election, almost reaching the 3 percent threshold necessary for entering the National Assembly. Kim Jin-ho (2016: 10) asserts that the Christian Liberal Party represents the paradigmatic combination of far-right (*kügu*) politics with religious fundamentalism that can be found in the Korean Protestant Right.

What becomes evident here is the ambiguous relation of the Protestant Right to the state. To use the terminology of the contentious politics research agenda, one can say that conservative Protestant actors are both members and challengers. They are members of the conservative historical bloc, which, as I have shown, they have actively supported throughout the years. Conservative Protestants have also been keeping close relations with the main conservative parties and governments both before and after democratization. At the same time, parts of the Korean Protestant Right developed their very own political endeavors and projects. They established associations and political parties and eventually entered the political competition – however, without tangible success so far.

25 The Christian Liberty Party was renamed 'Christian Liberty Unification Party' (*kidok chayü t'ong'il dang*) before the 2020 general elections (in which it received 1.83 percent of the votes for the proportional representation seats). In June 2021, it changed names again, running henceforth as the 'National Revolutionary Party' (*kungmin hyöngmyöng dang*). Its present name is 'Freedom Unification Party', but its web address is still the old one: <http://clparty.kr/> (as of 19 May 2023).

While generally sharing the conservative historical bloc's outlook on political and social issues, that is, its values and – perhaps most importantly – its legacy, it seems that the Protestant sub-bloc is partially diverging from its bedrock. This divergence includes, as shown above, an increased thirst for political power, but also, I argue, a newly found role as an agenda setter within the conservative camp. This study concentrates on the way the Protestant Right politicizes LGBT issues. Other issues like anti-feminism or anti-Muslim activities are also part of this (cf. Kim, Nami 2016). In turn, these newly politicized topics affect 'traditional' conservative politics and politicians, who gladly jump on this bandwagon. Protestant Right actors utilize existing organizational structures and ideological legacies in such a way that they are able to build professional and oftentimes effective new organizational structures.

What we can observe here are the mechanisms of bricolage and modularity. The Protestant Right reframes 'traditional' contents of the conservative historical bloc to serve its anti-LGBT endeavors (*bricolage*). These new frames are, in turn, emulated and reused by traditional political actors (*modularity*) (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 16f). In this sense, both old and new actors and action repertoires serve as models for each other. While the conservative historical bloc in Korea continues to exert a significant influence on its constituting sub-actors, it readily incorporates new additions to its action forms and ideological repertoires. In fact, I argue that such additions from what one might as well call the anti-LGBT *sub-sub-bloc* of the conservative historical bloc may stabilize the whole structure of the conservative historical bloc.

The Korean anti-LGBT movement may even exert influence across borders, in interactions with actors that nurture similar religious and socio-political ideas and endeavors. Such relations form part of what I term the *transnational conservative historical bloc*, a loose but increasingly interconnected network of right-wing actors worldwide who learn from each other, support one another and, ultimately, strive to gain socio-political power. These emerging counter-hegemonic forces build their activism and ideology upon right-wing legacies from their respective local background and use, among other means, modern technologies such as the Internet to disseminate these. I will now briefly present this globalized variation of the historical bloc.

The transnational dimension of the bloc logic

In his seminal article from 1983, Robert W. Cox contemplates the usefulness of Gramscian concepts in the field of International Relations. He mainly occupies himself with the world order and ways to change it. For this purpose, Cox applies Gramscian concepts like hegemony, war of position, and passive revolution to the study of international relations. In Cox' approach, the historical bloc plays a crucial, if not the most important role in the process of changing hegemony in the world order. Cox summarizes: "[...] the task of changing world order begins with the long, laborious effort to build new historic blocs within national boundaries" (Cox 1983, 174). This perspective matches Antonio Gramsci's take on international relations:

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in the social structure,

through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field too. (Gramsci 1971, 259)

With the term 'organic', Gramsci designates long-term and structural, i.e., the fundamental and basic aspects of social phenomena (Cox 1983, 169).²⁶ The basic social relations and structures *within a country* thus have a significant impact on its international relations and on world order at large.

On first sight, this perspective differs from approaches which regard political activism in the national arena as a response to global problems, trends, and developments. John Meyer et al. (1997), for example, turn their attention to the macro-level, global-scale effects that institutional settings exert in a *world society*. Their approach assumes that we can observe a highly pervasive isomorphic diffusion of, and adaptation to universalistic world models, which is done in order to gain legitimacy (Meyer et al. 1997, 148). According to this perspective, the rejection of world-cultural principles is difficult. If certain social groups want to defend local patterns, they are "well advised to invoke universalistic cultural principles of some sort and join with others in generalizing the issue to the world level" (Meyer et al. 1997, 170).

Lechner and Boli (2005) offer a related research agenda with their *world culture* approach.²⁷ They emphasize, however, that world-cultural elements can only be effective when they are embedded in national and local organizations and structures (Lechner & Boli 2005, 235). Moreover, they point out that there is not *the one* world culture that everybody worldwide follows. Rather, different groups promote different kinds of world-cultural elements. One example the authors put forward is Pentecostalism as a global movement (Lechner & Boli 2005, 173–190).

This study does not privilege one theoretical view over the other. Whether the local or the global are more pervasive in affecting national and transnational political activities is not the key to understanding the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Rather, the fact that *there are* nationally embedded transnational networks among ideologically and thematically related groups is important. Such a perspective focuses on those societal groups that strive for power and influence by means of, among others, building globally intertwined networks among (what they hope for) increasingly powerful socio-political actor networks on the local level – or in Gramscian terminology: historical blocs. While Gramsci and Cox regard any historical bloc as necessarily embedded in national contexts, they also acknowledge that "the *ensemble* of the social relations" (Gramsci 1971, 366), which is crucial for building and maintaining historic blocs, also encompasses the level of international and transnational relations. In the context of this study, we can observe the workings of what I refer to as the *transnational conservative historical bloc*.

For a long time, research on right-wing groups had a focus on individual, nationally based organizations. Empirical in-depth studies on populist, radical or extremist right-wing networks which cross borders have been scarce (Caiani & della Porta 2018,

26 Refer also to Gramsci's usage of the term 'organic' in his concept of 'organic intellectuals' in chapter 3.3.

27 For an extensive overview of different theoretical approaches to analyzing world culture, see Lechner and Boli (2005), chapter 2, pp. 30–59.

332). Recent years, however, have seen rising attention to such relations, with a special focus on transnational activities and networks of right-wing actors (Caiani 2018; Bob 2013; 2012). The studies deal with topics as diverse as the way groups of the extreme right use the Internet as a means to build networks (Caiani & Parenti 2013), the specific right-wing connections of French and Italian neofascist groups (Mammone 2015), and the proliferation of US-based conservatism through founding and financially supporting ideologically corresponding organizations and networks abroad (Teles & Kenney 2008). The US-American Christian Right – politically and theologically conservative Christian actors – pursue similar strategies when promoting what they frame as ‘family values’ on a global scale and thereby cooperating with local politicians, organizations, and churches abroad – in an effort to especially fight human rights of LGBT people (Oliver 2013; Anderson 2011; Kaoma 2009; Buss & Herman 2003). As I have shown above in chapter 2.2, an inequalities version of Gramscian theory itself has become a core strategic element of New Right actors worldwide (Abrahamsen et al. 2020).

Robert Cox’ Gramscian approach to international relations is principally interested in the role of the state and international organizations, which he presents as central mechanisms in hegemonic struggles (Cox 1983, 172f). He does also, however, acknowledge the crucial role of groups which build the institutions and the ideology necessary to achieve or maintain hegemony. “An historic bloc cannot exist without a hegemonic social class” (Cox 1983, 168). Cox does not elaborate much on who these social groups actually are and how they interact in the international arena.

Social movement scholars did develop more detailed elaborations. *Transnational collective action* is perhaps the most basic term in this respect, denoting “coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions” (della Porta & Tarrow 2005, 7).²⁸ While this concept’s narrow focus on states and international organizations as targets of activism needs to be questioned – since transnational influence can also affect other societal actors – it helps us put the analytical spotlight on the linkages between nationally based social movement organizations. Difficulties, however, arise when trying to discern whether transnational collective action is the result of incidental connections and borrowings or whether they actually represent consciously formed, perhaps even institutionalized networks between social movements in different places. For now, it is therefore more productive to concentrate on the circumstances that foster different kinds of transnationalization.

Della Porta and Tarrow (2005, 3–6) discern three types of transnationalization processes that bring about transnationally acting movements (cf. also Desai 2008, 958f.).

28 Further common terms to denote such international coordination among social movements include *transnational social movement organizations* (TSMOs) (Sikkink & Smith 2002; Smith 1997) and *transnational advocacy networks* (TANs) (Keck & Sikkink 1998). The latter concept came first into being as part of the famous “boomerang pattern” conceived by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, according to which weak non-state actors fail to influence domestic politics (e.g., concerning human rights campaigns) and therefore seek connections to other NGOs abroad, which then put pressure on their own governments who, in turn, put pressure on the other state’s leadership (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 12f.). TANs also play an important role in Risse and Sikkink’s (1999) “spiral model of human rights change”, which builds upon the boomerang pattern.

First, movements may get influenced or even come into existence through the *diffusion* of ideas, issues, and frames. Diffusion – if understood not only as a passive process – relates to the mechanism of modularity introduced before. Secondly, *internalization* concerns movements that play out external conflicts domestically. Thirdly, *externalization* can be at work, meaning that supranational and transnational organizations are encouraged to get involved in domestic conflicts (on this last point, cf. also Keck & Sikkink 1998). This study investigates whether these transnationalization processes exist in Korean anti-LGBT activism as well (cf. chapter 7.5).

Marco Giugni (2002) argues that transnationalization processes such as diffusion render movements increasingly similar. According to Giugni, *globalization* has an important effect on the convergence of movements: “the increasing interconnectedness of the world stimulates transnational structures and processes which might simultaneously affect movements in different countries” (Giugni 2002: 15). Furthermore, Giugni introduces the *structural affinity model*, which points to the influence similar structures in different countries can exert on the homogenization of movements. Such structures, in turn, may result from globalization dynamics and serve as *political opportunity structures*, for example in terms of resembling cleavage or conflict structures, similar political systems and opportunities for alliance building (Giugni 2002, 17f.).

In the Korean case, one can accordingly argue that conservative Protestant groups are part of the overall social structure and, hence, a resource or opportunity for people (or factions of said Protestant groups) who wish to mobilize around the anti-LGBT issue. Similar processes may have been ongoing in other countries, where anti-LGBT groups build upon similar conservative Christian foundations. Developing this argument further, one can proceed on the assumption that these movements show resemblances across borders because, from the outset, similar groups tend to cooperate and use similar strategies and frames.²⁹ In the case of religious groups, transnational collaboration may already exist due to denominational ties. If they have the same or similar doctrinal or exegetic traditions, this may minimize the threshold for working together – further undergirding the argument on cooperation among resembling actors. On the level of beliefs, values, and norms, Christian groups – and by extension, similarly oriented right-wing actors – may be particularly eager to share and, importantly, defend their ideology in unison and thus try to influence society and politics. Such groups are then part of what Keck and Sikkink (1998, 1) call a “transnational advocacy network”, i.e., networks of nontraditional political actors like social movements that act on a global level to influence states and international organizations, and – importantly – that are motivated by principled ideas and values.³⁰ The aspect of ‘principledness’ needs to be stressed here:

29 Here again, we come across a ‘chicken or egg’ causality dilemma. What was there first? Anti-LGBT attitudes, e.g., rooted in a conservative or fundamentalist interpretation of Biblical texts or external impulses (domestic or transnational) that problematize LGBT issues and mobilize people to act against sexual and gender diversity – to only then, in a second step, utilize Christian resources (on the ideational as well as on the institutional levels) for the purpose of anti-LGBT activism? This study strives to shed light on this problem, however, without claiming that it can be ultimately solved.

30 “Ideas that specify criteria for determining whether actions are right and wrong and whether outcomes are just or unjust are shared principled beliefs or values.” (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 1; see also

What distinguishes principled activists [...] is the intensely self-conscious and self-reflective nature of their normative awareness. No mere automatic 'enactors,' these are people who seek to amplify the generative power of norms, broaden the scope of practices those norms engender, and sometimes even renegotiate or transform the norms themselves. (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 35)

This means that values, norms, and ideas are important as resources, indeed, across borders. Keck and Sikkink highlight that transnationally acting social movement organizations consciously make use of ideas – regardless of whether they have local or foreign origins – and do so also through instrumentalizing and, at that, adapting them for their own specific (locally oriented) agenda and gain. This insight may seem paradoxical when considering that right-wing and far-right parties and movements commonly denounce the cultural, economic, and political processes of globalization as having negative consequences for locals (Bornschier 2018, 220–224).³¹ Despite these nationalist positions, radical right actors themselves engage in transnationalizing processes (Halikiopoulou et al. 2012). Thomas Grumke (2013) therefore refers to these actors as “globalized anti-globalists”.

These anti-globalist tendencies notwithstanding, right-wing groups and activists operate both domestically and transnationally, featuring local and foreign interests, influences, and strategies. Sidney Tarrow's concept of *rooted cosmopolitans* captures this phenomenon, which I argue also works for describing the transnational ambitions of right-wing actors. Tarrow defines rooted cosmopolitans as follows:

individuals and groups who mobilize domestic and international resources and opportunities to advance claims on behalf of external actors, against external opponents, or in favor of goals they hold in common with transnational allies (Tarrow 2005, 29, original italicized).³²

Tarrow's concept complements the mechanisms of internalization, externalization, and diffusion seen above by highlighting both the rootedness of actors in the home country, as well as in an increasingly globalizing environment. It also coincides with Antonio Gramsci's and Robert Cox' view that international and transnational relations necessarily originate from domestically based actors, their local networks, ideologies, and legacies.

Goldstein & Keohane 1993, 8–10). An analogous concept to transnational advocacy networks in the field of International Relations (i.e., relations among states and international organizations) is that of “knowledge-based” or “epistemic communities” introduced by Peter Haas (1992), which denotes global networks of scientists and experts who share causal beliefs and try to influence (international) politics in this direction. An extension of Haas' argument, “epistemic brokers” (Herring 2010) will play a role as an analytical category in chapter 10 on social movement entrepreneurs.

31 On the related issue of euroskepticism, i.e., opposing European integration, see, e.g., Vasilopoulou 2018.

32 It should be noted that Tarrow (2005, 29) defines “rooted cosmopolitans” as not only comprising social movement activists, but also “business executives, lawyers, and international civil servants and the national civil servants in regular contact with them.” This endorses a Gramscian perspective, according to which historical blocs are formed by a diverse range of socio-political actors in order to obtain leverage.

This study investigates in chapter 7.5 in which way the Korean anti-LGBT movement cooperates transnationally with allies abroad and how these instances of cooperation affect their actions, frames, and tactics (and vice-versa). Ultimately, this study contributes to answering the question whether the endeavors of the Protestant Right and its anti-LGBT faction serve to (re)create a conservative historical bloc not only domestically, but also on a transnational, global scale. The next part will focus on the concrete actors – the social movement entrepreneurs or, in Gramscian terms, ‘intellectuals’ – who work to realize such endeavors.

3.3 Social movement leaders as ‘intellectuals’

The analytical categories outlined so far – religion and historic bloc – represent large scale, partly institutionalized entities. But who are the concrete actors on the ground who potentially make use of religion as a resource? What groups build their activism upon the legacies of the conservative historic bloc? While Gramsci acknowledges the central position of the ‘masses’ for achieving hegemony (Gramsci 1971, 393), his strategic outlook on socio-political change leads him to the conclusion that particularly one societal group is of utmost importance to reach fundamental change: the intellectuals.

Gramsci’s take on intellectuals

Antonio Gramsci famously claims that “everyone is a philosopher” (Gramsci 1971, 323). He notes: “There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: homo faber cannot be separated from homo sapiens” (Gramsci 1971, 9). Gramsci here emphasizes that everyone has an intellect that they use, but he does not assume that everyone is intellectual in a professional sense. Gramsci thus adopts an inclusive definition of intellectuals, in the sense that in modern times, one can become or serve as an intellectual also beyond class-bound restrictions that had determined intellectual activity for a long time. For Gramsci, the term intellectual has a functional meaning rather than denoting the result of long studies: “What matters is the function, which is directive and organizational, i.e. educative, i.e. intellectual” (Gramsci 1971, 16).

He differentiates between two kinds of intellectuals: *traditional* and *organic* intellectuals.³³ Traditional intellectuals, Gramsci writes, represent a

noblesse de robe, with its own privileges [...]. Since these various categories of traditional intellectuals experience through an *esprit de corps* their uninterrupted historical conti-

33 Deirdre O’Neill and Mike Wayne (2018, 171f.) suggest a third analytical category of intellectuals, which they argue reflects the present roles of intellectual working professionally in corporations and state bureaucracies, i.e., *technocratic intellectuals*. Their functions “are neither ‘traditional’ because they are so obviously tied to the dynamic and moving terrain of occupations responding to economic forces, nor are they ‘organic’ in the sense that their agenda is more focused on the smooth functioning of an apparatus rather than the broader project of public persuasion and politics” (O’Neill & Wayne 2018, 171). This typological addition will not be further treated in this study, though, since its main focus is on *organic* intellectuals.

nuity and their special qualification, they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. (Gramsci 1971, 7)

Emblematic for this kind of intellectuals are, for Gramsci, the clergymen who, for centuries, had occupied a key position in knowledge building, had close ties to the dominant political forces (or were part of them), but at the same time displayed a certain degree of autonomy and developed a class-like self-conscience, loyalty, and pride, what Gramsci calls an “*esprit de corps*”. On the ideational level, traditional intellectuals promote the established ideological basis of the those in power – for example, by fostering the ‘religion of the intellectuals’ as in the case of clerics (see also chapter 2.3). Seen from a temporal-historical perspective, traditional intellectuals are those intellectuals that existed before the emergence of new, (counter-)hegemonic forces (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 35; cf. also O’Neill & Wayne 2018, 170, 172).

Organic intellectuals emerge along with such new socio-political forces (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 34). They are organic in the sense that they come into being ‘organically’, that is, as an integral part of forces that promote new worldviews and, accordingly, aim at establishing new socio-political and cultural realities in a given context. Gramsci describes organic intellectuals as follows:

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals, which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its function, not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.” (Gramsci 2000, (ref. 20), 301)

Gramsci’s definition of organic intellectuals is, thus, a pragmatic one, in that he asserts their clear functionality for newly ascending social groups. Organic intellectuals serve the interests of these specific forces and do so by working to obtain popular consensus for a new socio-political agenda (Nieto-Galan 2011, 458). It is not only the consensus that is needed, but also homogeneity, which refers to “the decisive moment when a social group acquires self-consciousness and thus prepares to enter the historical stage as a collective actor” (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 37). The organic intellectuals are the central figures promoting the cultural and socio-political project of an upcoming social group. In Gramscian terminology: they sow the seeds for these groups’ intended ‘intellectual and moral reform’. Ultimately, organic intellectuals are the key agents for reaching hegemony. Gramsci, therefore, denotes organic intellectuals – in contrast to the traditional ones – as the practical ‘organizers’ and, on the ideological level, as the ‘permanent persuaders’.

The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just a simple orator. (Gramsci 1971, 10).

Organic intellectuals are the key agents for transforming the common sense in a way that it becomes the *buon senso*, the ‘good sense, i.e., a coherent body of thought that aims at convincing and winning over the general public (Olsaretti 2014, 375). In this process, organic intellectuals are producers of knowledge and culture, which they build upon existing common sense intelligible to the ‘masses’. Organic intellectuals “are able to find intellectual resources through organic integration with the masses, working out the principles and problems which the masses had in their own practical activity, and eventually building a cultural-historical block” (Forlenza 2019, 13). Forlenza argues that this is in stark contrast to traditional intellectuals who denied the general public the knowledge necessary to build a critical conscience and, ultimately, inhibited their socio-political participation (ibid.).

Along with the reliance on common sense, a crucial role of organic intellectuals is to create new ideas, a new *Weltanschauung*, a fresh worldview, or parts thereof (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 37; Olsaretti 2014, 375). Indeed, Gramsci claims that if intellectuals fail to include social change into their schemes “they are but a conservative and fossilized leftover of the social group that has been left behind historically” (Gramsci 1977a, Q11§16, 1407; quoted in, and translated by Olsaretti 2014, 376). Having one important argument of this study in mind, one can say that organic intellectuals are actors that put dynamic continuity into practice.

Intellectuals as social movement entrepreneurs

Whenever scholars of social movements deal with actors similar to intellectuals as conceived by Antonio Gramsci, they resort to the analytical category of leadership. In fact, movement leaders need considerable intellectual capacities for the many tasks they have to accomplish.

A host of social movement activities – framing grievances and formulating ideologies, debating, interfacing with media, writing, orating, devising strategies and tactics, creatively synthesizing information gleaned from local, national, and international venues, dialoguing with internal and external elites, improvising and innovating, developing rationales for coalition building and channeling emotions – *are primarily intellectual tasks*. (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 175; my emphasis)

I argue that the Gramscian category of intellectuals can be productively integrated into leadership matters as dealt with in social movement studies. Morris and Staggenborg (2004, 171) define leaders as “strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements”. Movement leaders, just like Gramscian intellectuals, try to convince people to adopt or reinforce certain positions for the purpose of mobilizing them for concrete action. As the list of intellectual tasks above suggests, however, movement leaders are not only ideological ‘permanent persuaders’. They also act as organizers when drafting strategies, seeking cooperation partners, and institutionalizing the movement. Building upon Max Weber’s famous ideal types of authority (Weber 1964 [1887]; 1968 [1922]), John Wilson proposed three types of movement leaders: charismatic and ideological leaders corresponding to the persuasion type on the one hand, and prag-

matic leaders, which assume administrative-organizational tasks on the other (Wilson 1973; cited in della Porta & Diani 2006, 142).³⁴

In her seminal study on the pro-choice movement, Suzanne Staggenborg (1988) differentiates between professional and nonprofessional movement leaders who both, in turn, can serve as “entrepreneurs”, that is, “leaders who initiate movements, organizations, and tactics” (Staggenborg 1988, 587). Professional managers, for Staggenborg, are those who get paid for their movement-related work and potentially build careers upon this (ibid.: 586). The latter are more likely to create formalized, rule-based social movement organizations (SMOs), while nonprofessional leaders, mostly volunteers, prefer informal structures (ibid.: 594). Staggenborg thus presented an empirically based counter-argument to John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (1973; 1977) who had claimed that professionalized social movements were becoming more prevalent because movement entrepreneurs tended to create SMOs (as opposed to maintaining looser movement structures). In furthering their argument within the resource mobilization approach to social movements, McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1215) even suggested that “issue entrepreneurs” were able to fabricate grievances without the need of an actual aggrieving precedent.

Later scholarship has criticized this excessive emphasis on agency as well as an undue focus on structures of political opportunity, claiming that the failure to integrate these two perspectives resulted in a lack of theorization of leadership in social movements (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 171; Ganz & McKenna 2019, 187). In a similar vein, the question of whether a focus on movement leadership is necessary or appropriate at all has been disputed among researchers. One branch of social movement studies followed Robert Michels’ (1958 [1911]) argument that any movement, organization, or party, in order to be sustainably successful, needs to bureaucratize and concentrate authority in leadership circles – Michels’ famous “iron law of oligarchy” (cf. also Piven & Cloward 1977). Others, however, doubted that this strong argument withstands the empirical test, stressing that what constitutes the very essence of social movements is their nonformalized, nonhierarchical, and grassroots character (e.g., Sutherland et al. 2013; Voss & Sherman 2000).

This study focuses on structural elements of leadership *and* its agency dimension. Leadership is based on previous experiences and cultural traditions, pre-existing organizational structures, and the socio-political opportunities that movements have at a given point in time (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 173, 180). Without (pro)active leaders, the odds are high that these structural elements would oftentimes be neglected or overlooked. In the case of political opportunities, for example, actors are needed who detect an opportunity, who interpret and translate it so that it appeals to potential adherents (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 179f.). The *Dynamics of Contention* (DOC) approach stresses this aspect: opportunities are not objective structural factors, but rather something that has to

34 Early social movement scholarship also proposed different kinds of leadership roles or styles, for example charismatic, administrator, intellectual (Killian 1964), instrumental and affective (Downton 1973) (cf. also della Porta & Diani 2006, 142), as well as outward-facing representative and coordinative work (“social movement leadership”) and inward-facing management work (“social movement organization leadership”) (Ganz & McKenna 2019, 185).

be attributed in the first place. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001, 43) call this mechanism *attribution of opportunity (or threat)*.

Movement leaders thus occupy a crucial position in the workings of social movements, which is why this study will not hastily discard analyzing their particular agency in greater detail. While the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ (Michels 1958) certainly needs to be put into question – especially in the case of social movements where broad participation plays an important role – I claim that the agentic nature of leaders, their creative and coordinative work is at least just as important. Existing research on movement leadership seems to neglect the fact that different political and socio-cultural backgrounds may bring about different movement structures and action forms. Studies so far have predominantly focused on leadership types and practices in progressive movements. Only a few studies explicitly analyze leaders of conservative movements, concentrating mostly on the role of women leaders in the US-American antifeminist, evangelical and Tea Party movements (Johnson 2018; Critchlow 2018; Deckman 2016) and leader figures of extreme right movements in Serbia and Germany (Lilly & Irvine 2012; Virchow 2013).³⁵ This study contributes to this literature by investigating a case outside the United States and Europe and asking the question whether a specifically Korean leadership culture can be found in the anti-LGBT movement.³⁶ The specifics of this case study include the church background of leaders and, accordingly, particular charismatic or authoritative leadership styles as well as special framing strategies. Another aspect concerns the leaders’ educational background, their “educational capital” (cf. Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 175) – especially in a society where education is held in high esteem. Apart from these analytical foci, this study concentrates on three further, interrelated points: the entrepreneurial character, the framing activities, and the relation-building practices of movement leaders.

The notion of *social movement entrepreneurs* was first introduced by McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) to denote actors who call attention to certain issues to broaden the base for recruiting people to social movements (Staggenborg 2013, 1). Movement entrepreneurs thus have an important role in the context of mobilizing human, but also other kinds of resources. They are the creative forces of social movements, being creative in the sense of imaginative powers but also, literally and ultimately, as the actual creators of emerging social movements. They produce the initial sparks for further developments and, in the long run, contribute to the maintenance of the project, consolidating, institutionalizing, and perhaps professionalizing the movement, for example through founding social movement organizations (SMOs).

35 The literature on – also historical – eminent *political* leaders of conservative or (extreme) right-wing *parties* is more extensive, cf. e.g., on the Dutch Geert Wilders (Vossen 2011), the French Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen (Stockemer 2017), and the Austrian Jörg Haider (Dorner-Hörig 2014).

36 The literature on leadership in Korea mostly focuses on political leadership in South and North Korea (Suh & Lee 2014) and emotion-based leading practices in South Korea (Ha 2011). Cf. also chapter 10 for a more in-depth perspective on particular leadership cultures in South Korean (Christian) conservatism.

Framing as a key task of movement leaders

Like Gramsci's concept of intellectuals, movement entrepreneurs act as producers, adaptors, and disseminators of arguments and ideology. The means to do so is *framing*. Frame analysis is an analytical and methodological approach conceived by Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow (2000), now representing, besides political opportunity structures and resource mobilization, one of the three main theoretical schools in social movement studies. Frame analysis "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 agentic and strategic side of actors' statements and claims. The particular frames analyzed in social movement studies 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)³⁷

Morris and Staggenborg (2004, 183) assert that the framing approach has disregarded the important role of movement leaders in the framing process, as well as how the framers' background influences the way frames get enacted. In a similar vein, while dismissing overly voluntaristic approaches to framing, Stephen Hart (1996) emphasized that pre-existing cultural codes exert significant influence framing processes, particularly so in the case of religion-based movements, which resonates with Gramsci's thoughts on religion. Since leaders commonly emanate from pre-existing organizational contexts (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 173), their framing practice will also be affected by this legacy. I claim that movement leaders thus represent the personified link between 'old' and 'new' ideational and action-related elements within the dynamic continuity approach, as proposed in this study.

One concretization of the framing practices of movement leaders is Howard Becker's (1963) 'moral entrepreneurs'. Staggenborg aptly summarizes Becker's main argument: "moral rules, and our views about what is deviant or acceptable behavior, do not follow automatically from the nature of the behavior, but are the result of labeling activities by moral entrepreneurs" (Staggenborg 2013, 1). This corresponds to the 'attribution' mechanism of the DOC research agenda and, at the same time, points to the moralizing effect movement leaders, understood as entrepreneurs, can exert. In the context of gender and sexuality issues, which are often regarded as moral matters, this insight may gain particular analytical value.

37 Another definition of collective action frames regards them as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)" (Benford & Snow 2000, 614). In very broad terms, Erving Goffman (1974, 21) has defined frames in general as "schemata of interpretation".

(Norm) brokerage as a relational mechanism

Another approach towards the framing efforts of movement leaders is Ronald J. Herring's (2010) concept of 'epistemic brokers'. Epistemic brokers act as conveyors of knowledge claims to support specific framing efforts on contentious issues. They gain legitimacy through their actual or alleged expert status (cf. also Haas 1992) and "command authority from their positions at junctures of networks, enabling the screening, weighting, theorizing and diffusion of contentious empirical accounts" (Herring 2010, 614). Herring highlights the contentious nature of such accounts, in that there are cases of seemingly knowledge-based claims that turn out to be inaccurate or false. In his approach, Herring combines special, i.e., purportedly expert, or 'intellectual' framing practices with a relational perspective. Brokers, however, do not only act in the context of disseminating certain types of frames, they also help build other relations – for example, of an interpersonal or interorganizational kind – to promote their specific socio-political agenda.

'Brokerage', and along with it, *relational* perspectives have been gaining attention and influence in sociology and, particularly, social movement studies over the past decades (cf. Marshall & McKenna 2019, 190; Stovel & Shaw 2012; Vasi 2011; Diani 2003; McAdam et al. 2001; Gould & Fernandez 1989; Marsden 1982).³⁸ McAdam et al. (2001, 142) define brokerage as "the linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site." In contrast to the traditional view on diffusion where information is directly transmitted, brokerage functions through an intermediary, which establishes an enabling connection in the first place (Vasi 2011, 11). "The crucial characteristics of brokers are that (a) they bridge a gap in social structure and (b) they help goods, information, opportunities, or knowledge flow across that gap" (Stovel & Shaw 2012, 141). Brokerage is a mechanism that helps people or groups realize that they have common interests and leads them to interact for the purpose of achieving shared goals (Vasi 2011, 13). Philippe C. Schmitter (1977) and Dieter Rucht (1995) refer to such interest-based linkage-building as "interest intermediation" or "political interest mediation". The brokerage perspective challenges the view that social movements are necessarily decentralized and antihierarchical, since there are central leading figures or SMOs that take charge of dissemination and mediation work (Diani 2003, 105). In methodological terms, brokerage draws from the network analysis tradition, in that it identifies gaps between social groups as well as actors that bridge these gaps (Stovel & Shaw 2012, 141; Gould & Fernandez 1989).

38 Sociologists like Georg Simmel (1950) had dealt with brokerage-like social relations already at an earlier point in time. In his essay "The Triad", Simmel highlights the dualistic structure of social relationship and the important position that 'third elements' may occupy there (cf. also Schroer 2017, 81). For a general overview of different sociological takes on brokerage, see Stovel and Shaw (2012). Antonio Gramsci also recognizes that relations and relation-building are crucial for forming social realities, for example when it comes to intellectuals: "The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction [for the definition of the intellectual] in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations" (Gramsci 1971, 8; cited in Hoare & Sperber 2016, 31).

Brokerage does not only occur between people or groups. Brokers also serve as mediators between people and ideas, as already implied in Herring's notion of epistemic brokers. Phillip M. Ayoub (2016) introduced the concept of *norm brokerage* to analyze processes of norm diffusion in the context of pro-LGBT activism in Europe. Ayoub defines norm brokerage as

the process by which actors endowed with local knowledge mediate between often-divergent new international norms and domestic norms. Norm brokers aid diffusion by framing the international elements of the norm – in a domestically familiar discourse – so that they resonate with the domestic traditions of the society. [...] (Ayoub 2016, 34)

Ayoub's definition mainly focuses on transnational and international diffusion of *norms*, but I argue that this concept is also applicable in country-specific contexts and for ideational or ideological elements in general – without, however, ruling out the possibility that such brokerage may occur through transnational channels as well. Framing certain issues in a way that they resonate with certain publics and their pre-existent ideas again reflects the idea of dynamic continuity. Bricolage is a mechanism that is likely to be applied in this context. But when does brokerage actually happen, and under which circumstances is it effective?

Ion Bogdan Vasi (2011) made an important contribution in this respect. He argues that in order to explain why spreading contention is successful and when and why it fails, one has to take into account the diverse types of brokers and brokerage relationships. An important parameter for evaluation is the degree of what Vasi calls 'miscibility', that is, whether groups or individuals are ideologically compatible and already connected through networks (Vasi 2011, 12). This means that social groups who share similar worldviews can be linked more easily; if, on the other hand, miscibility is low, brokerage efforts have to be more intense, or else may be vain from the outset. Proceeding from these considerations, Vasi comes up with a *prima facie* paradoxical prediction: "Contention spreads faster when brokers connect few groups and when they connect groups that are highly miscible; yet, contention spreads furthest when brokers connect diverse groups and groups with low miscibility" (Vasi 2011, 16, italics in original). Bringing together groups that have similar ideological orientations is of course easier than convincing those groups featuring different or even opposing worldviews. On a large scale, however, the spread of contention will only be successful if diverse groups are addressed, convinced and, ultimately, won over for a new purpose.

In summary, Antonio Gramsci grants great significance to intellectuals, the 'permanent persuaders' who lead the way to counter-hegemony. Social movement studies similarly acknowledge the eminent position that movement leaders may occupy in contentious politics. This study explores the role that leaders play for the Korean anti-LGBT movement, their organizational and ideological backgrounds, purported or actual 'intellectual capital', as well as framing efforts. A special focus of the analysis will lie on creative work of leaders as entrepreneurs, and on their relational practices as brokers, which will be investigated through a network analysis (cf. chapter 10.3). The study will show that (norm) brokerage is an important part of leadership activities in order to set a new agenda, one that puts LGBT issues at the center of problematization. I argue that

the anti-LGBT movement primarily tries to connect to pre-existing, ideologically compatible (in Vasi's (2011) terminology: miscible) arenas such as conservative Protestant denominations and other right-wing actors in politics and society, that is, the conservative historical bloc. However, movement leaders also strive to connect to the public at large in an effort to put their (counter-)hegemonic struggle on a broader basis. The means through which movement leaders and other activists disseminate frames and thus work for the goal of hegemony – education and media – will be treated in greater detail in the next two subchapters.

3.4 Education

The Gramsci-inspired aspects of the analytical framework presented in this chapter – religion, historical bloc, intellectuals, education, and media – are all non-exclusive, intertwined categories. This becomes perhaps most obvious when taking a thorough look at the important role intellectuals play in the context of education. To attain the ultimate goal of hegemony, educating the masses is a key element. The actors fulfilling this task are, in most cases, the intellectuals, who use their own knowledge and education and are thus “able to educate the popular masses and raise their intellectual level, such that, finally, the people are increasingly able to self-educate and become actors in their own right in the new culture that is in the process of formation” (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 39). Gramsci builds this insight upon Marx' famous dictum from the *Theses on Feuerbach* according to which “the educator must himself be educated” (Marx 1976 [1845]). While the educators, the intellectuals, fulfill an important function, Gramsci does not conceptualize education as a top-down, hierarchical – or as he puts it “scholastic” relationship. Gramsci notes:

This problem [i.e., the question of collectively attaining a single cultural ‘climate’] can and must be related to the modern way of considering educational doctrine and practice, according to which the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher. But the educational relationship should not be restricted to the field of strictly ‘scholastic’ relationships [...]. This form of relationship exists throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals. It exists between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between the rulers and the ruled, *élites* and their followers, leaders and led, the vanguard and the body of the army. Every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilization. (Gramsci 1971, 349f.; cited in Borg et al. 2002, 8)

This passage reveals three main Gramscian insights on education: (1) Gramsci regards education through a relational, reciprocal lens; (2) he considers education something that does not only take place in institutionalized settings like schools or universities; (3) and he sees educational relationship as a core element of any attempts to achieve hegemony,

not just on the micro, interpersonal level, but also in larger, even international or transnational contexts.

Gramsci has a what Borg et al. (2002, 6) call “active or activist concept of education”. That is, Gramsci goes beyond the idea of education as a hierarchical one-way process and learning as mere passive reception, thereby highlighting its potential for the necessary ideological work (the ‘war of position’) and, ultimately, the cultural and concrete transformation of society and state (cf. also Mayo 2014, 388). Education is always political for Gramsci and conversely, politics, in order to be successful, must be educative in nature (Fontana 2002, 32) and not just geared to the youth, but to all people regardless of age or status (Borg et al. 2002, 13ff.; Mayo 2010).

Educators, in turn, need to be open to be educated. This can take the form of actually training new generations of intellectuals, also to raise their educational capital (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 175). When it comes to a (counter-)hegemonic project, however, this also and importantly means that educators should learn from the popular knowledge, the ‘common sense’, critically reflect it and integrate it into their educational endeavors. Through this reciprocal process, ‘good sense’ is created, that is, coherent, ordered thoughts that can be fruitfully applied in the education for a new hegemony (Kuk & Tarlau 2020, 595). Gramsci describes the basis of this educational process as follows:

To know oneself means to be oneself, to be master of oneself, to distinguish oneself, to get out of chaos, to be an element of order and of one's own discipline in pursuit of an ideal. And one cannot achieve this without knowing others, their history, the succession of efforts they made to be what they are, to create the civilisation they have created and which we want to replace with our own. (Gramsci 1977b, 13)

Overcoming the “chaos”, being productively educated, thus also entails understanding the opponent's culture. In his writings, for example, Gramsci concretely analyzes the educational situation of his times, concretely the school system, which had been reformed in 1923 under the Fascist regime (cf. Borg et al. 2002, 9f.). In general terms, he criticizes the bourgeoisie, which Gramsci characterizes as a “closed caste” that does not allow for social mobility but uses state structures to prompt the general public to accept the bourgeois cultural and economic model. Gramsci concludes: “the state has become an ‘educator’” (Gramsci 1971, 260).

Education and learning in and through social movements

Of course, Gramsci is mainly concerned with education as a means for progressive social forces to transform society to their benefit, to raise the educational level and critical capacities of unprivileged people. This has also been an important task of progressive social movements and is, consequently, an area of interest of social scientific research. Studies on the nexus between social movements and education mostly focus on adult education (Kuk & Tarlau 2020; Hall et al. 2006, 6) and can be subdivided into two categories: education and learning in social movements, and studies on the influence of social movements on formal education and education policies (Niesz et al. 2018). Early research has predominantly concentrated on ‘popular education’ in Latin America, a pro-

gressive educational concept promoted and implemented 'by the people' (hence the adjective 'popular'), as opposed to state-led formal education. The Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire (1970) significantly contributed to this perspective with his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire argues that in the context of social movements, organizing, mobilizing, and educating cannot be separated from each other, they go hand in hand. He also emphasizes the agency of learners, however, without dismissing the important role of educators when acting in a way to promote freedom and critical thinking – similar to how Gramsci conceptualizes education (Kuk & Tarlau 2020, 593–596).

Recent literature on new social movements is predominantly concerned with *social movement learning*, learning figuring as the natural counterpart of education (Kuk & Tarlau 2020, 599–601). Social movement learning, broadly speaking, has two sides: "a) learning by persons who are part of any social movement; and b) learning by persons outside of a social movement as a result of the actions taken or simply by the existence of social movements" (Hall et al. 2006, 6; cf. also Hall & Clover 2005). In this study, *learning* is a central mechanism serving as both a precondition for mobilization of movement participants and as a crucial element of the process of ideological change and, in the long run, the attainment of hegemony. Phillip M. Ayoub provides a definition of learning which will be used in this study:

the process by which individuals and communities reassess their fundamental beliefs, values, and ways of doing things through interacting with new ideas and norms. Learning can refer to the transfer of knowledge between international organizations, governments, societies, and individuals, and it includes both simple learning, which leads to instrumental change, and complex learning, which leads to change in beliefs. (Ayoub 2016, 34)

Empirically, learning cannot be easily observed. On the individual level, in particular, it is difficult to assess whether a person has learned something new and, therefore, may have changed his or her beliefs or values, resulting in movement participation. Another possibility is that this person took part in movement activities due to a pre-existing (collective) identity or organizational ties, for example as a member of a church community whose pastor encouraged the parishioners to participate in a specific protest, for example. Learning can also take place on the level of framing when external frames influence individuals or communities, which then adopt and adapt these frames for the achievement of their own goals. This process of *frame diffusion* (Benford & Snow 2000, 627f.) is more easily observable empirically. Benford and Snow (2000, 627) differentiate between two types of frame diffusion: (1) strategic selection, in which the adopter intentionally borrows and adapts a frame across cultures, and (2) strategic accommodation, where an external transmitter actively engages in fitting a certain frame to the host culture. In both cases, the mechanisms of norm brokerage and bricolage are likely to be observed.

Examining education is especially relevant in the Korean context, where education plays an eminent role in people's lives. For decades now, Korean governments have established a tight control over the educational system and have encouraged its people to invest – both financially and symbolically – in education, which contributed to the country's phenomenal economic growth and rapid social changes over the course of just a few

generations. Educational capital is widely regarded as pivotal for individual success and, in broader terms, also for familial prestige. Educational zeal is therefore pervasive and virtually omnipresent in Korean society (Kim & Bang 2017; Seth 2012). Considering the importance that Korean governments and citizens grant to education, it is also a sensitive topic rife with potential for conflicts, for example regarding curricula, private educational institutions, and regulations to alleviate the negative consequences of the Korean 'educational fever' (*kyoyungnyōl*) such as high rates depression and suicide in young people. Education can thus be expected to represent field of action also for the Protestant Right.

This study is mainly concerned with the way education is exactly done and utilized by the Korean anti-LGBT movement, but it will also touch on its attempts to influence education policies. It will also address the question as to what extent the anti-LGBT movement is actually interested in raising the educational level of people, considering the fact that they also disseminate false information on sexuality and gender issues, using education for anti-emancipatory purposes. In terms of learning, possible instances of frame diffusion are investigated. These adopted and adapted frames may then figure prominently in the movement's educational programs. On the individual level, learning processes and results are hardly observable. However, it is fair to argue that the anti-LGBT movement has the objective of make people 'learn' about its views on homosexuality and gender issues, or reinforce existent beliefs of a similar kind. It is with this lens that the educational activities of this Christian-conservative movement are analyzed in this study, also to find out whether they differ from educative efforts of progressive movements (cf. chapter 11).

3.5 Media and culture

As has been shown, social movements commonly make use of education to get connected to potential adherents and to promote their specific agendas. They do so in informal or nonformal settings beyond the traditional educative sites. For Gramsci, the sites of educational relationships are manifold, including civil society organizations such as political parties, unions, and churches, as well as cultural actors like the print media, the radio, and the entertainment industry (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 40, 45f.). The press, in particular, represents the "most prominent and dynamic part" of cultural production according to Gramsci (1985, 389) and, therefore, can serve as an important element of struggles for hegemony. Gramsci, a journalist himself, did not comment extensively on the emerging new audio and visual media of his time – radio and cinema – but he did recognize their potential, despite his view that thorough ideological change can and should be reached through other means: "spoken communication is a means of ideological diffusion which has a rapidity, a field of action, and an emotional simultaneity far greater than written communication [...] but superficially, not in depth" (Gramsci 1985, 382f.).³⁹

39 Here, Gramsci appreciates that emotions are centrally transmitted through audio-visual media channels. In another part of his writings on tasks that organic intellectuals should ideally fulfill he explicitly emphasizes the importance emotions and feelings to win over people and, ultimately, to

Emblematic of the power of the media was the bourgeois press. Gramsci claims that the bourgeois media outlets, already before the ascent of Fascism in Italy, were crucial for the creation of public opinion, which is why diverse social forces strove to exercise control over them (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 46). “Public opinion is the political content of the public’s political will that can be dissentient; therefore, there is a struggle for the monopoly of the organs of public opinion” (Gramsci 2007, Q7§83, 213). Public opinion, for Gramsci, denotes the result of a process in which dominant social forces “tend to project and reinforce their own particular and narrow perspectives through an apparently democratic media discourse ostensibly targeted at a universal readership” (Hoare & Sperber, 47). Marcia Landy (2008) builds upon Gramscian concepts to analyze the present-day neo-liberal changes in economy and society as a ‘passive revolution’, that is, far-reaching top-down social change that mainly benefits the dominant political and capitalist layers of society. She argues that the media played an important role in this process. The manipulation of public opinion through cultural production does not only happen through journalistic means, though. Literary works such as novels with conservative content can also play their part (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 50f.).

Gramsci is, of course, not interested in the ways the media preserves or reinforces the position of privileged and dominant parts of society. He argues that journalism (and other types of cultural production) can be used for progressive purposes, as well. Journalism, in this sense, needs to be activist and pedagogical, what he calls *integral journalism*. This political kind of journalism “seeks not only to satisfy all the needs (of a given category) of its public, but also to create and develop these needs, to arouse its public and progressively enlarge it” (Gramsci 1985, 408). Hoare and Sperber (2016, 49) describe integral journalism as relying on a dialectic, in that journalistic practice should be based on the given aspirations within a certain populace to then create organized and enriched knowledge out of this, which is then again disseminated to the people. In short, such a journal-

create a historical bloc. However, he does not make a direct connection between these two areas, as the following quote shows. “The popular element ‘feels’ but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element ‘knows’ but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel. [...] The intellectual’s error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned (not only for knowledge in itself but also for the object of knowledge): in other words that the intellectual can be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) if distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in the particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated – i.e. knowledge. One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation. In the absence of such a nexus the relations between the intellectual and the people-nation are, or are reduced to, relationships of a purely bureaucratic and formal order; the intellectuals become a caste, or a priesthood [...] If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, between the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled, is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then can there take place an exchange of individual elements between the rulers and ruled, leaders and led, and can the shared life be realized which alone is a social force – with the creation of the ‘historical bloc’” (Gramsci 1971, 418).

ism should be integrated into the people's needs and wishes. Gramsci applies a similar argumentation to literary forms of cultural production. He envisages the ideal of activist and political *popular literature* as “sink[ing] its roots into the humus of popular culture as it is, with its tastes and tendencies and with its moral and intellectual world, even if it is backward and conventional” (Gramsci 1985, 102; cf. also Hoare & Sperber 2016, 50f.). These processes are related to Gramsci's concepts of ‘common sense’ and ‘good sense’, the latter of which being developed based on the former by intellectuals (here: journalists or producers of cultural products) and then broadly circulated. Gramsci's perspective stems from the early 20th century and thus does not include modern forms of communication technologies such as television or social media. Rusa Jeremic (2019), however, claims that Gramscian thinking also matters in the digital age, suggesting that digital activists play an important role as organic intellectuals in transformational processes through the means of social media.

The relevance of media for social movements

Existent literature has extensively covered the ways in which social movements make use of, appear in, and create their own media. Overviews of the field focus on the role mass media play in influencing public opinion and mobilizing new crowds (Gamson 2004), the strategies of using mass media for movement purposes, also across borders (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019), and how relatively new *information communication technologies* (ICTs) like social media impact social movements (Earl 2019). Right-wing movements also prominently use established media channels in their socio-political activism (Abrahamsen et al. 2020, 103–104; White 2018; Ellinas 2018; Hemmer 2016) and establish their own, ‘alternative’ media outlets (Holt 2019).

William A. Gamson (2004, 243) considers the mass media as the “master arena” of public discourse. Mass media have a huge reach and are thus “the major site of contests over meaning because all of the players in the policy process assume its pervasive influence” (Gamson 2004, 243). In this context, journalists act as gatekeepers, but also as political players themselves since they get to decide whom to quote or which frames to use to cover a specific topic (ibid.). In this context, Gamson discerns three goals that different framing strategies for mass media can or should achieve:

- (1) Increase the readiness to act collectively on the part of one's primary constituencies; (2) increase mobilization potential among bystanders who are possible supporters; and (3) neutralize and discredit the framing efforts of adversaries and rivals, keeping their potential supporters passive. (Gamson 2004, 250)

In their *strategic choice model*, Rohlinger and Corrigan-Brown (2019, 133) argue that “activists use different mediums for different purposes”. They do so depending on the target of communication, that is, whether they want to reach external mass audiences or internal and sympathetic audiences. Aside from the media target, the two scholars also consider the relative openness of the media system in a given state as important for the strategic decision-making of activists (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 133). Since this study deals with South Korea, a democratic political system with a relatively high degree

of freedom of press and expression, this latter category of openness is of minor importance for the analysis.

Activists normally target general interest media like newspapers, radio, and television news to reach large audiences in an effort to shape political debates and potentially mobilize individuals to action. They also increasingly use the digital sphere to achieve the same goals, for example, by creating websites and social media channels. These self-created, Internet-based communication technologies are attractive to activists since they keep control over how they frame their content (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 136f.). When activists use media to target their primary constituencies, they often do so to foster collective identity. This is important to stabilize participation, to guarantee continuity, and to create a sense of unity (Gamson 1991, 27; Klandermans 2004, 364; Snow & Corrigan-Brown 2015: 175).

Some obstacles come to the fore in the attempts to get media attention. For example, the access to mainstream media is not guaranteed. Especially in early phases of a movement, getting media attention is an intricate matter. Gamson points out that movements or individual activists first need to garner a certain 'standing' with journalists; however, they also compete over such standing with other, often adversarial movements (Gamson 2004, 251). In this context, Hilgartner and Bosk argue that a strategy akin to this study's 'dynamic continuity' may be conducive to prevail in competition: "In all public arenas, social problems that can be related to deep mythic themes or broad cultural preoccupations have a higher probability of competing successfully." (Hilgartner & Bosk 1988, 71, cited in Gamson 2004, 254). Media bias is another potential constraint. The discursive opportunity structure may be more favorable for activists if their socio-political views coincide with those of media outlets (Rohlinger et al. 2012, 53).⁴⁰ If a movement event is chosen to be reported on, this coverage validates the importance of movement demands. In the case, however, that no coverage can be achieved mobilization is in vain and tantamount to a nonevent (Gamson 2004, 252). Finally, negative media attention could pose problems to social movements. For instance, radical or violent tactics (or also unintended occurrences of this kind) during protest events could backfire and be met with journalistic problematization and, consequently, disapproval from the general public (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 139).

As already mentioned, such obstacles of general interest media can be circumvented by creating one's own media outlets or using ICTs. While early research on Internet usage for activism was skeptical as to its effectiveness, arguing that ICTs were not able to establish strong social ties necessary for sustained mobilization (Diani 2000; Tarrow 1998), recent literature unanimously acknowledges the importance of ICTs for social movements. Earl and Kimport (2011), for instance, argue that a huge benefit of online activism is its reduced costs for both organizers and participants and that, in order to engage in activism, there is less need for actually being physically together. ICTs can be driving forces to propel new movements into existence (e.g., the Arab Spring and #MeToo), to reach and

40 Rohlinger et al. (2012, 56), however, point out that "opposing movement organizations may get as much coverage in partisan venues as those groups with which partisan journalists are sympathetic", but, in fact, partisan journalists also cover opposing parties to vilify their positions.

mobilize people difficult to win over through traditional means by providing personalized content, and to diffuse frames, tactics, and insights on potential opportunities (Earl 2019, 295–297; for the last point cf. also Castells 2012; for personalization, see Bennett & Segerberg 2013). While recognizing the increasing importance of social media, scholars also point out that digitally informed activism is often combined with offline activities, using the digital sphere for connective action to link physical groups (Bennett & Segerberg 2013). Andrew Chadwick (2013) argues for hybridity, too. He claims that older and newer media are interdependent and influence each other and that these new relationships bring to the fore, and at the same time reshape power structures in media and politics.

Another aspect of – traditional *and* digital – media and communication strategies that needs to be mentioned concerns the focus on eminent, *charismatic* movement figures. Gamson (2004, 252f.) notes that commercial media outlets have a bias towards entertainment content, therefore preferring to cover what Gamson calls “celebrities” – charismatic movement spokespersons stemming from the movement leadership circle. Movements themselves may include this bias towards charismatic figures into their media strategy, promoting such ‘celebrities’ while making sure that they articulate frames in the movement’s interest. If charismatic media representation becomes a key strategic element of activism, one can speak of an institutionalization of charisma – or, to use the Weberian term: ‘routinization of charisma’ (Turner 2015, 351; Weber 1968).⁴¹ Originally, charisma is a theological term, which has found its way into sociology. It is, however, still relevant to the analysis of Christian contexts, especially of Christian charismatic renewal movements. In the context of industrialization and urbanization, “charisma is also associated with religious forms that are a response to personal alienation, isolation, and meaninglessness in the developed, industrial world” (Turner 2015, 351) – a feature that fostered the phenomenal growth of Christian, especially Protestant and evangelical churches in South Korea (Chung, Byung Joon 2014; Kim, Byung-suh 2006). Finally, charisma is also a common research topic in studies on right-wing or radical right movements and political parties. Right-wing charismatic leaders can be characterized by having a radical mission, being omnipresent, featuring an unquestioned leadership status while at the same time expressing the thoughts and speaking the language ‘of the people’, and by using Manichean demonization tactics (Eatwell 2018, 253–256). There is, however, also criticism of the concept of charisma, or rather its application on social sciences. Roger Eatwell (2015, 263f.), for example, finds fault with scholars who use unclear or overly stretched definitions of charisma. It is also questionable whether the charisma ascribed to certain people can be considered authentic at all when, for example, the term is just used to describe “the fleeting popularity of political leaders whose social appeal is constructed by campaigns in the media” (Turner 2015, 352).

41 The use of the term ‘routinization of charisma’ here should not be misunderstood as strictly following Weber’s concept of charisma. Weber uses the notion of routinization in the context of succession issues. He argues that charismatic leadership or authority is unstable, for disciples would disband after the demise or disappearance of a charismatic leader. This is why there is a need to institutionally guarantee succession or establish a system that upholds authority (Turner 2015, 250f.).

Charisma shall not figure prominently as a mechanism in this study's analysis. It is, however, a common denominator of the Gramscian perspectives on intellectuals who might as well be designated 'charismatic' and, as presented here, on the role old and new media play for the Korean anti-LGBT movement. The South Korean media landscape is very much polarized, being dominated by the three traditionally conservative newspapers *Chosun*, *JoongAng* and *Dong-a Ilbo* – a potentially fertile soil for news coverage on conservative movements. In general, however, mainstream media – with the exception of television – enjoy very little trust among the public (Kwak 2012, 121f.; data as of 2008). Online media and social media, which are commonly referred to as 'SNS' (Social Network Service) in Korea, have been on the rise in recent years. They are used for political communication by both political parties and civil society (Kwak 2012, 115–131; Kang, Seok et al. 2018; T'ak 2016), mobilizing young people into social movements (Kang, Jiyeon 2016; Yun & Chang 2011), creating counter(-hegemonic) publics, for instance, through the creation of citizen journalism platforms (Yoon, Kyong 2018, 290–292; Choe & Cho 2017; Kern & Nam 2009), as well as for thematic activism as in the case of the feminist movement (Jeong & Lee 2018). The ways old and new media serve conservative movements in Korea has not yet been investigated, though.

This study sets out to fill this gap by analyzing how the anti-LGBT movement uses media, whether they benefit from the goodwill of established conservative media outlets (which might figure as political actors themselves), and by asking the question in what way the movement leadership plays a crucial role as explicitly political and activist 'organic journalists' and influencers. This study will also cursorily look into other areas of cultural production to find out how the anti-LGBT movement deals with novels, movies, and media coverage that they deem worth fighting against.

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

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- 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-de-r-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.

Section 2: Making LGBT issues contentious: development, targets, and framing strategies of Korean anti-LGBT activism in the light of dynamic continuity and opposing desires

When I asked an anti-LGBT activist in one of my research interviews how exactly the Korean anti-LGBT movement approached its socio-political struggles, the activist quoted the *First Epistle to Timothy* (6:12) from the Bible: “Fight the good fight of faith.” It is not enough, however, to only bear good witness towards God, the activist added. “You also have to direct it to the world” (Interview no. 7).¹

At an event celebrating a court decision denying homosexual couples to get married in Korea, another anti-LGBT activist, Yi Su-jin, representative of the *School Parents' Association for Health and Family Affairs* (*kōn'gang-gwa kajōng-ŭl wihan hakpumo yōnhap*), expressed her strong opposition against any attempts at introducing same-sex marriage in Korea. She denounced the opponents' strategies by saying that “homosexuals are suing for the legalization of same-sex marriage with the image of the weak and the victim”, and added what she thinks the anti-LGBT movement should achieve: “It is important to win in the court, but we should also win the cultural war” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyōn 2016, June 8).

These two quotes reveal the broad visions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. The two activists argue that the fight they engage in is an explicitly religious one. Yet, this fight is not restricted to the religious realm in the strict sense. Rather, their messages also need to be carried to publics beyond the confines of Christianity, that is, into the secular world, into other parts of society. Yi Su-jin claims that concrete success stories, for example winning a lawsuit to prevent same-sex-marriage, are crucial in their overall activities. What is even more important, however, is to prevail in a full-fledged “cultural

1 Translations from the originally Korean quotes, either from research interviews or from articles cited, are my own, unless indicated differently. Since I use a lot of originally Korean textual material, I refrain from mentioning every time that the quotes presented in this study are my own translations.

war" (*munhwa chŏnjaeng*). This strong wording bespeaks the significance and urgency of their fight and indicates the readiness of the movement to drastic action. One may wonder, however, what this 'cultural war' is actually about. Is it the fight of the anti-LGBT movement versus advocates of LGBT rights? Is it the volition for Christianity to gain the upper hand over other religions and society at large? Is it a clash of cultures in the geopolitical sense (Huntington 1996)? Or is it comparable to the 'cultural wars' over gender, race, religion, and education ongoing in the United States since the 1980s (Hartman 2015)?

The purpose of this section is to provide a systematic overview of the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement – the development, concrete action forms, and framings of their activism – in order to gain a better understanding of the particular 'cultural war' that these parts of conservative Korean Protestantism engage in. The section addresses this study's main research question: why and how do parts of Korean Protestantism make homosexuality a contentious issue? The section will also offer partial answers to supplementary research questions: How did the activism change over time in terms of framing, action repertoires, and overall tactics? What roles do the historical and ideological backgrounds as well as the embeddedness in Protestantism play for the anti-LGBT movement? By using descriptive statistics to analyze the data collected through Protest Event Analysis (PEA), this section covers basic insights and general trends concerning Korean anti-LGBT activism. The analysis is complemented by further sources such as newspaper articles as well as data from qualitative interviews. This section thus sets the stage for the following analytical chapters and sub-case studies, which focus in detail on certain aspects and missing links derived from this section's analyses.

This section proffers three main arguments. First, I analyze what has above been referred to as 'cultural war' as *struggles over hegemony*. In his strategic political thinking, Antonio Gramsci laid the foundation for a broadly conceived understanding of power, which, he argues, can only be safely achieved when sustainably winning the hearts and minds of people. People have to be convinced of the rightfulness of rule and – more importantly – whole-heartedly support and champion the ideological positions promoted by those in power or those who strive to get there. The latter enter counter-hegemonic struggles, of which the lion's share consists of a 'war of position', that is, endeavors to change people's conscience, moral attitudes, and ideological thinking – or in Gramscian terminology, to change their *common sense*. This study shows that the Protestant Right actively engages in such a counter-hegemonic fight. The anti-LGBT movement has an explicitly political focus when, for instance, obstructing pro-LGBT legislation, and attacking politicians and government institutions that promote such laws. Conservative Protestant actors prove to be a considerable counter-hegemonic force, and, at that, an outspokenly political one. This distinct political agenda is backed by a 'war of position' strategy. As will be demonstrated, large parts of the movement's activities comprise communicative and educational action. Different framing strategies are employed depending on the publics addressed.

The second argument this section wants to make concerns the frames used by movement actors. Frames figure as the central means to persuade people of new ideas, to change their attitudes and behavior, and to mobilize them for collective action. A central observation of this study is that part of the framing efforts of the anti-LGBT movement are performed in a dynamic, yet continuous way. *Dynamic continuity*, as presented

in this section, involves three aspects. First, the redeployment of old frames that are combined with new elements in a *bricolage* fashion, most prominently the melding together of anti-communism with anti-LGBT stances. Second, we can observe framing contests and frame diffusion across ideological borders. Specifically, the anti-LGBT movement reframes elements originally used by its direct opponents, i.e., pro-LGBT forces, such as frames related to love and human rights. Diffusion also happens among ideologically compatible actors on a transnational scale. Third, on the level of *collective identity*, this section demonstrates how the anti-LGBT movement tries to resurrect hostility towards homosexuality as a central identity marker of current and potential adherents. Regarding the Christian context, anti-LGBT activists explicitly turn to religious resources by accentuating conservative interpretations of Biblical texts to vilify homosexuality – a topic that, as I will show, has for a long time been largely disregarded in Korean Christianity. The anti-LGBT movement does not only work towards such an identity shift within the Protestant community, though. In order to convince and mobilize other publics as well, the movement uses ‘secular’ frames that resonate with non-religious crowds. Put differently, in a Gramscian way, anti-LGBT activists attempt making hostility towards LGBT issues a part of the general *common sense* and, for practical activist purposes, have come to use it as a newly established master frame. I argue that these attempts at identity shift have proven successful for conservative Protestant believers, but less so vis-à-vis the general public.

The final line of argument in this section is related to *opposing desires* within the framing strategies of the anti-LGBT movement. This argument is connected with the previous one in the sense that the movement needs to juggle between different publics it wants to reach and between different framing strategies, especially in terms of counter-framing. When borrowing and redeploying frames from opponents on topics such as human rights, love, and victimhood, activists have to make sure that the overall image they propagate remains consistent within their particular system of ideas, norms, and beliefs. The opposing desires evoked in chapter 8 oscillate between religious and non-religious/‘secular’ framing strategies, between a radicalization of rhetoric while pretending to be moderate and non-violent, and between claims of victimhood on the one hand, and assertions that the anti-LGBT movement represents the societal majority and majoritarian opinions on the other. Such opposing, at times seemingly contradictory framing strategies also exist in socio-political fights over rights, privileges, and recognition – or the refusal to grant these rights to certain groups of people. It is a type of identity work that vilifies others, that creates new boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and designates the in-group as a special, ‘chosen’ force safeguarding what is ‘good’ and ‘sensible’. In so doing, the anti-LGBT movement creates an external enemy necessary to close the ranks internally (Han, Ch’ae-yun 2017). Ultimately, constructing external enemies serves to mobilize resistance also beyond Protestant confines, pursuing an agenda – a ‘cultural war’ – that, while having anti-LGBT activism at its core, aspires to greater influence and power in politics and society at large. As I demonstrate in this section, the mechanisms present in these hegemonic struggles contribute to many of the established findings in social scientific research on anti-LGBT political action worldwide. This section will also, however, discern some of the Korean particularities to be found in the action forms, and especially, in the framing strategies of the Protestant Right.

The section proceeds in four steps to approach the arguments just outlined. Chapter 5 encompasses an overview of how LGBT topics have been regarded and dealt with in Korean Protestantism. It starts off with an analysis of the conservative Christian newspaper *Kukmin Daily's* coverage on the topic of homosexuality to find that – unlike other parts of the world at that time – there was relative inattention to LGBT issues in the 1990s and early 2000s. From around 2003 onwards, the orientation of the newspaper's coverage changes, acquiring a more negative stance towards homosexuality. It is also in this phase that concrete activism against LGBT rights starts. Anti-LGBT activism, just as media coverage, intensifies on a large scale after 2013, gets consolidated and becomes a common feature of the Protestant Right's socio-political activities. After this historical overview, chapter 6 zooms into the concrete activities of the anti-LGBT movement, focusing on the topics of protest, the organizations and individuals targeted, and the action forms used in the respective contentious episodes. The movement's framing strategies are covered in chapters 7 and 8, analyzing core mechanisms such as attribution of threat, bricolage, radicalization, boundary work, identity shift, as well as several kinds of frame alignment processes. The section closes with a discussion of its research results and of the effectiveness of the movement's activities over the past years in chapter 9.

5. Development of the Korean anti-LGBT movement and media coverage critical of LGBT issues

This study argues that the Korean anti-LGBT movement acts as part of the Protestant Right, which in turn belongs to the conservative historical bloc of South Korea (cf. chapter 3.2). In contrast to similarly oriented conservative and Christian actors in other parts of the world, the topic of non-heterosexual sexual orientations and non-cis gender identities has only been ‘discovered’ at a relatively late point in time in Korea. For instance, organized collective action against LGBT rights emerged as early as in the 1970s in the United States, fighting against the decriminalization of same-sex practices and anti-discrimination initiatives, and later also taking action against the support for HIV/AIDS patients, and against attempts at legalizing same-sex marriage (Fejes 2008; Herman 1997). This – mostly Christian – anti-LGBT movement was motivated to get active in reaction to intensified LGBT rights activism that emerged around that time, notably in the years and decades after the initial spark of the Stonewall riots in 1969.¹

The LGBT movement in Korea was established from the mid-1990s onwards (Bong 2009). The forces opposing LGBT rights only emerged in the mid-2000s and really gained traction starting in 2013/2014, as this chapter will show. Queer people in South Korea did not have a Stonewall moment. Mobilization and socio-political organizing only started after the end of the repressive military regimes that had not left any space for minority rights whatsoever. And also after democratization, LGBT individuals, as well as their activism remained largely invisible in Korea, owing to fear of social repercussions in a societal environment marked by strong heteronormative familism (Johannemann 2021; cf. also Chang 2010). Writing in the early 2000s, gay activist and scholar Seo Dong-jin (2001, 67) states that in Korea, homosexuals “do not exist as a significant social reality.” Since then, this has definitely changed, with queer festivals and pride parades growing

1 The Stonewall riots emerged spontaneously on June 28, 1969, in the Stonewall Inn in New York's Christopher Street, fighting against police raids that were commonly performed at gay and lesbian bars in the 1960s. This uprising is considered a watershed moment for the US gay liberation movement (Carter 2004) and has also influenced and inspired LGBT movements elsewhere, e.g., in the Netherlands and in Belgium (Dupont 2021), Denmark (Shield 2020), Germany and elsewhere (Griffiths 2019).

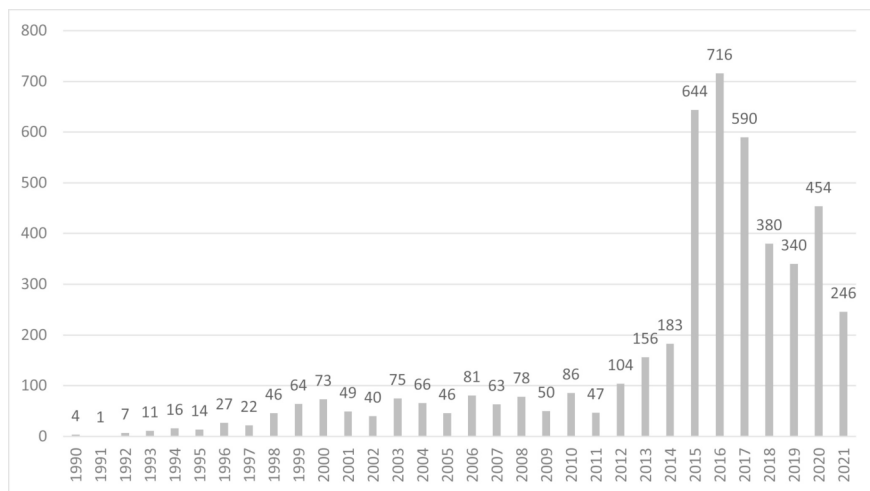
in size, with increasing media representation, and attempts at politically codifying LGBT rights on the national, regional, and local levels. As this chapter will show, the anti-LGBT movement emerged in reaction to such policy proposals and not so much as a direct reaction to pro-LGBT activism or LGBT visibility.

The organizations that would later engage in anti-LGBT activism did either not exist or were silent on this topic before the emergence of the actual movement. In order to get a glimpse into how conservative Protestantism dealt with LGBT issues prior to their politicization, the first part of this overview focuses on the *Kukmin Daily* news coverage on homosexuality in the 1990s and early 2000s. This newspaper was chosen due to its conservative Christian outlook and origins. It was founded in 1988 by Cho Yonggi, head pastor of *Yoido Full Gospel Church* (*yōido sunbogŭm kyohoe*), one of the largest Christian congregations worldwide, which is affiliated with the pentecostal *Assemblies of God*. The analysis covers all articles with the search term “homosexuality” (*tongsōngae*) for the 1990s. From the years 2000 onwards, selected articles are analyzed in detail.

5.1 Relative insignificance of anti-LGBT stances in the 1990s and early 2000s’ Christian-conservative media coverage

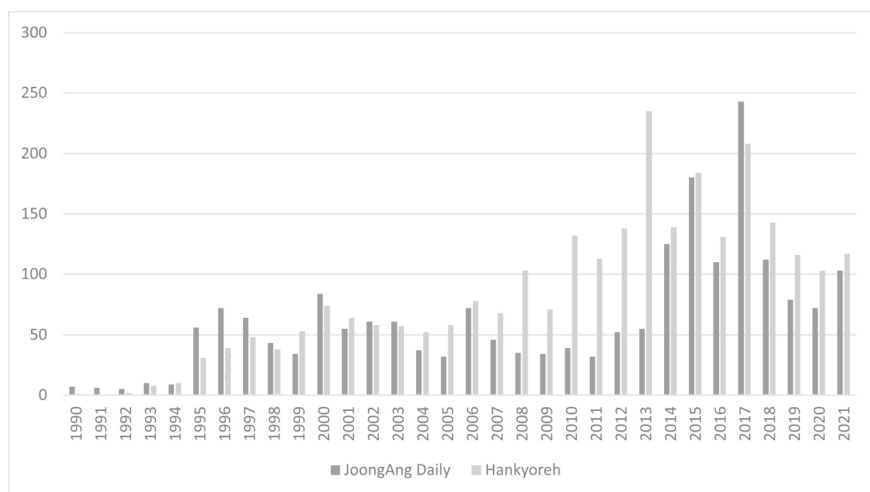
The Christian-conservative newspaper *Kukmin Daily* did not show much interest in the topic of homosexuality in the 1990s and early 2000s. Figure 1 displays minimal media attention to homosexuality from 1990 until 1995, with articles including the term ‘homosexuality’ ranging from the minimum of one article in the year 1991 to 16 in 1994. From 1996 on, there was a slight increase in the coverage of homosexuality, reaching a first minor peak in 2000 with 73 reports mentioning the topic. The numbers go down again afterwards, with 49 articles in 2001 and 40 pieces in 2002. This up-and-down pattern continues on a low level until 2012, when a slight rise in numbers began. The years 2015 till 2017 see an extreme surge and high numbers of articles mentioning homosexuality, reaching the absolute peak in 2016 with 716 articles. Numbers decrease again after 2016, but remain on a relatively high level, spanning from 454 articles in 2020 to 246 in the year 2021.

Figure 1: *Kukmin Daily* articles including the search term 'homosexuality'



By way of comparison, other major Korean newspapers show similar patterns, displaying very low coverage in the mid-early 1990s, low-medium numbers after that until the mid-late 2000s, and higher numbers of articles including the search term 'homosexuality' in the 2010s (cf. Figure 2). Compared to the conservative mainstream newspaper *JoongAng Daily*, the progressive newspaper *Hankyoreh* reports significantly more on homosexuality from 2007 until 2013, showing peaks in the years 2008, 2010, and 2013 – moments when the political discussions on proposals for a comprehensive anti-discrimination law were in full swing.

Figure 2: Media coverage of the conservative *JoongAng Daily* and the progressive *Hankyoreh* newspapers on homosexuality. Data provided by bigkinds.or.kr



It is noteworthy, though, is that the numbers of homosexuality-related news coverage of these two major newspapers were not nearly as high as in Kukmin Daily, especially in the years from 2015 onwards. One could assume that there must have been an immense increase of issues and events related to homosexuality that journalists felt necessary to be covered – at least from a Christian-conservative point of view. The extreme surge of articles suggests that this may not have been the only incentive for this intensified news coverage in Kukmin Daily. Probably, it was also an intentional editorial decision to funnel greater attention on homosexuality and related topics.

Kukmin Daily on homosexuality in the 1990s

In the 1990s, however, homosexuality was treated differently by Kukmin Daily journalists – both in terms of quantity and quality. The vast majority of the 212 articles that include the search term ‘homosexuality’ in this period only mention the topic once, like a side note. Only a few articles have homosexuality as their core subject. The fact, however, that homosexuality is mentioned only at the margins, without being problematized in most cases, is interesting in itself. As Table 2 shows, the highest number of article topics in the 1990s consists of book reports, movie reviews, and reports on foreign film festivals – most of which happen to also treat homosexuality as part of their artwork.² These reports are generally neutral and have the purpose of informing the readers of new publications and releases. The same is true for the second largest category, articles on events and occurrences abroad that are related to LGBT rights, and the category of ‘tabloid’ or general interest articles. Some of these news pieces, however, do include negative foci, for example, when treating sex scandals in several countries, the hostile stance of the US Republican Party on homosexuality (1992, August 15),³ and the debate on the *Don't ask, don't tell* policy of the United States military (multiple articles in 1993), which represented an ambivalent improvement for LGBT soldiers since it allowed them to serve in the army only as long as they do not open up about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. These negative points are not raised in order to either distance oneself from such occurrences or applaud certain actions. Rather, these articles simply pass on information about what is going on elsewhere. Choosing to report about these topics indicates a general interest, yet in most cases, the journalists do not ask what the respective event abroad could mean for Korea.

2 Some also have an explicit focus on homosexuality, e.g. a publication on 100 gay men in history (15 April 1996). One book review is even treats two new publication that openly criticizes the repressive heterosexism in South Korea (2 December 1994).

3 I refrain from providing full bibliographical information of the Kukmin Daily articles when only used for short reference, but rather give the dates or years of the articles. I do, however, give the full bibliographical information (also in the bibliography at the end of this study) whenever I directly quote from articles or relate their content in greater detail.

Table 2: Topics covered in Kukmin Daily articles on homosexuality, 1990–1999 (N=212)

Topic/tendency	Number of articles	Topic/tendency	Number of articles
Reports on books, movies, art, film festivals	76	'Tabloid' or general interest reporting	25
LGBT-related ongoing abroad	57	Articles on HIV/AIDS	15
<i>Of these: including a clear focus on religion</i>	12	Relating survey results including items on LGBT topics	6
Anti-LGBT stance	35	Noticeably neutral reporting on LGBT issues ^a	14
<i>Of these: including clearly Christian argumentation</i>	15	Pro-LGBT reporting	2
<i>Criticizing media for positive LGBT representation</i>	13		

Notes: The categories in this table only give a broad overview of the topics covered, as well as their respective tendency in terms of LGBT issues. The categories are not exclusive; overlaps exist. ^a Neutral in the sense that one could have expected negative reporting in a conservative Christian newspaper, e.g., when it comes to Biblical interpretations or LGBT issues that are treated negatively in other articles.

Some articles on foreign occurrences also cover achievements for LGBT rights, or attempts to attain them, such as discussions on introducing same-sex marriage in the US state of Hawai'i (1996, May 25). Other neutral if not positive articles include one on thriving gay businesses in the United States (1995, April 15), one that reports about human rights problems faced by gay men in Russia (1992, May 28), and a news story about hate crimes in the United States, which, one could say, almost shows compassion for the murder case of Matthew Shepard, a young man from Wyoming who was killed just because he was gay (1999, August 24). New developments in reproductive medicine were also treated, stating neutrally that also lesbian women (1999, January 11) and gay men (1999, February 22) could benefit from these developments. The 1990s' news coverage of Kukmin Daily includes two noteworthy articles that prove historical awareness of the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany. One article criticizes Japan for not accounting for its past misdeeds, comparing it to Germany, which was willing to compensate victims of the Nazi regime, among them homosexuals (1994, September 1). Another article states that Germany started the compensation of Holocaust victims, again explicitly mentioning homosexuals (1999, June 30). These latter two articles are particularly interesting when comparing the historical awareness expressed here with the rhetoric that would later be used in anti-LGBT activism. Some anti-LGBT organizations and activists, for example the anti-LGBT group *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (*kōnganghan sahoe-rŭl wihan kungmin yōndaē*) would – in an unabashed inversion of victims and perpetrators – refer to homosexuals as “Nazis” and “Gaystapo” (People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society 2017; cf. also chapter 8.3).

Considering the Christian-conservative outlook of Kukmin Daily, such rather neutral articles are even more surprising when it comes to religious topics. The first distinctly religious comment on news related to homosexuality is made in 1993. The report deals with a new medical treatment that may 'heal' people from their homosexuality. The article, however, states one should not attempt to change people's sexual orientation because one must not interfere with God's creation order, basically claiming that homosexuals are made this way by God (1993, December 28). This is also in stark contrast to how the anti-LGBT movement handles the topic in later years, presenting so-called 'conversion therapies' as both possible and desirable for LGBT people.

The 1990s have seen negative news coverage on homosexuality as well. Table 2 shows that a total of 35 articles have an explicitly anti-LGBT focus. Among these, 15 articles feature clearly religious anti-LGBT arguments. The first longer Kukmin Daily piece dealing with homosexuality as a central topic is entitled "What does the Bible say about same-sex lovers?". Interestingly, the author, Pastor An Chong-man, starts off by claiming that friendship between people of the same sex is not opposed by the Bible, illustrating this with the story about David and Jonathan in the Old Testament.⁴ Referring to seven Bible verses that are commonly regarded as condemning homosexuality, he describes same-sex activities as a sin and claims that "nowhere in the Bible there is any indication that God made certain men or women homosexual". Rather, homosexuality is presented as a choice by people who feel lonely and depressed (An, Chong-man 1994, August 6). Other articles have a similar orientation, criticizing homosexuality from a Christian perspective, two of which provide an interpretation of the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which the authors claim condemns same-sex activities (1996, July 11; 1998, October 16; 1999, October 14). A commentary from 1995 (February 25) is remarkable not so much for its citing of Bible verses that are allegedly hostile towards homosexuality, but due to its derogatory reference to newly forming, publicly visible homosexual groups that claim rights. In fact, this is the only instance that Kukmin Daily refers to Korean LGBT rights groups in the 1990s.

The majority of articles critical of homosexuality, however, is not confined to merely theological perspectives on homosexuality – even if involving emphatic statements of disapproval from a conservative Christian perspective. Rather, most articles relate to concrete occurrences and phenomena in Korea and abroad. Kukmin Daily reports about what seem to be matters of concern, for instance, the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In sum, 15 articles make a link between this health issue and homosexuality. In most of these reports, the latest Korean or worldwide infection statistics are reported, including in some cases surprisingly detailed information, such as the surnames of newly infected persons in Korea (e.g., 1992, May 28). One column comments on the newest HIV/AIDS statistics of the *World Health Organization* and describes the disease as a "punishment from heaven", since many of the infected people act in opposition to the Bible's prohibition of homo-

4 The David and Jonathan narrative in the Old Testament books 1 and 2 Samuel has also been interpreted, especially by queer theology scholars, as a portrayal of homosexual love, thus going beyond mere friendship. For an overview on this, see Harding 2016.

sexuality (cited in Kukmin Daily 1995, May 1).⁵ Another area of concern is how churches abroad treat LGBT issues. There are 12 articles in the 1990s with such a focus, for example dealing with the US *United Methodist Church's* rejection of ordaining homosexual persons (1996, May 3), the struggles within the Anglican Church on the same question of whether to accept homosexual priests (3 articles in 1998), and on the *World Council of Churches'* decision to set up a committee to mediate in the conflict between orthodox and western churches over women's ordination and homosexuality (1998, December 15). While most of the articles on HIV/AIDS and foreign churches' dealings with homosexuality go without outspoken hostility towards LGBT people, what becomes obvious is a diffuse sense of danger conveyed through journalistic means. Already the decision to cover these topics along with mentioning homosexuality as a potential threat to health or church structures is telling, as it may provoke negative reactions with the newspaper's readership. Yet, for the 1990s, it would be premature to regard this as an evidence for a clear-cut anti-LGBT editorial orientation of Kukmin Daily – mainly because there are so few distinctly anti-LGBT articles during that time.

The instances in which articles report about concrete actions of Christian organizations are especially noteworthy. These activities are precursors of the future actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Interestingly, most of these actions have a clear focus, that is, reproaching the media of reporting about allegedly 'unethical' sexualized contents including homosexuality. In 1996, for example, the *People's Association to Fight Media that Incite Obscenity and Violence* (*ŭmnan p'ongnyŏksŏng chojang meche taech'aek simin hyŏbŭihoe*), an association of 32 Protestant organizations, criticized a magazine and an advertising company for depicting homosexuality in an advertisement. They wrote an open letter deploring that the advertisement's content "not only greatly harms teenagers' emotions but also goes against social ethics" and threatened to boycott the magazine and company in question (cited in Kukmin Daily 1996, March 2). Another group that repeatedly criticized media and art contents is the *Christian Ethics Movement* (*kidokkyo yulli silch'ŏn undong*). In 1997, for instance, the organization issued a list of pop songs harmful to teenagers, decrying, among other things, the portrayal of homosexuality (1997, April 7). In another announcement, the Christian Ethics Movement criticizes the TV broadcasting service SBS for allegedly presenting Protestantism in a bad light and promoting, among other detrimental contents, homosexuality (1997, May 8). Kukmin Daily itself also chimes in in blaming other media. A 1995 article suggests that young people get attracted to homosexuality through the Internet and magazines and demands that "lewd chats" be prohibited in order to protect the youth from the "serious disease" of homosexuality and from "western sex culture" (Yi, T'ae-hŭi 1995, June 7). Over the course of the 1990s, Kukmin Daily accuses further media outlets and popular culture contents of depicting homosexuality, including TV dramas (1995, October 7) Korean television in general (1996, August 20), movies (1998, October 26), and a novel (1999, June 21).

5 An interesting aspect of this article, as well as of one other in that year (1995, February 25), is that it does not only use the modern Korean word for homosexuality (*tongsŏngae*), but also the rather outmoded term '*namsaek*', which literally means 'male color' and explicitly refers to male same-sex desires and activities. For an overview of the history of male homosexuality, including accounts on different terms used for this phenomenon, see Johannemann 2021.

It is striking that in these last-mentioned reviews, there is no explanation as to *why* homosexuality is regarded as a threat to young people and to the church as a whole. It seems that the authors are under the impression that is enough to just mention homosexuality, assuming that the readers will know about the alleged badness of homosexuality anyways. The Kukmin Daily reporting of the 1990s only provides one concrete example of concrete anti-LGBT counteraction. A short article from 1998 advertises for a video “indicating the problematic aspects of homosexuality”, including ‘experts’ such as Reverend Lee Jonah (*Yi Yo-na*), a “former homosexual” who would later become an important figure for the anti-LGBT movement – or more specifically, for the Korean ‘ex-gay’ movement. Arguing against homosexuality in the 30-minute documentary, another pastor is quoted as saying that “homosexuality not only destroys the humanity and sexual identity of men and women as made by God, but it also destroys the universal values of human society, that is, marriage, childbirth, and the family system” (cited in Yi, Kang-mi 1998, September 19).

Kukmin Daily reporting on homosexuality in the early 2000s: ongoing ambivalence

The early 2000s see a continuing ambivalent reporting on homosexuality. However, more articles treat homosexuality as a focal topic and the number of articles containing negative opinions on the issue tend to increase compared to the 1990s. This rising interest can be attributed to the first-ever coming out of a Korean celebrity, Hong Seok-cheon (*Hong Sŏk-chŏn*), a TV show presenter and actor, who as a result got shunned from entertainment business for several years. Hong was able to reestablish himself later and remains, to date, one of the most famous openly gay TV personalities in Korea.

Kukmin Daily reports about his coming out on 27 September 2000. In the following weeks, there is a noticeable increase in the number of articles on homosexuality, some of which demonstrate a clearly hostile attitude. One article, for example, quotes Protestant and Catholic organizations’ comments on the Hong case, claiming that homosexuality goes against the Biblical truth and that church groups have to get active to heal homosexuals (2000, October 3). Other articles show similar religious arguments, claiming that homosexuality is sinful behavior destroying the family (2000, October 10), that homosexuality is not part of God’s creation and a choice made due to sins (2000, October 16), and that one can overcome homosexuality through leading a life according to Jesus (2000, November 13; 2000, December 11). Some authors also make use of scientific research, which allegedly shows that homosexuality is not innate and emerges owing to environmental factors. This argument is then used to create a threat of the kind that homosexuality could spread like a disease – leading to peculiar commentaries like the following by a professor of *Hansei University*, an evangelical institution affiliated with Yoido Full Gospel Church: “One thing we should note is that there is a possibility that homosexuality becomes a trend. Psychiatrists say there is no risk of contagion, but just as homosexuality is prevalent in prisons and the military, there is a risk that homosexuality will spread due to increased demand” (cited in Kim, Sŏng-il 2000, November 18).

Neither the theological nor the scientific arguments presented in Kukmin Daily are consistent in the early 2000s. One article published shortly after Hong Seok-cheon’s coming out neutrally presents biological and psychological evidence, arguing that homosexu-

ality is not a mental illness, but an inborn preference (2000, October 10). From an exegetical perspective, Bible interpretations differ. For example, Kukmin Daily reports about an educational event in which professor Ch'ae Kyu-man from *Sungshin Women's University* says: "It is time for the Korean church to seriously review how to preach the gospel to homosexuals by stepping back from its position of demeaning homosexuals and driving them out of the church by saying that homosexuality is an unconditional sin" (cited in Ham, T'ae-gyōng 2002, April 27). Another article reviews a translated book ("20 Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch" by Tony Campolo) that criticizes, among other issues, the way especially evangelical churches treat homosexuals and reminds Christians that everybody should be treated with love (2001, May 3).

Even though Kukmin Daily presents a spectrum of theological positions on homosexuality in the early 2000s, the majority of articles includes a negative, opposing attitude against homosexuality. It is noteworthy, however, that positive views on homosexuality were able to get published. In later years, as I will show, Kukmin Daily's editorial orientation takes a clearly anti-LGBT direction. What is more, conflicts over Biblical interpretations, the correct way to treat LGBT people, and the directions of anti-LGBT activism will prove highly divisive within Protestantism (cf. chapter 12).

Besides the reactions to Hong Seok-cheon's coming out, two main topics continue to attract the attention of Kukmin Daily's reporting: the 'threat' of equal rights for homosexuals encroaching upon foreign churches, and the alleged danger of the Internet for the youth. Several articles raise concerns regarding certain developments abroad, in particular that of the *Presbyterian Church of the United States of America* (PCUSA), which had fierce and divisive debates on whether homosexuals could be ordained to priesthood (2000, April 10). Kukmin Daily describes this situation as "shocking", fearing that the confrontation between conservative and liberal fractions might lead to a split of the denomination (Kim Byōng-ch'ōl, 2001, June 19). It is noteworthy that, for the first time, Christian groups seem to feel compelled to take action against these developments, explicitly focusing on the topic of homosexuality. In the 1990s, statements from Christian groups had mentioned homosexuality only incidentally, in a row with other 'social ills'. In 2001, though, the *Hapdong* domination of the Presbyterian Church in Korea published a press statement urging its mother church, PCUSA, to explicitly refrain from allowing the ordination of homosexual priests (2001, October 9). It is with a sense of relief that Kukmin Daily journalist Kim Byōng-ch'ōl (2002, February 21) reports about the "victory for the conservatives", since PCUSA eventually rejected the ordination of homosexuals.

Kukmin Daily also relates how Christian organizations abroad address religious and political issues. The US *National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches* (*changnogyo chōn'guk hanin kyohoehyōp*), a conservative Korean-American denomination, for example, announced strong opposition against the ordination of homosexual priests (2001, July 14). Another article deals with Christian groups in California taking the lead in opposing a proposed legislation granting same-sex couples more rights (2002, January 19). Other churches like the *Roman Catholic Church* (2001, May 16) and the *US Evangelical Lutheran Church* (2001, August 22) are reported as reaffirming their doctrinal bans on homosexuality.

The Internet is another big concern in Kukmin Daily's reporting about homosexuality. One article refers to the establishment of a website for lesbian high school students as

“shocking” (Yi Hak-chun 2000, May 9). Another article regrets that the young generation is exposed to harmful Internet contents, resulting in them talking without shame about issues such as homosexuality and transsexuality (2002, December 20). This critical reporting on asserted dangers for the youth through exposure to ‘harmful’ LGBT contents – be it on the Internet or mediated through cultural products – may have paved the way for the Protestant Right’s harsh reaction to attempts at removing ‘homosexuality’ from the *Youth Protection Law*.

Relative insignificance and inconsistencies

The 1990s’ and early 2000s’ coverage of the conservative Christian newspaper Kukmin Daily on homosexuality is remarkable for at two reasons. First, considering its socio-politically conservative and conservative-Christian outlook, the relative insignificance of homosexuality leaps to the eye. This may be due to the fact that homosexuality in general was largely invisible back then, and also because LGBT rights activism has initially been rather reluctant and more community-oriented than geared towards policy changes (Bong 2009). Compared to the socio-political struggles around LGBT issues in other parts of the (western) world during that time, the news coverage of Kukmin Daily and other Korean mainstream media outlets is quite small. But Kukmin Daily does report about topics such as HIV/AIDS, and it also shows a keen interest in what is going on outside Korea in terms of LGBT rights, particularly concerning the situation of churches abroad – even if on a low quantitative level. There are certainly clearly negative articles on homosexuality, some of which feature a marked Christian argumentation – especially after the coming out of Hong Seok-cheon, an event that attracted a lot of attention. But overall, these distinctly negative articles only make up a relatively insignificant proportion. The vast majority of news coverage on homosexuality is rather neutral in this period.

Related to this aspect is the second surprising finding: Kukmin Daily’s inconsistent and partly contradictory reporting on homosexuality in this period. The critique of other media outlets outlined above is particularly interesting, since Kukmin Daily itself does not observe its own demands. Alongside the few distinctly anti-LGBT articles, there are many more which do not problematize artworks with LGBT content at all. On the contrary, book reviews written in a rather neutral style, for example, can in fact be regarded as promoting the very product. Moreover, Kukmin Daily even features articles advertising events that other articles would decry as ‘unethical’ or ‘sinful’, such as the *Seoul Queer Film Festival* (1998, October 31) and a festival on sexual culture including homosexuality (1998, November 21). Even when contemplating the possibility that these news pieces may be simply adopted from news agencies or form part of the commercialized section of the newspaper, the inconsistencies remain astonishing. Kukmin Daily apparently did not follow a clear-cut editorial line on homosexuality in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Of note is also that the politically active parts of Korean Protestantism did not engage in anti-LGBT actions during this period. The *Christian Council of Korea* (CCK, *han’guk kidokkyo ch’ong’yŏnhaphoe*, short: *hangich’ong*) in particular could have been expected to champion anti-LGBT positions. The CCK was established in 1989 as an association of conservative Protestant and evangelical denominations with the aim of actively exerting

influence in society and politics. The liberal governments under the presidents Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003) and Roh Moo-Hyun (2003–2008) faced fierce opposition from CCK (Cho, Kyuhoon 2014, 319). Had CCK promoted anti-LGBT activism, one can assume that it would have found support in the general public. Public opinion on homosexuality was not benevolent at that time in Korea, which is demonstrated in several Kukmin Daily articles reporting the results of surveys including items on homosexuality (see Table 2).⁶ Taking a Gramscian perspective, one could argue that anti-LGBT sentiments were not part of the active, politicizable *common sense* of people in general, and of the Korean Christian community – including its media outlets – in particular. As this study claims, and as the next subchapter shows, this reluctance and partly ambivalent stance regarding LGBT issues changes fundamentally towards clearly opposing pro-LGBT positions and increased activity in the years from 2003 onwards.

5.2 Early anti-LGBT activism: 2003–2012

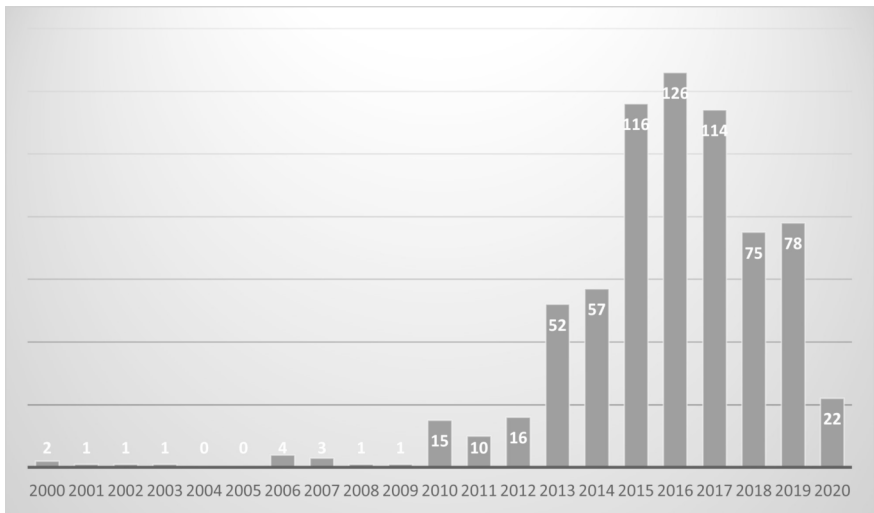
The period from the year 2003 onwards is marked by a new quality of anti-LGBT attitudes and actions. Larger parts of Korean Protestantism react to concrete LGBT-related phenomena and get mobilized. First central actors of the anti-LGBT movement emerge, and first successful interventions take place. The core issues of contention in the years until 2012 consist of proposals for laws or ordinances that promote LGBT rights: the deletion of the category ‘homosexuality’ from the list of harmful contents in the *Youth Protection Act* in 2003, the change of the family registration system in favor of trans people in 2006, anti-discrimination laws in 2007 and 2010, the attempted amendment of the *Military Criminal Code* in relation to homosexual acts in 2010/2011, and the *Seoul City Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2011/2012 being the most important ones. Alongside the focus on legislation, television programs with LGBT content also got criticized a lot by conservative Protestant groups.

One measure to recognize heightened interest in a socio-political topic is to look at collective action around this issue. The Protest Event Analysis data, however, does not show many anti-LGBT protest events in the period 2003–2012 (cf. Figure 3). Even though Kukmin Daily did not report about concrete protest events – which could be due to media bias – the significance of the occurrences just mentioned becomes apparent when taking into account also the overall coverage of Kukmin Daily and press statements from

6 One 1996 opinion survey reported by Kukmin Daily, for example, shows that 63% of young Christians in Korea have a negative opinion about homosexuality. 9% of the interviewed persons would end a friendship if their friend turned out to be homosexual. The statistical validity of this study is questionable, though, since only 371 people participated in it (1996, March 7). The World Values Survey (WVS) confirms the negative attitudes South Koreans held on homosexuality in the 1990s and early 2000s. Respondents saying that homosexuality is ‘never justifiable’ made up 89.3% in 1990, 66.6% in 1996, and 47.6% in 2005 (with answer options ranging from 1 [‘never justifiable’] to 10 [‘always justifiable’]); the numbers given here only covered the category 1, but the cumulated percentages of people leaning to a negative attitude towards homosexuality (i.e., categories 1–5) are actually higher; note: the WVS data for South Korea in 1990 only offers three answer options, ‘never justifiable’, ‘always justifiable’, and ‘6’, an intermediate category). Cf. Inglehart et al. 2022.

the *Korean Association of Church Communication* (KACC, *han'guk kyohoe òllonhoe*), an important mouthpiece of the Protestant Right. The number of protest events increases slightly in the years 2010 until 2012, to then rise exponentially, reaching a peak with 126 protest events in 2016. There are less protest events in 2018 and 2019, yet remaining on a relatively high level. This quantitative development mirrors the curve of media attention seen above (Figures 1 and 2). I will address the reasons for the sharp increase of movement activities from 2013 in the following subchapter.

Figure 3: Anti-LGBT protest events per year.



Protest Event Analysis (PEA) data from Kukmin Daily and press releases of the Korean Association of Church Communication. Note: data for the year 2020 only from January until the end of April

Removal of the classification of homosexuality as “harmful and obscene” from the Youth Protection Act

On 2 April 2003, the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea* (NHRCK, *kukka in'gwòn wi-wònho*) issued a recommendation to remove the classification of homosexuality as “obscene and harmful” from the Youth Protection Act, which had been passed in this form in 1997. The following day, the *Youth Protection Committee* adopted NHRCK’s resolution and, in turn, sent its decision to the National Assembly and to further responsible government agencies to revise the respective law and charters accordingly. Prior to this decision, LGBT rights groups had lobbied for this amendment of the law, which had been restricting the operation of their websites with content on LGBT rights and community service. The NHRCK concluded that banning such web content represented discrimination against homosexuals, being in “violation of Article 10 (right to pursue happiness), Article 11 (right to equality) and Article 21 (freedom of expression) of the Constitution” (NHRCK 2003).

The reactions from Christian organizations and media outlets were immediate and harsh. Kukmin Daily dedicated its first-ever editorial on homosexuality to this topic (2003, April 4) and published a cascade of articles criticizing the decision of the Youth Protection Committee and, in particular, the resolution of the NHRCK (2003, April 12; April 26). The arguments presented range from instigating the fear that now, homosexuality would spread due to increased media coverage and exposure through the Internet, that the revision would go against the Biblical teaching of the sinfulness of homosexuality (2003, April 3), and that the protection of young people should be more important than the rights of homosexuals (2003, April 4). The Christian Council of Korea also got involved in the contention using drastic vocabulary in a press release rejecting the changed Youth Protection Act, claiming that homosexuality “is a clear violation of Christian ethics and morality” and would “destroy the human social order”. The CCK adds that “it is very dangerous to destroy the order of the majority for the sake of the happiness of a minority” (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2003, April 7).

LGBT rights groups, in contrast, celebrated the decision of the NHRCK and the Youth Protection Commission as the first major success of their political advocacy work. The abolishment of the classification of homosexuality as a “socially unacceptable act” was finally enacted in April 2004 (Bong 2008). Human rights organizations were, however, very much aware of the backlash that was forming in the conservative Protestant camp and of the danger emanating from this new development. This awareness even spread to foreign supporters of LGBT rights in Korea. The US-based human rights organization *OutRight International*, for instance, lamented the “sharp anti-gay rhetoric” by conservative Christian groups, pointing out Kukmin Daily’s eminent role in this campaign. The group also criticized that the Youth Protection Committee and NHRCK came under fire for their decisions (OutRight International 2003).

In fact, it seems that the controversy around the Youth Protection Act was the tipping point for Kukmin Daily in terms of anti-LGBT coverage. Since 2003, the newspaper has been showing a clear editorial orientation of decrying anything deemed to be in favor of LGBT rights. Kukmin Daily started dedicating editorials (*sasöl*) to LGBT topics (15 in total in the period 2003–2012), thus turning to distinctly negative opinion pieces rather than just quoting others’ oppositional sentiments. The LGBT-related news coverage has become more consistent, but not necessarily more constant. As shown above in Figure 1, the aggregate numbers of Kukmin Daily articles on homosexuality per year in the 2000s were on a higher average level than in the 1990s. Yet, even though the editorial direction became unambiguously negative towards LGBT issues, the reporting remained sporadic – definitely so in comparison to the immense increase starting in 2013 with hundreds of articles each year. What can be said for the time after 2003 is that Kukmin Daily turns into an important player in the journalistically mediated struggles over LGBT rights. It informs about its stance on the topic, provides arguments, discredits adversarial positions and organizations, and potentially persuades readers to adopt, and act upon these views. In 2003, Kukmin Daily initiates what Gramsci would call *integral journalism*, that is, a kind of media practice that has an activist as well as a pedagogical purpose. Kukmin Daily can be described as an early agenda setter within the Protestant Right’s emerging anti-LGBT activities – way before any organized and truly systematic Korean anti-LGBT

movement sees the light of day. Chapter 11 will further elaborate on this particularly journalistic activism of the anti-LGBT movement.

Kukmin Daily reports on, and problematizes several further issues in the years following the contentious episode on the Youth Protection Act – issues that increasingly gain attention from conservative Protestant organizations in general. This study will not deal with each of these contentious topics in detail, but describe the conflicts around the *Anti-Discrimination Law* (*ch'abyŏl kŭmjibŏp*) as the most important aspect for the emergence of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.⁷ In fact, several of the people interviewed for this study, both those with pro-LGBT attitudes (interviews 1, 13, 14) and anti-LGBT stances (interviews 23, 31) singled out the controversy over the Anti-Discrimination Law proposal in 2007 as the initial spark of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

The Anti-Discrimination Law as initial spark of the anti-LGBT movement

Before Roh Moo-hyun (*No Mu-hyŏn*) was elected president in 2002, one of his policy pledges was to introduce a comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Law. After the election, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, which had been established by his predecessor Kim Dae-Jung (*Kim Tae-jung*) in 2001 (by the way, including an official mandate to protect sexual minorities – which had gone virtually unnoticed by conservative Protestant groups for several years⁸) set up an expert committee that presented a draft bill in 2004. After supplementary consultations with relevant ministries and also collecting opinions from the general public, the NHCRK finalized the draft in 2006, which was finally announced for legislation by the Ministry of Justice in early October 2007 (Kim, Chi-hye 2020). The proposed law was meant to substantiate the already existing *NHRCK Act* and provided protection from discrimination on the basis of 20 categories, among them gender, disability, national origin, religion – and sexual orientation.

The latter category in particular drew strong resistance from Protestant groups.⁹ In March 2007, Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, a physics professor of Christian faith at Busan University, took the lead in gathering 211 professors from 29 universities who signed a statement demanding the removal of the category 'sexual orientation' from the proposed Anti-Discrimination Law (Sin-Yun, Tong-uk 2007, November 8). The statement claimed that the

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- 7 Some of these topics are treated elsewhere in this study, e.g., the framing that presents homosexuals as a threat to the Korean military and national security in chapter 7.2, and the role of media in chapter 11. For the case of the *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance*, refer to Ol Teun Kim (2021) who provides a detailed argumentative discourse analysis of the policy making processes surrounding this successful legislation – one of the few successful pro-LGBT law proposals beyond the revision of the Youth Protection Act in 2003/2004.
 - 8 Article 2 of the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act* includes the term 'sexual orientation' as part of a list of grounds upon which discrimination must not be made. This provision is part of the section "Definitions" of the *NHRCK Act*, concretely defining the term "discriminatory act violating the equal right" (*NHRCK Act* 2016).
 - 9 In his analysis of the socio-political discourse around anti-discrimination legislation in Korea, Jong-woo Kim (2019) confirms this observation: he identifies the discourse conflict over 'sexual orientation' as the main element of veto powers in their – until now – successful attempts at preventing the introduction of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law on the national level.

rights of sexual minorities were overly considered while disregarding the alleged negative effect this law would have on teenagers and society at large. The signatory professors continued writing that the anti-discrimination law, which they frame as a single-focus act, that is, the “law to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals” (*tongsöngae ch’abyöl kŭmjiböp*), “would overly recognize the abnormal and unethical homosexuality as normal and force this perception upon people”. Moreover, they expected that, as a result, “pathological social phenomena such as the decrease in marriage rate, the low birth rate, and the spread of AIDS would be further aggravated” (cited in KACC 2007, March 9). The group of professors around Kil Wön-p’yöng also sent faxes to relevant government organizations to protest against the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’ into the Anti-Discrimination Law. Kil was an important figure in this particular fight against LGBT rights – and he would become one of the most important activists of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in the long run, organizing, and participating in anti-LGBT protest events and providing ever new arguments against equal treatment of LGBT people. In an article presenting “Christian voices” on the contended Anti-Discrimination Law proposal, Kukmin Ilbo quotes Kil Wön-p’yöng as follows: “If the law passes, homosexuality will have to be taught as normal at schools and we [i.e., Christian groups] will not anymore be able to counsel or even just recommend that homosexuality should be avoided” (cited in Chön, Pyöng-sön 2007, October 12). Interestingly, Kil Wön-p’yöng had started off his socio-political activism in a completely different area. He and many of his fellow professors belonged to the *Scientists’ Assembly Opposing Embryonic Cloning* (*pea pokche-rül pandaehanün kwahakcha moim*) before starting the fight against LGBT issues.¹⁰

Protestant groups joined this protest against the Anti-Discrimination Law as well. The Protestant organizations *Korea National Prayer Breakfast*, *Holy City Movement*, and the *Korean-Japanese Union of Christian Lawmakers* started a fax-sending campaign against the Ministry of Justice in October 2007. The *Christian Council of Korea* held a press conference and threatened to start a campaign to collect 10 million signatures should the clause including the term ‘sexual orientation’ not be deleted from the law proposal. In this context, these conservative Protestant organizations formed the first explicitly anti-LGBT group, the *Parliamentary Missionary Association against the Law Proposal Prohibiting Discrimination against Homosexuality* (*tongsöngae ch’abyöl kŭmji pöban chöji üihoe sön’gyo yönhap*). The progressive newspaper *Hankyoreh* reported that the Internet was full of comments and petitions against, but also in favor of including the category ‘sexual orientation’ into the proposed legislation (Shin-Yun, Dong-uk 2007, November 8; Yi, Söng-gyu 2007, October 22).

Pro-LGBT rights activists, some of which had taken part in devising the draft of the Anti-Discrimination Law, did not anticipate such a forceful opposition. Han Ch’ae-yun, an LGBT rights activist, argued that the upcoming presidential election in late 2007 also played a role in the fierce contention over the Anti-Discrimination Law. According to Han, the anti-LGBT protests indirectly supported the conservative presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak (*Yi Myöng-bak*). On the other hand, the liberal government and po-

10 In fact, among the earliest texts against the Anti-Discrimination Law, one can be found on their website, e.g., listing problems that would arise if the law got passed. Cf. Scientists’ Assembly Opposing Embryonic Cloning (2007, September 7).

litical camp of President Roh Moo-hyun (which would actually be voted out of office) wanted to safeguard its legacy in the human rights field, also by making compromises that would, eventually, erode the proposed bill. As a result, the Ministry of Justice discarded seven of the original 20 criteria for anti-discrimination, among them 'sexual orientation', also owing to pressure from the business world (Poore 2007).¹¹ Conservative Protestant groups welcomed this decision, but still found fault with the revised draft bill. The draft still included, added to the reduced list of categories, the term 'and other reasons', which they feared could allow the government to reintroduce 'sexual orientation' again through the backdoor. Twenty church leaders held a press conference at the National Assembly to deplore this fact and demanded its deletion (Yu, Yöng-dae 2007, December 13). In the end, the whole legislative process was dismissed in 2008.

The failure of the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2007 and 2008 was the first big success of conservative Protestant groups in terms of preventing legislation in favor of LGBT rights. The story does not end here. Quite to the contrary, I argue that it is the actual starting point of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. From this critical juncture onwards, the Protestant Right increasingly realized the potential of the topic. By virtue of the conflict over the Anti-Discrimination Law, they came to perceive that they have political clout and that LGBT-related topics are fitting and easily politicizable ones for conservative Christian groups. As I have shown before, the overall level of activism remains relatively small until 2013 (cf. Figure 3). However, the topics targeted by conservative Protestant actors have diversified from 2007, the frames used for problematization increased, as did the number of organizational actors involved in contentious episodes (for the latter aspect, cf. chapter 10). At the same time, a paradox comes to the fore here: the very law that was supposed to eliminate discrimination of (among others) LGBT people has, instead, instilled and increased hostility and discriminatory behavior, predominantly emanating from the Korean Protestant Right.

Diversification and consolidation of anti-LGBT activism, 2010–2012

Conservative Protestant actors showed their hostility towards the idea of equal rights for LGBT people on many occasions in the years after the first attempt at a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. The PEA data reveals overall 51 protest events for the years 2003–2012. The main topics that these events treated are the following, given in the order of their first occurrences: the revision of the family registry system to also allow trans people to register (3 times, 2006), repeated attempts at passing an anti-discrimination law including a clause for sexual minorities (12 times, 2007 and 2010), discussions about removing the prohibition of male same-sex acts from the *Military Criminal Code* (6 times, 2010 and 2011), critiques of TV programs with LGBT content (9 times, 2010–2012), and the *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* (14 times, 2011 and 2012) (cf. also Table 3).

After the events in 2007, the two following years remained rather quiet concerning anti-LGBT activism. The year 2010, however, saw a sharp increase in protest activities. First and foremost, protests were directed against the second attempt at introducing a

11 The other six dropped categories were: national origin, language, educational background, medical history, family situation, and criminal history.

comprehensive anti-discrimination law. Even though the Lee Myung-bak government belonged to the conservative camp, the Ministry of Justice restarted the consultation process on the Anti-Discrimination Law, which again was met with fierce resistance from Protestant anti-LGBT groups. This time, the protests against the Anti-Discrimination Law became more frequent: the PEA data exhibits three protest events in 2007 and eight in 2010. In 2013, there were even 21 protest events against the third attempt at introducing such a bill. The arguments used against the draft bill are pretty much the same as in 2007, most prominently claiming that those who oppose homosexuality and call it, according to their faith, 'sinful' would be criminalized (Lee, Wondong 2021, 85f.).

What is notable for the period after 2010 until 2012 is not only the slight increase in numbers of protests and the diversification of topics, but also that protest forms gain more variety and that concrete protests, in the narrow sense, start to emerge. For example, the first-ever 'forum' against the Anti-Discrimination Law is held (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2010, October 29), including lectures of people that are presented as experts. Such fora would become a common attribute of anti-LGBT activism in the following years. They are significant, since they are often held at the prestigious National Assembly premises, which is only possible if actively approved by one or more members of parliament. Political involvement also starts to stretch to the higher levels. In 2010, the CCK leader, Yi Kwang-sŏn, met with Prime Minister Kim Hwang-sik to deplore the newly proposed anti-discrimination bill and particularly the incorporation of the homosexuality clause, threatening that if the governing block does not delete this, the Protestant churches would fight against the bill as if it was a "question of death and life" (*sasaenggyŏldan*). The prime minister promised that he would discuss the "problem of homosexuality" with the committees of the ruling conservative party (*Grand National Party, Hannaradang*) (cited in Ham, T'aegyŏng 2010, October 22).

Also in 2010, the first actual protests in the narrow sense took place, reinforcing the collective dimension of anti-LGBT activism. On October 28, Protestant groups staged a protest in front of the NHRCK headquarters in Seoul, criticizing the NHRCK's declaration that article 92(6) of the *Military Criminal Code* may be unconstitutional because it discriminates against homosexuals. In 1962, the military regime had introduced into the code an article penalizing sex between men – making it, until today, the only explicitly anti-gay piece of legislation in South Korea, which has, however not been enforced until recently.¹² It was also in this context that two of longest standing anti-LGBT social movement organizations appeared for the first time in the Kukmin Daily coverage,

12 In another article, I (Johannemann 2021, 95) have summarized the recent developments in this field: "From 2014 onwards, around 50 male soldiers have fallen victim to article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code, i.e. they were either investigated by the military police or even brought to trial. Article 96(6) criminalizes anal sex and other "indecent acts" by imprisonment of up to two years, even if the sexual relationship is consensual. The present version of the law does not specify the gender of the 'offenders', but so far only male soldiers have been prosecuted. The Military Criminal Code was revised in 2009. Before then, the official English translation for the punishable act was 'sodomy'; the Korean word, however, was *kyegan*, a derogative term for male same-sex practice, literally meaning 'sex between chickens'. The prosecution of men who (were said to have) had sex with other men intensified significantly in 2017, when 29 men were investigated, one of which was indicted for a prison sentence. The South Korean military's 'Examination Criteria for Conscript

the *Esther Prayer Movement* (*esŭdŏ kido undong*) and the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* (*parŭn sŏngmunhwa-rŭl wihan kungmin yŏnhap*) (Yu Yŏng-dae 2010, October 28). On 16 November 2010, the CCK submitted a petition with 2233 signatures to the *Constitutional Court*, demanding not to allow gay men to serve in the army (Yu Yŏng-dae 2010, November 16). A few months later, Protestant groups held a press conference in front of the Constitutional Court applauding its decision to uphold the ban of same-sex conduct in the military (Yu Yŏng-dae 2011, March 31).¹³ As I will show in my analysis of the frames used by the anti-LGBT movement in chapter 7.2, the topic of LGBT people in the army plays an important role in the activists' framing efforts.

Overall, the action form that was used most in the years 2003–2012 was the publication of press statements or press conferences, coming up 40 times in the PEA dataset, with a majority of instances in the years 2010–2012 (30 times).¹⁴ Petitions and signature campaigns constitute the second largest number with 10 times, followed by actual protests and rallies occurring 8 times. Other action forms like educational events (such as the 'forum' mentioned above), meetings with politicians, prayer meetings, or fax and e-mail sending campaigns only appear once or twice in this period. Press statements are a relatively simple and low-cost means to make oneself heard. This action form is, however, not directly conducive to mobilizing sympathizers and the general public for collective action. Petitions and concrete rallies are more likely to accomplish this task, since they generate publicity, but also show that a considerable number of people have already joined the fight. In general, the early years of anti-LGBT activism are distinguished by relatively low levels of participation. This changes already in the context of the struggles around the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance, which marks the transition of the Korean anti-LGBT movement towards a spike in activity, participation, and increased institutionalization. I argue that already before this point, one can call anti-LGBT activism a movement, definitely from 2007 onwards, since diverse actors from within conservative Protestantism gather to fight against a concrete topic in a continuous and organized manner.

The Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance was proposed by the progressive city government under Mayor Park Won-soon (*Pak Wŏn-sun*) to ensure students' dignity and freedom, including guidelines for the protection against discrimination at schools – also on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Conservative Protestant organizations reacted with fiery disapproval, collecting signatures (2011, September 22), issuing statements with 231 signatory civil society groups (2012, January 26) and dismissive

Physical Examination' include an article on "sexual identity disorder" and 'sexual preference disorder'" (cf. also Center for Military Human Rights 2019, 1f.).

13 The Constitutional Court upheld the ban of same-sex conduct in the Military Criminal Court four times, in 2001, 2011, 2016, and 2023. In April 2022, however, the Supreme Court overturned another court's verdict of two soldiers who were charged with having consensual sex outside their base. The Court ruled that article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code does not apply to consensual acts outside the army context (Choe, Sang-Hun 2022, April 21).

14 The number of press statements in the PEA dataset has a certain bias, since it includes data from *Kukmin Daily* and the Korean Association of Church Communication (KACC). The KACC *only* publishes press statements, which means that they can be said to be overrepresented in the dataset when counting them as an action form.

newspaper editorials (e.g., 2011, October 19), appealing to church members to get active by sending faxes and e-mails to the responsible politicians, threatening to file a lawsuit (2011, December 19), holding a prayer meeting against the ordinance (2012, January 31), and by staging protests with up to 800 participants (2012, January 5). The ordinance was passed including the provisions for LGBT students despite this rather significant amount of counter-protest. Ol Teun Kim (2021) argues in his dissertation that the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance was confirmed under such inhospitable circumstances due to the powerful impact of counter-heteronormative storylines, effective tactics of the pro-LGBT discourse coalition, and favorable discursive opportunity structures in 2011–2012.

Despite such beneficial circumstances, such as a liberal government at the local level in Seoul, many attempts at reaching equality for LGBT people failed in the following years, owing to the intense resistance of the anti-LGBT movement after 2012. The next subchapter will give an overview of the wide array of topics tackled by this anti-emancipatory activism to further elaborate on the development during – what one might call – the ‘boom’ period of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

5.3 Peak of activism and routinization of the anti-LGBT movement, 2013 onwards

The years 2013 and 2014 mark a steep increase in anti-LGBT protest events, numbers that are only topped by the years after that (cf. Figure 3). Of all protest events that the PEA dataset includes, the vast majority, 92.4% (640 out of 693) lie in the period 2013–2020. Given this huge number of events as well as the abundance of topics and actors, this section will only provide a broad overview and the general trends of this period. Detailed analyses of selected aspects will be offered in chapters 7–12. Before delving into the general overview, I will consider the question as to why there was such a surge in anti-LGBT activism in 2013 and 2014.

I argue that the intensified activism can be attributed to five main occurrences, which reinforced resistance from the Protestant Right. Two occurrences concern attempts at guaranteeing and codifying LGBT rights in legislative processes, that is, the third anti-discrimination bill proposal in 2013 and the *Seoul Human Rights Charter* in 2014. Another controversy revolves around same-sex marriage, however, without any proposed law. Contention also emerged in reaction to a church-internal event, the *World Council of Churches’* (WCC) general assembly in Busan 2013. Finally, the anti-LGBT movement mobilized against the *Queer Culture Festivals* in Seoul and Taegu in 2014, thus for the first time directly attacking pro-LGBT events and groups.

Anti-discrimination law, 2013

In March 2013, three policy proposals for anti-discrimination bills gained attention from the Protestant Right. One bill had been introduced into the National Assembly by the minor *United Progressive Party’s* (*t’onghap chinbodang*) representative Kim Chae-yŏn in November 2012. Two further proposals followed in February 2013, initiated by deputies from the main oppositional *Democratic United Party* (*minju t’onghaptang*), receiving sup-

port from more than 70 lawmakers (Yi, Yong-p'il 2013, March 27). The reaction from Protestant Right groups was swift and proved effective. The first press statement calling attention to the renewed introduction of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law was issued by the Korean Association of Church Communication on March 6, calling the bill a "bad" or "evil" law (*akpöp*) (KACC 2013, March 6). Just six weeks later, all three law proposals were withdrawn, which was welcomed by Protestant leaders, claiming that by achieving this retraction "the Korean churches rescued the 'morality of the Republic of Korea'" (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 22).

In the meantime, the Protestant Right mobilized opposition on several fronts. Opinion pieces in *Kukmin Daily*, for example, presented the anti-discrimination law as in fact promoting "reverse discrimination" (*yöckch'abyöl*) (*Kukmin Daily* 2013, March 13), as infringing the freedoms of expression and religion for the sake of the rights of homosexuals and thereby allegedly instigating homosexuality (So Kang-sök 2013, March 18). It is interesting how these articles frame the anti-discrimination law, labeling it as a "homosexuality law" (*tongsöngaeböpp*) (*ibid.*), rendering the term 'anti-discrimination law' in quotation marks throughout – suggesting that the law creates new discrimination, namely, against Christians – and insisting that the bill promotes same-sex marriage (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 22). Apart from media framing, the anti-LGBT movement also took to the streets, staging protests in front of the National Assembly and the headquarters of the Democratic Party to sustain a full-fledged campaign, which had been started by Protestant church leaders (*Kukmin Daily* 2013, March 18). Part of this campaign were also petition movements promoted by an ad-hoc coalition of conservative Protestant groups, the *People's Solidarity Against the Anti-Discrimination Law* (*ch'abyöl kŭmjiböpp pandae kungmin yöndae*). The coalition collected more than 100,000 signatures on paper (yet, having the enormous goal of 10 million signatures) and reached 95,000 comments on a ministerial online notice board, of which it claimed 90% were against the Anti-Discrimination Law (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 9). Other actions of the coalition included the production and distribution of 40,000 leaflets featuring, among others, a list of all the members of parliament who supported one of the proposed bills and posting an ad in the major newspaper *JoongAng Daily* with the deliberately suggestive heading "Confessions of a homosexual – secrets about homosexuality that homosexuals do not tell you" (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, March 28). In general, many Protestant groups got mobilized in this particular fight against the Anti-Discrimination Law, including more than 3,000 churches from the city of Inch'ön alone, which officially voiced their disapproval of the policy (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 17).

The resistance was massive and even politicians from the Democratic Party who had introduced the bill in the first place succumbed to the pressure. The member of parliament Kim Han-gil, for example, was quick to respond to the counter-activism by claiming that he was against discrimination, while at the same time distancing himself from homosexuals in a press release from March 19: "I personally disagree with homosexuality, and I oppose the promotion and spread of homosexuality" (cited in Yi, Yong-p'il 2013, March 27). The Protestant Right took pride in yet another successful fight, becoming apparent in a *Kukmin Daily* article which features a table including all the major actions of Protestant groups that led to the eventual withdrawal of the bills (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 22). Other parts of the anti-LGBT movement, however, called for prudence even in light of this triumph. They feared that, in the future, lawmakers could again introduce an anti-

discrimination law proposal. Therefore, established Protestant organizations founded a new association geared towards the prevention of any pro-LGBT legislation, the *Korean Churches' Emergency Committee for Countermeasures Against the Legalization of Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage* (*han'guk kyogyae tongsöngae-tongsöngnon ippöp chöji pisang taech'aek wi-wönhoe*) (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, April 25).

The anti-LGBT movement thus changed its strategy from merely reactive opposition to pro-active resistance against pro-LGBT legislation (cf. Green 2000). This also became obvious later in the year when major Protestant associations, among them the *Christian Council of Korea* (CCK) and the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK), joined forces to demand a law that would prohibit education and advertisement on "unethical sex culture" (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, July 24). This cooperation between CCK and CCIK is astonishing since the two associations are normally united only in their reciprocal disdain.¹⁵ The opposition against homosexuality, however, clearly has the potential of bringing together organizations that would, under other circumstances, not cooperate with each other. This is an important observation for Korean Protestantism, which is characterized by notorious fragmentation and discord (cf. also chapter 12). Cooperation against LGBT issues even transcends religious borders beyond Protestantism. In October 2013, yet another anti-LGBT coalition was formed, now also including a Catholic and a Buddhist group (Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, September 29). However, these two groups and the Protestant Right mainly have in common their staunch socio-political conservatism rather than a joint religious worldview.¹⁶

World Council of Churches assembly in Busan, 2013

The *World Council of Churches* (WCC) was founded in 1948 in the spirit of Christian ecumenism, bringing together 352 churches from more than 120 countries as of 2022 (WCC 2022). The tenth WCC assembly was held in the Korean city of Busan in 2013. The *National Council of Churches* (NCCCK), an interdenominational Christian association considered to be liberal, was part of the assembly's organization committee, while the more conservative parts of Korean Protestantism took a critical position towards this global church event. Already in 2009, when Busan was declared the next venue for the WCC assembly, the *Hapdong* denomination of the Presbyterian Church in Korea and the CCK

15 In 2012, the CCK was faced with accusations of corruption and heresy. Moreover, due to disagreements over the election of a new leadership for the church association, 20 denominations split from the CCK and formed a new association, the CCIK (Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, August 27).

16 The organizations' names in themselves are telling: the *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* (*ch'önjugyo nara sarang kido moim*) and the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* (*taehanmin'guk chik'igi pulgyo toch'ong yönhap*). In general, the Protestant Right has a conflictive relationship with both the Catholic Church and Buddhism. PEA data also testifies this. In 2014, for example, a Protestant group started a campaign to counter the spread of Roman Catholicism in South Korea, the 'Movement to inform about the character of the Catholic Church' (*kat'ollik chöngch'e alligi undong*), which combined anti-Catholic attitudes with anti-LGBT stances (Yu, Yong-dae 2014, August 31). Buddhism also faced hostility from conservative Protestantism. In 2015, for example, the leader of CCIK criticized Seoul mayor Park Won-soon for allowing the Seoul Queer Culture Festival to take place, demanding on a poster at a protest in front of Seoul City Hall the following: "Homosexuality mayor [sic!] and Buddhist mayor OUT" (cited in Yu & Paek 2015, May 26).

opposed this decision, reproaching the WCC of allegedly supporting homosexuality and communist groups (Paek, Sang-hyön 2009, November 3; 2009, November 27). Similar accusations were brought forward in 2013. The KACC in particular was critical of the WCC, decrying its alleged pro-communism in the past as well as the fact that it allowed a booth of a Christian LGBT group and did not repudiate a pro-LGBT declaration that had been issued in the context of the WCC Assembly. On November 3, LGBT rights activists from foreign Christian groups had staged a protest in Seoul, demanding that discrimination of LGBT people – especially emanating from conservative Protestant groups – had to stop (Kim, Jae-won 2013, November 3). In its press statement, the KACC concludes that it is “fortunate” that “the members of the Korean church saw the reality of the WCC in real time” in view of such ongoingings. Also, the KACC holds that “the WCC should no longer leave scars on the Korean church as in the past” (KACC 2013, November 11).

The KACC here refers to historical events during the Korean War. In 1950, the WCC had recommended to enter into negotiations with the Communists, which President Syngman Rhee – himself a Christian of Methodist faith – categorically refused, calling the WCC henceforth pro-communist. This conflict also created a rift within Korean Protestantism, since Rhee established a Protestant anti-communist group, whereas other parts of Korean Protestantism wanted to maintain relations with the WCC (Yoon 2017). The critical stance of the Protestant Right towards the WCC is thus nothing new, but based on historical developments and conflicts in Korean politics and churches. The particularly *Protestant* anti-communism, which had been reinforced by Syngman Rhee in the early days of the Republic of Korea, has fed anti-WCC outbursts ever since.

The accusation of promoting homosexuality, however, is a rather new addition to the catalogue of criticisms directed at this global interdenominational organization. The Protestant Right combines established enemy stereotypes with new ones – a manifestation of dynamic continuity. The WCC has been presented by conservative Protestants in Korea as a wicked organization. Its suspected welcoming attitude towards LGBT people is then just another evidence for its badness, bluntly ignoring the fact that many member churches of the WCC are far from accepting homosexuality. At the same time, this deliberately evoked controversy around the WCC’s alleged pro-LGBT attitude creates a vivid threat for conservative Protestants in Korea for two main reasons. First, the controversy showcases how LGBT issues may lead to (further) intra and interdenominational split-ups. Second, the WCC is depicted as an example of how pro-LGBT stances ‘infiltrate’ Korean churches and Korea at large, in short: an external threat. The Korean anti-LGBT movement uses these kinds of frames a lot (cf. also chapters 7.5 and 12). The WCC Assembly in Busan in 2013 can be regarded as a catalyst for these lines of argumentation in the years to come.

Evoking the threat of same-sex marriage

In 2013, same-sex marriage was not a new topic for conservative Protestant actors. It had been a contentious issue already before, coming up in Kukmin Daily articles on ‘worrisome’ examples from abroad – either concerning the legalization of same-sex marriage and similar policy models, or relating debates within foreign denominations on whether one should allow same-sex couples to get married in church. The ‘threat’ of same-sex

marriage was brought up also inside Korea, as exemplified by the controversy around the anti-discrimination law in 2013. Although the proposed bills did not mention same-sex marriage at all, Protestant Right actors prominently alleged that non-discrimination for LGBT people would, ultimately, allow them to get married in Korea, too. In fact, up until today, there has not been a single concrete law proposal for introducing same-sex marriage in Korea. This fact notwithstanding, the 'menace' of same-sex marriage is often invoked by conservative Protestant actors, mentioning it in the same breath as the general need to oppose homosexuality. Ahead of the presidential election in 2012, for example, the *Korea Christian Public Policy Council* (*han'guk kidokkyo konggong chôngch'aek hyöbüihoe*) submitted a list of ten issues of utmost relevance to Korean Protestantism to the two major political parties, demanding them to state their positions. "Homosexuality and same-sex marriage" were part of the list. In response, the governing conservative *Saenuri* Party affirmed its clear opposition against both, while the Democratic United Party just stated its "sympathy for the churches' position", thus factually also being against acknowledging equal rights for LGBT people (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2012, November 29). This example shows that the anti-LGBT movement achieved to implant an anti-LGBT attitude also into important parts of Korean politics (cf. also chapter 10.5).

As these examples show, same-sex marriage has been a contentious issue for the Protestant Right already for a longer time. The years 2013 and 2014, however, saw three events that – from the perspective of the anti-LGBT movement – represented imminent 'threats' that Korea had to face in terms of same-sex marriage. The first one was the public, yet only symbolic gay wedding ceremony of a famous Korean film director, Kim Jho Gwang-su (*Kim Cho Kwang-su*), and his partner Kim Seung-hwan (*Kim Söng-hwan*) in central Seoul in September 2013. This event stirred great commotion within the conservative Protestant community. During the ceremony, one anti-LGBT activist attempted to smudge the couple with a mixture of human excrements and soybean paste, but was prevented from doing so. Apparently, the level of hostility was rising within a portion of Protestants who turned to employing radical action forms. Kim Jho Gwang-su and Kim Seung-hwan had tried to officially register their marriage with the authorities, hoping to create a legal precedent (Borowiec 2014, February 11). However, their application for a marriage license was eventually rejected by the *Södaemun District Office* in December 2013. In a press statement, 244 Christian groups applauded this "reasonable" decision and reinforced their opposition against any attempts to legalize same-sex marriage, which they claimed would be unconstitutional and against the national sentiment (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, December 11).¹⁷

The second watershed event occurred in the United States. In June 2013, the US Supreme Court declared the *Defense of Marriage Act* unconstitutional. The Defense of Marriage Act had been introduced by the Clinton administration in 1996 to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. In Korea, the Protestant Right lamented this US development. The KACC wrote that the Supreme Court ruling was

17 It was not the first time that a homosexual couple officially applied for a marriage certificate in Korea. Already in 2004, two men had tried to register their union, but had been rejected by the district office in charge. *Kukmin Daily* reported about this "first gay marriage" in Korea, calling it a "shock" (Hwang, Il-song 2004, March 8).

regrettable for a country that claims to be Christian, describing the United States as a “a backward country in terms of ethics and morals”. Korea, the KACC warns, should not be obsequious to the US and not follow such a “degenerate culture”, but rather continue its determined resistance against pro-LGBT legislation. In contrast to the US, Russia is presented as a good example, having passed a law restricting the spread of information on non-traditional family models (often referred to as ‘gay propaganda law’), also in June 2013 (KACC 2013, June 27).

It becomes apparent that in this context, the Korean anti-LGBT movement started using anti-US-American narratives. The US, along with other western countries, are depicted as failed states in terms of ‘sexual ethics’ – mainly, but not exclusively, for introducing pro-LGBT legislation. The more the US and other countries refrained from discriminatory legal practices over the years, the more disappointed and critical the Protestant Right got, discarding the US in particular as a henceforth bad example in this respect. This is surprising, since historically, the Protestant Right exhibited strong pro-US American tendencies (Shiwoo 2018, 105–110). When the US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015, So Kang-sök, chief pastor of the *New Eden* mega-church (*sae eden kyohoe*), wrote in a column in *Kukmin Daily* that he was disappointed to see few churches in the US opposing this decision. In contrast to this, he claimed that such a thing would not happen in Korea because Korean churches were different (So Kang-sök 2015, July 15). Pastor So presents Korea, and Korean Protestantism in particular, as something special, as ‘the last man standing’ in the face of ‘evil’ developments – or to use more religious vocabulary, as a chosen nation. The resistance against same-sex marriage and, in extension of this, foreign influences, serves as a motivation to get active to protect Korea’s purported uniqueness.

A third critical moment was a statement made by Seoul mayor Park Won-soon in October 2014. Park had said in an interview with a US media outlet that he wished South Korea would become the first country in Asia to introduce same-sex marriage. The backlash from the Protestant Right was immediate and massive, accusing the mayor of following a hidden agenda supporting LGBT rights and using homosexuality for political purposes (Yu Yöng-dae 2014, October 16). As a result, Park Won-soon retracted his statement and became more reticent in other matters regarding LGBT rights as well, as the controversy over the *Seoul Human Rights Charter* shall demonstrate.

While same-sex marriage had been posing an implicit, dormant threat to Korean conservative Protestantism for a longer time already, the years 2013 and 2014 really made it a central topic in its anti-LGBT activism. The PEA data shows that activism against the recognition of same-sex unions intensified after this period. In a manner of speaking, one could say that that same-sex unions represent a fertile topic for the anti-LGBT movement. It is both flexible and easily graspable for the general public. The movement combines the ‘threat’ of same-sex marriage with other issues such as the anti-discrimination law as shown above. This works well, because a certain level of knowledge on this topic is already present in the general public, including the narratives on the alleged ethical decadence of other countries and the purported danger for ‘normal’ heterosexual families, which the anti-LGBT movement evokes over and over again (cf. chapter 7.2).

Protests against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival, 2014

For a long time, the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival* (SQCF) had gone unnoticed by anti-LGBT forces. The SQCF was first held in 2000 with just a handful of people, but soon grew into the biggest and most visible public queer event in Korea. In 2014, however, the festival faced challenges on several fronts. The festival, which had taken place in the Hongdae district the years before, had to relocate to Sinch'on owing to complaints from Hongdae residents. Shortly before the 2014 edition of the festival on June 7, however, the *Sōdaemun District Office* withdrew its permission, saying it would be unfit to hold such an event in face of the tragedy of the Sewōl Ferry, which had sunk on April 16, leaving 304 people dead. The festival organizers regarded this as a pretext, assuming that rather, pressure from conservative Protestant groups was behind the cancellation of the permit. Having still the official permission from the police, the organizers decided to push ahead with the event anyways. The SQCF was then met with counter-protests from conservative Protestant groups, which had registered their gathering as a commemoration rally for the victims of the Sewōl Ferry disaster, while actually disturbing the queer festival's proceedings – in an organized and systematic manner, as one pro-LGBT activist recalls (Interview 3). When the 3,000 SQCF participants wanted to start their scheduled queer parade, they were blocked by counter-protesters who lay down on the street and under parade trucks for more than four hours. In the end, when the police started dissolving this counter-protest, some anti-LGBT protesters resorted to violence, leaving 10 people injured. Four anti-LGBT protesters got arrested (Kwōn & Yi 2014, June 9; Yu, Yōng-dae 2014, June 8).

The Queer Culture Festival in the city of Taegu in the same year also for the first time drew active opposition from conservative Protestant groups. The latter's problematization of the event already started well in advance – just like the counteractions against the SQCF – organizing a seminar on the alleged dangers of homosexuality and starting a signature campaign involving the churches of the region to prevent the festival from taking place (Ch'oe, Il-yōng 2014, May 28). According to Kukmin Daily, around 400 people joined the counter-protest against the Taegu Queer Culture Festival on June 28. Frictions also occurred here when the queer parade was blocked, with people pushing their bodies against each other. After 20 minutes, the festival organizers decided to change the course of the parade. Further violent clashed did not occur, perhaps also due to the massive police deployment of 700 officers (Ch'oe, Il-yōng 2014, June 29).

What is of importance at this point is to note that for the first time, significant numbers of people enter into direct conflict with pro-LGBT groups, making the new 'discovery' that queer festivals are part of the perceived 'bad' visibility of LGBT people and their demands. Before, the anti-LGBT movement had predominantly reacted to law proposals and media coverage on homosexuality. While the Korean LGBT community had been affected by anti-emancipatory activism already ahead of the protests against queer culture festivals, they now had to fear that these relatively safe spaces for expressing themselves in public were not so safe anymore. The motto of the 2014 SQCF, "love conquers hate", leaves a sour aftertaste in this context, since from 2014 onwards, anti-LGBT groups – or 'hate forces' (*hyōmo seryōk*), as they are commonly referred to by the queer community – began to actively sabotage, and counteract against these events. One could even argue that the counter-rallies got institutionalized to a certain extent. Starting in 2015,

the rally against the SQCF has developed into one of the biggest recurring anti-LGBT events in Korea, featuring large numbers of participants and booths, as well as almost ritualized actions such as camping in front of the Namdaemun district police station to hinder the organizers of the queer festival from applying for the necessary permit to use the events' location (Ock, Hyun-ju 2015, June 28). In this sense, the year 2014 marks a new quality of anti-LGBT activism, discerning a new target and thus getting more obviously involved in movement-counter movement dynamics (Meyer & Staggenborg 1996). Be that as it may, the principal focus of anti-LGBT activism remains the opposition against (perceived) pro-LGBT legislation or attempts to codify pro-LGBT attitudes in some way, as the next final watershed event of the years 2013/2014 exemplifies.

The Seoul Human Rights Charter, 2014

The *Seoul Human Rights Charter*, alongside the policy proposal for an anti-discrimination law, is another political project that was met with fierce opposition from the Protestant Right. The Charter was conceived as a collaborative grassroots project by the *Seoul Metropolitan Government*, bringing together 180 volunteer Seoul citizens who would, according to the plan, draft human rights guidelines for the capital city. They received assistance from human rights activists and experts who coordinated the process, planning that the city government could enact and declare the charter on December 10, 2014, that is, Human Rights Day. However, in the end, the Human Rights Charter has not been declared due to vociferous opposition from conservative Protestants. One clause in particular drew harsh criticism, namely, that a person "has the right not to be discriminated against based on his or her sexual orientation or sexual identity" (Lee, Claire 2014, November 30). The opposition did not only stem from Protestant Right actors outside the charter's preparatory committee. One of my interview partners, a human rights expert who was part of the committee, recalled that at a certain point in the discussions, some people started showing hostility towards the idea of integrating non-discrimination for LGBT people into the charter. The expert added that the group of facilitators had been "a bit naïve" at first, because they had thought that the selection of committee members was representative. "But, I think, later on we were told that in fact some Christian groups, conservative Christian groups, they really actively volunteered themselves to be in the pool" (Interview 11). When the sixth and final, decisive committee meeting took place on November 30, more than half of the members refused to vote at all and left, leaving only 73 people, of whom 60 voted in favor of non-discrimination of LGBT people. Protestant groups had tried to influence the proceedings already before, blocking the fifth committee meeting from taking place and holding rallies against the enactment of the Human Rights Charter on November 18 and 28 (Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, December 1). The Seoul Metropolitan Government then refrained from declaring the charter because the committee did not adopt it in a unanimous vote (a rule that had not been specified anywhere before), regretting that "[u]nfortunately, working on this charter has been creating more social conflicts. We would like to take more time to listen to a variety of opinions from our citizens on this matter" (cited in Lee, Claire 2014, November 30; cf. also Wee 2014, December 10).

Mayor Park Won-soon, who was denounced by anti-LGBT forces as a supporter of LGBT rights not only in the issue of same-sex marriage (see above) but also in this matter, did listen to more voices, meeting leading representatives of the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea* (*han'guk changnogyo ch'ongyŏnhaphoe*) on December 1. During the meeting, Park said that “universal discrimination should be prohibited, but I definitely do not support homosexuality” (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2014, December 8). Disappointed and infuriated by what happened to the Seoul Human Rights Charter, LGBT activists occupied Seoul City Hall from December 6–11, deploring the fact that Mayor Park Won-soon “yielded under pressure of extreme rightists and conservative protestant groups of South Korea”, as they outlined in an open letter (Wee 2014, December 10). The sit-in protesters demanded a meeting with Park, along with an apology for failing to intervene against the anti-LGBT intruders’ disturbance of the fifth committee meeting, and called for the proclamation of the Charter as planned (*ibid.*). Eventually, Mayor Park met with LGBT activists and apologized to them, but their demand to reconsider the charter was to no avail.

Even though the Seoul Human Rights Charter was eventually unsuccessful, pro-LGBT activists assessed the occupation of Seoul City Hall as an important event for the Korean LGBT movement. It was not the first time that LGBT activists resorted to this action form, though. Already in 2011, when the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance got under attack from conservative Protestants, LGBT activists had staged a sit-in at the Seoul Metropolitan Council – yielding, back then, a successful outcome. A few weeks after the occupation and sit-in in 2014, Illan, an LGBT activist, recapitulated the events at a queer discussion event, pointing out the achievements of getting support and solidarity from 300 organizations and significant media attention. Moreover, Illan added, the sit-in at Seoul City Hall was a strategic choice made not only to achieve a certain goal, but also, and importantly, to start a debate on what human rights actually meant in Korea (Solidarity for Human Rights Korea Webzine 2015, January 26).

The question of human rights is also crucial for the anti-LGBT movement. After the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance, the controversy over the Seoul Human Rights Charter was another important chain of events that revolved around human rights. The years to come would, as the sections below will explicate, comprise many more contentious human rights bills at the regional and local levels. At the same time, the concept of human rights itself has developed into a contested topic within right-wing Protestant circles. As chapters 8.1 will demonstrate, the anti-LGBT movement makes use of different framing strategies in terms of human rights. Activists, for instance, suggest that whenever ‘human rights’ come up in political debates or in legal texts, this is a way to sneak LGBT rights into laws through the backdoor. They also identify other notions and terms such as ‘gender’ and ‘diversity’ automatically with homosexuality. Concurrently, the anti-LGBT movement claims that the rights of Christians or of the majority would be affected negatively if pro-LGBT legislation passed, thus pitting the rights of one group against those of others. Relatedly, parts of the movement transform the concept of human rights in a fashion that serves their purposes, for example when the ‘ex-gay movement’ claims ‘ex-gay human rights’, reproaching LGBT activists of harming the rights of people who allegedly became heterosexual or cis gender ‘again’ (*cf.* chapter 8.1).

What is more, the struggles around the Seoul Human Rights Charter show that opposition from the anti-LGBT movement does not go unchallenged. LGBT rights groups do not remain silent in face of anti-emancipatory ruses, they also build networks and solidarity. This resistance does not only stem from outside the Protestant community. Pro-LGBT portions within Korean Protestantism are also becoming increasingly courageous and assertive, questioning from within the alleged Christian unity in opposing LGBT rights (cf. chapter 12). Several pro-LGBT activists and allies who I interviewed for this study argued that anti-LGBT activism had an unintentional, paradoxical side effect: the stronger the anti-LGBT movement got, the more vigorous pro-LGBT activism became as a result. Through their problematization alone, the Protestant Right actually made sexual minorities more visible. Potentially, anti-LGBT activism even created sympathy for LGBT people among the general public, who may disapprove of the partially radical action forms and the degrading rhetoric used by the opponents of LGBT rights (Interviews 1, 5, 11, 26).¹⁸

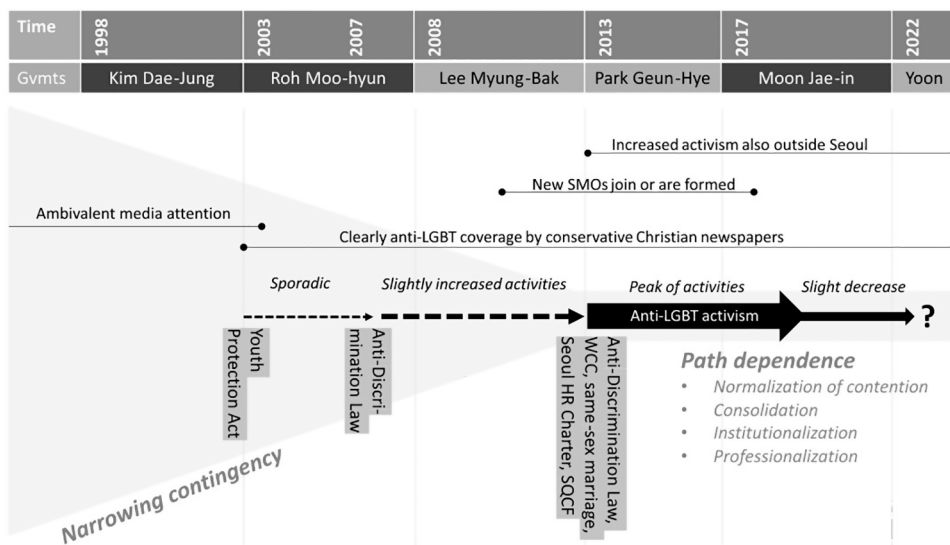
2003, 2007, 2013/2014 as watershed moments for the amplification of anti-LGBT activism?

The literature on institutional change, especially in historical institutionalism, broadly differentiates between phases of institutional stability on the one hand, and relatively brief periods during which change, even of a fundamental kind, is possible on the other. The latter are referred to as *critical junctures*, “relatively short periods of time during which there is a *substantially* heightened probability that *agents’ choices* will affect the outcome of interest” (Capoccia & Kelemen 2007, 348).¹⁹ Critical junctures are commonly triggered by exogenous shocks, which open up the potential for vast changes. But once the choice for the path of change is made in this phase of contingency, institutional stability sets in again, what is called *path dependence* (cf. e.g. Mahoney 2000; Sydow et al. 2009).

18 For a detailed account on the formation and role of anti and pro-LGBT discourse coalitions around the Seoul Human Rights Charter refer to Ol Teun Kim’s doctoral dissertation (2021).

19 In the field of historical institutionalism, there are different definitions of critical junctures that – while all being related to comparatively short periods of time during which huge change becomes possible – have diverse foci, such as agency, contingency, antecedent conditions, or the concrete institutional formation. For an overview of these different approaches, see Capoccia (2016).

Figure 4: Overview of the development of anti-LGBT activism



Note: Liberal/progressive governments ('Gvmnts') are highlighted in black; conservative governments in gray. Dotted/dashed arrows indicate sporadic activities; the breadth of arrow roughly indicates the intensity of anti-LGBT activism (i.e., protest events per year). Abbreviations: SMO = social movement organization; WCC = World Council of Churches; HR = human rights; SQCF = Seoul Queer Culture Festival.

The controversy around the Youth Protection Act in 2003, the fight against the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2007, as well as the events in 2013 and 2014 just outlined may well be considered crucial moments for the emergence, development, and amplification of anti-LGBT activism in Korea. Anti-LGBT activists who I interviewed claimed, for example, that the Sewöl Ferry accident in 2014 (presumably, in fact, meaning the struggles against the SQCF) made activism stronger in the long run (Interview 7) and led to the establishment of many new anti-LGBT organizations (Interview 23).²⁰ Moreover, one activist claimed that the prevention of the anti-discrimination law proposals was the biggest success of the anti-LGBT movement so far (Interview 23). While each of these three occurrences can be regarded as relatively short time periods in which certain actors (the Protestant Right) reacted to external shocks (mostly pro-LGBT law-proposals) and took specific decisions (to actively fight against equal rights for LGBT people) with long-term consequences (a consolidation of anti-LGBT activism, and ultimately, of anti-LGBT attitudes within the Protestant Right), it would be wrong to call them critical junctures. The impacts of each of these moments in time in themselves is too small to speak of a critical juncture. But they do, in each case, figure prominently in dynamizing the Protestant

20 Several of my pro-LGBT interviewees agreed with this view. They also regard the years 2013 and especially 2014 as the time when the anti-LGBT movement significantly intensified its activities (Interviews 8; 13; 18). One person said that while before, anti-LGBT actions were each like a "storm in a teacup", after 2014, a full-fledged conservative political agenda developed and prejudice and hatred against sexual minorities became deeply engraved especially in Protestant churches (Interview 13).

Right's anti-LGBT activism. And each moment does contribute to institutionalizing anti-LGBT activism and attitudes, thus creating a path dependence in the sense that departing from these choices would harm the trustworthiness and legitimacy of those leading and backing the movement.

Figure 4 summarizes these insights, relating them to the overarching political opportunity structures on the national level, that is, the respective governments from 1998 until 2022. What becomes evident is that the first two watershed moments for the anti-LGBT movement roughly coincide with the changes in government in 2003 and 2008. The year 2003 also marks the period in which the Korean *New Right* (*nyu rait'ŭ*), of which the Protestant Right forms an important part, really gained traction, fighting against President Kim Dae-Jung's *Sunshine Policy* and the rapprochement with North Korea (Eom 2004; Ryu, Dae-young 2004). The 2007 controversy over the Anti-Discrimination Law took place at a time when the election campaigns for the new presidency had already been in progress. While clear linkages between these political events and anti-LGBT actions are not discernable for these points in time, it is important to note that there are organizational and content-related overlaps. The CCK, for example, figured prominently in the movement against the Sunshine Policy and also acted as a staunch supporter of the presidential pledge of Lee Myung-Bak's – himself a conservative members of the Presbyterian church. When Lee became president, anti-LGBT activism increased. As several of my pro-LGBT interviewees mentioned, the political landscape became more beneficial for anti-LGBT activism under his rule (Interviews 13; 18; 20). One could argue that with the new conservative government backing the Protestant Right and vice-versa, the latter had more capacities to engage in new fields of action, strengthening among other topics its anti-LGBT flank. Later years have seen a more clearly visible politicization of LGBT topics, in the sense that politicians actively picked up on the subject or were pushed towards anti-LGBT positionings, as chapter 10.5 demonstrates in greater detail. The withdrawal of the Seoul Human Rights Charter and Mayor Park Won-soon's Janus-faced role in this is one example.

Besides the distinguishable crucial events outlined above, Figure 4 highlights the *gradual* development of anti-LGBT activism. Over the years, the focus of the Protestant Right on LGBT topics became stronger and stronger, or in other words, contingency decreased. The possibility to choose another pathway, that is, ignoring the topic as they had largely done before or even taking a positive stance, dwindled. But the decline of contingency did not happen passively. Each instance of anti-LGBT action, each protest event has been an unambiguous decision to actively deal with the topic. The Protestant Right did not just react to what they were faced with. Rather, certain actors determined that it is necessary to fight LGBT rights and pro-LGBT attitudes within society. This active *attribution of threat* (McAdam et al. 2001, 43) is done in relation to concrete exogenous occurrences, but it is also, so to speak, a gradual process running in the background. The continuously negative media coverage in Kukmin Daily after 2003 as shown in Figure 4, but also 'educational' events organized by anti-LGBT groups (cf. chapter 11) contribute to the increasing focus on LGBT issues. This goes to the extent that, after some time, the contention on LGBT topics becomes commonplace – or, as a human rights expert phrased it, there is a "normalization of conflict" (Interview 6). Put differently, anti-LGBT activism got consolidated and institutionalized.

The next chapters substantiate this argument by proceeding towards the ideational level of the anti-LGBT movement's activities, that is, its framing strategies. Essentially, this is where the anti-LGBT movement indulges in the 'cultural war' mentioned at the beginning of this section – a strategy of trying to win the hearts and minds of people, what Antonio Gramsci calls a 'war of position'. This study argues that alongside preventing or abolishing certain laws and ordinances, a central goal of Protestant anti-LGBT activism is to instill anti-LGBT attitudes into the general public. But before delving into the analysis of the movement's framing efforts, I will now focus on the topics, targets, action forms, and places of protest of the anti-LGBT movement in order to conclude the general overview of its development and general workings.

6. How to create contention: topics, targets, and action forms of anti-LGBT protest

This chapter summarizes the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in the phase of its intensified activity from 2010 until 2020. Owing to the sheer number of protest events during this period, I refrain from giving detailed accounts of what happened in these years. Rather, I focus on the topics of protest to find out which issues in particular represented bones of contention for anti-LGBT activists. I analyze the actors targeted by anti-LGBT protest to ascertain where the conflict is actually situated, and illustrate the forms of action. All of this will help understand the special composition of action repertoires, with traditional protest patterns on the one hand, and specifically argumentative, ‘educational’ war-of-position strategies on the other. This overview also provides the basis for discerning topics that will be analyzed in greater detail in the focus chapters 10–12.

6.1 Topics of protest: fighting pro-LGBT legislation and queer visibility

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, anti-LGBT activism has for a long time been rather sporadic but powerful, focusing on certain incidents and mobilizing accordingly, and – in most cases – preventing effectively many pro-LGBT laws from coming into force. After 2013, anti-LGBT activism has intensified both in terms of the increasing number of supporting social movement organizations (cf. chapter 10), as well as concerning the rising number of protests per year. A further routinization of anti-LGBT activism becomes apparent also in the topics the movement deals with.

Table 3: Main topics of anti-LGBT protest events per year, 2010–2020^a

	Topic	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
General topics	Homosexuality in general	1	-	-	11	9	41	34	21	9	9	-	135
	'Ex-gay'	-	-	-	-	3	9	7	4	3	4	-	30
	'Gender ideology'	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	4	4	2	14
	HIV/AIDS	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	2	1	1	1	9
	'Healing'	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	-	8
	Surveys	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	-	5
	Transgender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	4
Law proposals, ordinances, codification	Anti-Discrimination Law	8	-	-	21	5	9	12	2	-	5	5	67
	NHRCK Act article 2(3)	-	-	-	-	4	8	12	5	1	11	2	43
	Same-sex marriage	-	-	-	4	3	12	8	10	2	-	1	40
	Military Criminal Code article 92(6)	4	2	-	3	6	-	14	7	-	2	-	38
	Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance	-	6	8	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	19
	Constitutional amendment (gender equality)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	1	-	-	18
	School textbooks	-	-	-	6	2	1	1	-	-	3	-	13
	National Human Rights Policy Basic Plan (NAP)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	3	-	12
	South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province Human Rights Ordinance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	-	-	12
	Reform of Kyŏnggi Prov. Gender Equality Ordinance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	8
	Seoul Human Rights Charter	-	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	7
	Gender Equality Policy Plan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	6
	South Kyŏngsang Province Student HR Ordinance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	6
	Seoul National University Human Rights Guidelines	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	5

	Topic	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Anti-LGBT	Seoul Queer Culture Festival	-	-	-	-	5	33	15	4	6	6	6	75
	Taegu Queer Festival	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	2	3	2	-	13
	Embassies support LGBT	-	-	-	-	1	3	4	-	-	1	-	9
Media	Criticizing TV programs etc.	4	2	3	2	4	2	-	3	2	-	-	22
	Hankyoreh reports (e.g., on Esther Prayer Movement)	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	7	1	-	10
	Journalistic regulations	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4
Other	Homosexuality in elections	-	-	-	-	1	-	11	6	3	-	2	23
	Feminist lecture at Han-dong University	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	7
	Chongshin University controversy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
	Appointment of Supreme Court judge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
Total ^b		15	10	16	52	57	116	126	114	75	78	22	693

^a Data for the year 2020 only until the end of April. Except for two cases, topics with less than 5 occurrences have been excluded. ^b Total for all topics (2000–2020), including the topics excluded in this table. The totals equal the numbers of protests per year.

Table 3 depicts per year all the topics of protest events that have come up four or more times from 2010 until 2020, that is, the topics that have been most contentious for the anti-LGBT movement.¹ Some topics only appear at certain points in time, such as the *Seoul Human Rights Charter* in 2014 and 2015, the *South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province Human Rights Ordinance*, and the controversy over a new proposed definition of 'gender equality' as part of a constitutional amendment in 2017 and 2018.² In fact, as the extensive PEA dataset

- 1 By 'topic', I mean the main focus of the respective protest events. This does not imply that only this main topic is treated or commented on at events. Rather to the contrary, anti-LGBT activists commonly use diverse ways to argue for their purpose, often creating links with categorically unconnected topics, such as invoking the 'threat' of same-sex marriage at many events. Chapters 7 and 8 will analyze the framing strategies of the anti-LGBT movement in greater detail.
- 2 The South Korean constitution states in article 36(1) that "Marriage and family life shall be entered into and sustained on the basis of individual dignity and equality of the sexes, and the State shall do everything in its power to achieve that goal." In the Korean version, the term 'equality of the sexes' actually reads 'equality of both/the two sexes' (*yangsŏng p'yŏngdŭng*). The prefix 'yang' refers to a binary classification. In order to make the constitution consistent with the term '*sŏngbyŏl*' (i.e., 'sex' without the binary connotation), the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) proposed to delete this prefix. This was, however, disputed by the anti-LGBT movement, which

shows, there are many topics that come up in anti-LGBT protest events only once (47 topics) or twice (15 topics), revealing the broad positioning of the movement and its increasing zeal and diligence to problematize virtually everything that may be interpreted as being in favor of LGBT rights.

The protest event dataset also exhibits another trend. Some topics develop into issues that the movement focuses on *continuously*. Either the events or law proposals that they oppose keep reappearing on a regular basis such as the Seoul Queer Culture Festival or anti-discrimination bills. Or they are brought up by activists themselves, such as the generic topic of homosexuality,³ or the alleged possibility to 'heal' LGBT people so that they become 'ex-gays', or the issue of same-sex marriage, which serves as an overarching topic for fearmongering without a concrete law proposal at its basis. Concrete policies figure prominently among the topics that the anti-LGBT movement treats most and on a regular basis. Besides the anti-discrimination law and the worries that same-sex marriage gets legalized, the anti-LGBT movement also increasingly turns to already existing laws. For example, they aim at scrapping the provision for protection against discrimination of LGBT people from the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act* and, conversely, strive to keep the criminalization of sex between male soldiers in the *Military Criminal Code*.

Legislative attempts at stipulating equal treatment for LGBT people are generally a main focus of anti-LGBT protests. Of the 112 topics discerned through PEA, 38 deal with bills, ordinances, charters, and other types of regulating pro-LGBT positions through legislative means. These protest events make up 47.2% of the total number of protests (327 of 693) – by far the largest category. Related to this political focus are protest events that actively make homosexuality a topic in elections (23 events) and protests directed against politicians, government officials, and public organizations that support (or are alleged to support) LGBT rights. 38 such protest events have taken place from 2010–2020. In this context, the anti-LGBT movement commonly directs its activities towards eminent people that are appointed for important posts like Supreme Court judges or ministerial positions. Interestingly, also conservative politicians such as Hwang Kyo-ahn and Yoon Suk-yeol (*Yun Sōk-yōl*) gained some attention. While the former's appointment to become prime minister in 2015 was welcomed by the KACC for his strictly conservative and Christian positions (KACC 2015, June 18), the latter got under fire for his positive stance on LGBT issues. Anti-LGBT groups opposed Yoon's nomination for the post of prosecutor general in 2019 (Paek Sang-hyōn 2019, July 9). In 2022, Yoon would be elected

alleged that if the term '*sōng p'yōngdŭng*' (equality of the sexes) was introduced into the constitution, this would be an expression of 'gender ideology', alleging that pro-LGBT legislation could be introduced through the backdoor (cf. e.g., Paek, Sang-hyōn 2017, July 10).

- 3 It is, of course, hardly surprising that 'homosexuality' is treated as a central topic of anti-LGBT protests. In this respect, one has to note that the PEA dataset allows for overlaps in the category 'topic', i.e., a protest event can both be about a concrete target to fight against such as a human rights ordinance, as well as pointing out the alleged badness of homosexuality as a secondary theme. In most cases, however, I have classified protest events into the category 'homosexuality in general' when the clear focus was to speak ill of homosexuality in the narrow sense. This is, for example, the case at seminars, forums, in short, 'educational' events that the movement offers on a frequent basis. See on this aspect, i.e., education, chapter 6.3 and chapter 11.

South Korea's president with the support from conservative political forces. Protestant leaders, however, voiced concerns about the presidential candidate Yoon, reproaching him of being involved with shamanism and the *Sinchŏnji* sect, yet without mentioning his alleged pro-LGBT positioning anymore (Na, Su-jin 2022, February 14).

Further opposition is directed at LGBT events, and at those actors supporting these events such as embassies. The queer culture festivals in Seoul and in other cities in particular face counter-protests, constituting 13.1 % (104) of all protest events. The anti-LGBT movement seems to disapprove of such outright expressions of the existence and activities of LGBT people and organizations. Visibility of LGBT themes in general is highly problematic in the eyes of anti-LGBT activists, as they also decry films, TV series, and media outlets for displaying homosexuality in neutral or positive ways. Protest events that focus on media critique amount to 5.5 % (44) of the total. Pro-LGBT positions also face protest when they appear within the churches themselves. The critique of the *World Council of Churches* has already been treated in chapter 5, but also other instances of intra-church opposition against the overt homophobia in Korean conservative Protestantism have emerged in recent years. Chapter 12 analyzes in greater detail this intricate constellation of counter and counter-counter protest. Some of the church-related protest events, however, also take place in support of, and praising anti-LGBT positionings of Protestant denominations. In 2015, for example, the *Korean Methodist Church* adopted an official stance against homosexuality, and the *Hapdong* denomination of the *Presbyterian Church of Korea* changed its church constitution to explicitly prohibit the promotion of homosexuality in the same year – two examples of concrete institutionalization (i.e., codification) of anti-LGBT positions within the Protestant Right, which were applauded by anti-LGBT actors (Pak, Chi-hun 2016, January 11; KACC 2016, July 19).

Places of protest: the anti-LGBT movement goes local

The PEA data is indicative of another trend. The vast majority, 75.1 percent of protest events took place in Seoul.⁴ This is not surprising, considering that South Korea is a highly centralized state both in terms of political decision-making processes and concerning the concentration of population in the metropolitan area of Seoul – roughly half of the South Korean population, 25 million people, live in the capital city and its agglomeration. After 2013, however, the number of anti-LGBT protest events started to increase also outside Seoul. As the PEA dataset shows, many protests are directed against ordinances on (student) human rights and gender equality, as well as queer festivals on the regional and local levels. Kyŏnggi province, the area around the capital city, displays the second-largest number of anti-LGBT protest events after Seoul (24, or 5.7%), followed by the city of Taegu in Southern Korea (22, 5.3%), a politically conservative stronghold. Other traditionally conservative areas also boast slightly higher numbers of protests: Busan (8),

4 The numbers given here refer only to the cases where a place of protest is stated in the Kukmin Daily articles *without* KACC press statements, i.e., 415 out of 693. The 312 protest events in Seoul thus represent 75.1 % of 415. The high number of cases where the place is not specified is predominantly due to the high number of (KACC) press statements in the PEA dataset. Press statements normally do not indicate a specific place.

North Kyōngsang (9) and South Kyōngsang (5) provinces. Bigger cities such as Taejōn (8), Kwangju (6), and Inch'ōn (3) also feature some anti-LGBT mobilization. The remaining provinces have all seen at least one protest event.

In this context, the case of the *South Ch'ungch'ōng Province (Ch'unghnam-do) Human Rights Ordinance* is noteworthy. While the PEA data only depicts a total of 5 protest events for this province, the attention the anti-LGBT movement granted to this topic has been bigger. Twelve protest events are recorded to have taken place against this regional ordinance in 2017 and 2018 (cf. Table 3), thus transcending the local level and demonstrating the farther-reaching importance of this conflict. The reason for this is the fact that this ordinance was the first piece of pro-LGBT legislation to be abolished again after massive mobilization from conservative Christian groups – a huge success for the Protestant Right. The Ch'unghnam-do Human Rights Ordinance had been introduced in 2012 in an effort to implement human rights protection rules and institutions similar to the stipulations in the NHRCK Act of 2001 also on the regional level. Other provinces and municipalities passed analogous human rights ordinances in that period. Interestingly, the Ch'unghnam-do Human Rights Ordinance itself did not directly mention 'sexual orientation' or 'gender identity', but in article 5–2 only referred to the anti-discrimination clauses of the NHRCK Act and to the South Korean Constitution. When the majoritarian conservative lawmakers belonging to the Saenuri Party in the provincial assembly voted in favor of abolishing the ordinance on 2 February 2018, representatives of the Protestant Right triumphantly declared that this could also have effects on similar bills in other places. A Kukmin Daily journalist writes: "The case is expected to be a catalyst for the abolition of the Human Rights Ordinances promoting and advocating for homosexuality enacted in 103 municipalities and the revision of the National Human Rights Commission Act" (Paek, Sang-hyōn 2018, February 5). In fact, several localities followed the example of South Ch'ungch'ōng Province. In April 2018, for example, the county of Chūngp'yōng in North Ch'ungch'ōng Province scrapped its human rights ordinance (Paek, Sang-hyōn 2018, April 24), as did the city of Kyeryong in early May of that same year, where an activist claimed that the ordinance was passed to support "bad human rights education" on homosexuality and same-sex marriage and was allegedly geared "to create jobs for left-wing activists" (Paek Sang-hyōn 2018, May 2).

The contention surrounding the South Ch'ungch'ōng Province Human Rights Ordinance indeed showcases how the fight for and against the rights of LGBT people has increasingly become political in the narrow sense. When the local and regional elections in June 2018 ended with a landslide victory for the Democratic Party nationwide, the assembly of South Ch'ungch'ōng Province also changed towards a large liberal majority. This resulted in the reenactment of the Human Rights Ordinance in September 2018, only a few months after it had been abolished (Yi Chun-ho 2018, September 14). The issue of homosexuality has thus become a 'hot potato' for both political camps, also on the regional and local levels. Chapter 10.5 will deal with this politicization of LGBT themes in greater detail.

Expansion in content-related and geographical terms

In summary, the anti-LGBT movement treats diverse topics, most of which belong to the broad category of fighting against (alleged) pro-LGBT legislation. The movement also increasingly focuses its activities on concrete LGBT events and on media coverage about LGBT issues, which they decry and try to prevent. Apparently, anti-LGBT activists regard queer visibility – if realized in a benevolent and advocacy fashion – as a problem, alongside the codification of LGBT rights in the policy-making process. Some topics become continuous targets of anti-LGBT activism like the fight against same-sex marriage, anti-discrimination laws, and queer festivals in Seoul and Taegu. Then again, the focus on other themes remains short-lived and singular. This is also due to the expansion of the movement. After 2013, the number of protest events beyond Seoul has been rising. The anti-LGBT movement becomes more attentive and thorough in what it is doing, starting fights against anything that even remotely gives the impression of being pro-LGBT. In this process, anti-LGBT activists identify diverse opponents. These targets of activism are the focus of the following subchapter.

6.2 Targets of protest: attacking the political sphere, the LGBT movement, and others

Similar to the analysis in the previous subchapter, the main targets of the anti-LGBT movement fall into two main categories representing the lion's share of the opposed actors: first, the governmental and the political sphere in the broad sense, which supports – or is perceived to support – the LGBT community and pro-LGBT bills, and second, the LGBT movement itself. As Table 4 shows, a total of 576 instances of targeting opponents was identified in the PEA dataset. Of these, by far the largest part consists of institutions related to governing bodies (44.8%), including representative bodies like the national and provincial assemblies and city councils. If we go beyond this governmental sphere and consider also political parties, as well as individual politicians and public officials or candidates for public and political posts, the accumulated targets within the governmental and political arena make up almost two thirds of the total (64.5%). By contrast, the LGBT movement only occupies 12.2 percent of all instances of targeted actors. In this category, queer culture festivals are the main targets (52 out of 70), leaving only a very low number of specific LGBT rights groups targeted as objects of opposition.

Of course, it is difficult to differentiate between pro-LGBT activism on the one side, and pro-LGBT legislation and the political structures attempting to realize such policies on the other. Without LGBT activists fighting for their rights in the first place, presumably none of the proposed bills would have seen the light of day. It is also not surprising that the anti-LGBT movement attacks institutions that promote the law proposals, ordinances, and charters that are perceived as highly problematic in terms of their (alleged) support for LGBT rights, as the previous section demonstrated. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea in particular faces a great amount of opposition, as do politicians belonging to the Democratic Party of Korea such as Seoul's former mayor Park Won-soon and former president Moon Jae-in. However, as chapter 10.5 will show,

the divide between the major liberal and conservative political parties in Korea is not so clear-cut. There are, for example, also several politicians from the Democratic Party actively supporting the anti-LGBT movement. Conversely, national-level government institutions have provided partial support for LGBT topics also under the conservative Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye administrations.

Be that as it may, the large share of opposition directed against the political sphere is noteworthy. This bias suggests that the Korean anti-LGBT movement has a clearly political orientation. Anti-LGBT activism does not only take place on the religious and social levels; it is also, and importantly so, played out in the political arena. It seems that the anti-LGBT movement finds its main opponent in the political sphere rather than reacting to the Korean LGBT rights movement, given the scant attention directed towards the latter. In this context, it would therefore be wrong to call anti-LGBT collective action a direct countermovement of the LGBT movement (cf. Meyer & Staggenborg 1996).

Table 4: Frequencies of targets of anti-LGBT activism, 2000–2020^a

TARGETS	N	PERCENT (%)
Government, public institution, representative body	258	44.8
National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK)	93	16.1
National Assembly	23	4.0
Seoul Metropolitan Government	20	3.5
Ministry of Education	13	2.3
National Government	10	1.7
Ministry of Gender Equality and Family	10	1.7
Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education	10	1.7
Ministry of Justice	9	1.5
LGBT movement	70	12.2
Queer culture festivals	52	9.0
Seoul Queer Culture Festival	34	5.9
Public representative or candidate for a public position	66	11.5
Seoul mayor Park Won-soon	30	5.2
President Moon Jae-in	7	1.2
Political party or party politician	43	7.5
Democratic Party	11	1.9
Lawmakers supporting homosexuality/pro-LGBT bills	10	1.7
Media, TV station, newspaper	43	7.5
Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC, TV station)	9	1.5
Hankyoreh (newspaper)	9	1.5
Korean Broadcasting System (KBS, TV station)	7	1.2
Judiciary branch	38	6.6
Constitutional Court	14	2.4
Church association or denomination, individual church or pastor	21	3.6
National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK)	5	0.9

TARGETS	N	PERCENT (%)
Private person	10	1.7
University or other educational institution	8	1.4
Company	3	0.5
Other	16	1.4
Embassies or ambassadors supporting queer festivals	6	1.0
TOTAL	576^b	100.0^b

Note: Overarching categories are presented in bold. The most frequent sub-cases of these categories are listed below these categories. ^a The data for the year 2020 only includes the months January–April. ^b Within the overall 693 protest events, 576 targets could be identified, which serve as the total in this table. The total refers to the numbers in bold, i.e., the overarching categories.

When asked who the biggest opponent of the anti-LGBT movement in Korea was, one anti-LGBT activist replied that only “on the surface” it was the gay rights movement. The actual opponent consisted of “forces that want to destroy the nation”, groups that “instigate social chaos” and “make society confused” (Interview 7). This statement is telling, since it shows that the fight against LGBT issues is embedded in a bigger framework. Homosexuality is regarded as an element of ‘confusion’ that is purported to be used by inimical forces to harm the nation. The interviewee attributes the need to protect the nation to Korea’s geopolitical situation, the country still being at war. While resisting to get into the details, it becomes clear that the anti-LGBT activist talks about the truce with North Korea, thus alleging the threat that communism poses to South Korea. As chapters 7 and 8 will demonstrate, such views are frequently vindicated in anti-LGBT activism. The Protestant Right creates a ‘red scare’, claiming that people leaning to the political left support, or collaborate with North Korea, and by extension, also espouse topics such as LGBT rights. The interviewed anti-LGBT activist also holds this opinion. “I do not know if it is a coincidence, but there are a lot of people following it [i.e., North Korea] who advocate homosexuality” (Interview 7).

This larger political agenda may explain the dominant focus of the Korean anti-LGBT movement on political targets. Successfully influencing political parties, lawmakers, and institutions such as ministries and government agencies in a way that they refrain from supporting LGBT rights is a steppingstone for increased political leverage. I am not claiming here that LGBT issues *only* serve as a pretext for actually attaining larger political goals. The frame analysis in chapters 7 and 8 shows that the opposition against homosexuality does have a solid, mostly religiously based, ideological foundation. In addition to this, however, I argue that the Protestant Right *also* engages in anti-LGBT activism to implement a specific, comprehensive socio-political and religious agenda in Korea.

Rather than being a countermovement to LGBT activism, the anti-LGBT movement can be considered an “opposing movement” (Dugan 2004), a movement that did not emerge directly in reaction to another movement, but one that holds opposing positions against a certain topic and therefore competes with other actors for political influence.

However, the Protestant Right's larger socio-political outlook complicates this constellation since it does not merely act as a *challenger* to the state as suggested by the *contentious politics research agenda* (cf. McAdam et al. 2001), the state being defined as the government and the institutions exerting power. In a sense, it is also a *member* of the state, considering its traditionally strong representation in, and its ties with the political sphere (cf. chapter 3.2). This is especially the case in times of conservative rule. And it is in contrast to the LGBT movement, which does not have such 'natural' allies at the state level. For the Protestant Right, attacking state institutions is thus an ambivalent and potentially risky undertaking, especially when these institutions are controlled by conservative governments. The partisan divide is therefore still very much present also in the targets of anti-LGBT activism. Both on the national and local levels, the ministries and lawmakers attacked mostly belong to the Democratic Party. The NHRCK is a special case in this context, since it is officially an independent organization working according to a specific mandate. However, it is also commonly considered a political project of the political left since it was established under the Kim Dae-Jung administration in 2001. Through the years, the NHRCK has consistently called attention to human rights abuses against LGBT people irrespective of the political leaning of the national government in power. Therefore, the NHRCK has been a continuous target for the anti-LGBT movement.

The political divide also reaches beyond the strictly political arena. As the interview with the anti-LGBT activist quoted above shows, anything and anyone associated with left-wing politics and their alleged pro-North Korea stances becomes problematized. The judiciary, as well as the media world and non-aligned church associations are affected by smear campaigns. When, for example, the Moon Jae-in government appointed Kim Myŏng-su as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Protestant Right criticized Kim for his "progressive bias" and his pro-LGBT positions (KACC 2017, September 11). The progressive newspaper *Hankyoreh* is also frequently slammed for its reports boasting allegedly anti-Christian and pro-LGBT attitudes. Conflict even enters Protestantism itself when actors from within espouse LGBT rights or criticize the Protestant Right's uncompromising hostility against LGBT people. As chapter 12 will explore, the progressive church association NCCK, the Christian online newspaper *Newsjoy*, and pro-LGBT pastors, among others, face fierce backlash when they openly show progressive views.

Anti-LGBT contention is thus played out on many different levels: in the traditional institutionalized political arena, through non-traditional activist means, in the judiciary, in educational contexts, in the media, and within Protestantism. These sites of contention are also reflected in the actors targeted by the anti-LGBT movement. This and the previous sections have sought to find out what the conflicts are actually about, and between whom the contention takes place. The next section focuses on the question of how exactly contention gets enacted, describing the action forms and participation levels of anti-LGBT collective action.

6.3 Forms of protest: a ‘war of position’ with increasing participation

The definition of ‘protest’ employed in this study is a broad one. It does not only cover traditional forms of protest such as rallies, petitions, boycotts, and violent means of protest, but also includes other means to create attention and ideally change people’s attitudes towards the issue in question. The PEA dataset shows that communicating anti-LGBT content is in fact a predominant activity of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Of all the action forms used by anti-LGBT activism, press conferences and press releases represent by far the largest activist method, constituting 44.7% of all instances of action forms as depicted in Table 5. Press releases are a relatively cost-effective means to make oneself heard and, if successfully dispersed, have the potential to be covered by diverse media outlets. When such press releases are combined with press conferences held in locations close to one’s opponents headquarters or offices, as is often the case, this action form can prove even more fruitful. Press conferences with banners in front the National Assembly building or the NHRCK headquarters, for example, create powerful images and make the conflict more concrete. Educational events, which make up the second-largest share of action forms (14.7%), have a similar objective as press releases, that is, communicating one’s contents to the larger public. However, seminars and forums on anti-LGBT topics generally have a broader focus, they feature ‘expert’ input, and are aimed at a more specific public, mostly Christians. Chapter 11 will delve into the details of the media and education-related activities of the anti-LGBT movement, also covering its activities on social media platforms – aspects on which the PEA dataset lacks information.

Traditional forms of protest like rallies, as well as petitions and signature collection campaigns come in third (13.6%) and fourth places (7.2%). Other common action forms such as disturbances, demonstrations marches, sending messages to politicians (by e-mail or fax), symbolic forms of protest, and scuffles are of minor importance quantitatively, each appearing less than ten times in the PEA dataset. The use of violence in scuffles and brawls with the police and/or opponent protesters, however, represents a concern for the movement leadership. After the clashes at the Seoul Queer Culture Festival in 2014, Protestant groups such as CCK, CCIK, and KACC issued an advisory note ahead of the counter-rally against the SQCF’s 2015 edition, calling for the avoidance of physical violence and overt hatred since the resulting negative media coverage “would just strengthen the position of homosexuals” (cited in Yu, Yǒng-dae 2015, June 4).

Table 5: Action forms of anti-LGBT activism, 2000–2020^a

ACTION FORM	N	PERCENT out of all instances of action forms (807)	PERCENT out of all protest events (693)
Press conference, press release ^b	361	44.7	52.1
Educational event, forum, seminar	119	14.7	17.2
Rally, protest, assembly	110	13.6	15.9

ACTION FORM	N	PERCENT out of all instances of action forms (807)	PERCENT out of all protest events (693)
Petition, collection of signatures	58	7.2	8.4
Strategic, emergency, or preparatory meeting	51	6.3	7.6
Meeting with politicians	25	3.1	3.6
Prayer meeting, worship, service	19	2.4	2.7
Production and distribution of leaflets, booklets	12	1.5	1.7
Disturbance, hindrance, boycott	8	1.0	1.1
Repressive measure (e.g. heresy trials against pro-LGBT pastors)	8	1.0	1.1
Sending e-mails, faxes, text messages to politicians	6	0.7	0.9
Demonstration march	5	0.6	0.7
Scuffle, brawl	5	0.6	0.7
Litigation	4	0.5	0.6
Survey produced by anti-LGBT organization	3	0.4	0.4
Non-verbal, symbolic protest (e.g., shaving off one's hair)	3	0.4	0.4
Other ^c	8	1.0	1.1
TOTAL	807^d	100.0	100.0

^a The data for the year 2020 only covers the months January–April. ^b The PEA dataset has a certain bias towards press releases since the data of the KACC only consists of such. But even without the 180 KACC press releases this action form would constitute the largest category. ^c The category ‘other’ includes action forms occurring less than three times: defamation, procedural complaints, mission and evangelization, and sending questionnaires to politicians and/or creating an index on them. ^d The total number of action forms is higher than the total number of protest events (693) since more than one action form can occur at one protest event.

The leaders of the anti-LGBT movement are very intent on creating a favorable image of their activism, but also on acting effectively. For this purpose, they frequently hold meetings to prepare important events such as the counter-rallies against queer festivals. The leaders also gather to plan the movement’s short-term tactics and long-term strategy while also being able to act promptly, which is apparent in emergency meetings convened on short notice. A number of leading figures play a central role in the movement, as chapter 10 will demonstrate. They do not only take part in press conferences, rallies, and leadership gatherings on a regular basis, but also often meet politicians and public officials, either to advance their views or to show their disapproval about certain positions and policies supported by these political figures (cf. chapter 10.5). While leadership gatherings and meetings with politicians do not fall under the category of traditional protest events, they serve the important purpose of visibility for anti-LGBT positions both within Protestant confines as well as in the political arena.

What may come as a surprise is the relative absence of exclusively religious action forms. Prayer meetings and similar religious events with an anti-LGBT focus only represent a small share of the overall action forms used (2.4% of all instances). Yet, expressions of Christian faith are present as supplementary items on the agenda at many protest events. Participants at rallies pray together, presenters on the stage fall into sermon-like speeches at seminars and frequently use religious arguments to support their points (cf. also chapter 11). Repressive measures also form part of the religious action repertoires. Chapter 12 will show how Protestant denominations use the accusation of heresy to punish pro-LGBT pastors. There are also explicitly non-religious action forms such as litigation where anti-LGBT actors use the judicial structures of the secular state to reach their goals. The anti-LGBT movement has also commissioned some surveys on the topic of homosexuality to produce public opinion data undergirding their perspectives. The analysis of the movement's framing efforts in chapter 8.3 will further develop the aspects of 'scientific' knowledge and secular argumentative strategies.

The framing strategies are important to understand the 'war of position' strategy of the anti-LGBT movement. However, already a look at the action forms used is instructive in this respect. Be it the press statements, the 'educational' events, or the production of surveys, a major part of the activities is geared towards changing the ideas and attitudes that media actors and the general public – and in fact also conservative Christians – have on LGBT-related themes. As I have argued before, anti-LGBT activism is centrally implemented as a communicative 'war of position' to win the cultural hegemony first, in order to then also be able to seize and stabilize political power. The data on the action forms of the movement supports this argument. The exact ways the movement goes about this Gramsci-inspired 'cultural war' will be treated in the following chapters.

Increasing mobilization of the anti-LGBT movement

Movements choose their action forms based on hopes for causing large mediatic and, by extension, societal and political repercussions. One important variable to achieve this objective is the number of participants in a specific protest event. The PEA dataset provides information on this aspect for the mobilized individuals in concrete protests and rallies, for petitions and similar signature collection campaigns,⁵ and for the total number of established groups that organized and/or participated in protest events. Table 6 exhibits condensed data for four pooled periods. One needs to keep in mind, however, that the accuracy of the numbers given may be questionable since activists tend to exaggerate the number of protest participants to create an image of broad support for their causes. The measure of the median shall balance the risk of potentially excessive claims in this respect.⁶

5 Comments on online bulletin boards of governmental websites also fall under this category. The anti-LGBT movement frequently calls to get active on such participatory portals to express one's disapproval of pro-LGBT law proposals.

6 The median is a statistical measure to indicate the middle number in a row of values. In contrast, the arithmetic mean has the risk of suggesting high average participation when there are very high outliers. The combination of the two measures shall provide a robust overview of the mobilization potential of anti-LGBT activism. Note: in Table 6, the median cases sometimes exhibit several cor-

As for the participation in rallies and other types of protest gatherings there is a clearly increasing tendency. While the numbers for the period 2000–2010 are not very informative owing to the scant overall amount of protest events, the following periods feature a rising trend that is supported by both median and arithmetic mean. In the period 2011–2013, an average of 341 people (median: 100) participated in protests, while this number stood at 1,975 (median: 220) for 2014–2016, and 5,172 (median: 500) in 2017–2020. The biggest protest event in terms of mobilization drew 50,000 participants to the rally against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival in 2019 according to Kukmin Daily. The median, however, indicates that protest participation only seldomly reaches such high numbers and is generally significantly lower, but with an increasing trend over the years.

Table 6: Mobilization of the anti-LGBT movement, 2000–2020

Years	Measures	Participants at protest events (N)	Corresponding topics (code)	Participants in signature campaigns etc. (N)	Corresponding topics (code)	Participating/organizing groups (N)	Corresponding topics (code)
2000–2010	Minimum	120	1	2,233	3	1	4, 5
	Median	-	-	5,000	1	4	1, 2, 6
	Arith. mean	160	n/a	42,411	n/a	4.4	n/a
	Maximum	200	2	120,000	1	12	2
2011–2013	Minimum	50	7	54,000	1	4	1, 2, 6, 8
	Median	100	1, 7	100,000	1	30	1, 7
	Arith. mean	341.3	n/a	96,666.7	n/a	214	n/a
	Maximum	800	7	136,000	7	3,000	1
2014–2016	Minimum	10	6	11,000	9	10	6, 8, 12
	Median	220	3	34,312	10	60	3
	Arith. mean	1,975.6	n/a	58,675.9	n/a	115.8	n/a
	Maximum	20,000	2	100,000	11	1,568	2

responding topics. This is because the median number of participants sometimes appears more than once. This also applies to the remaining measures, except for the arithmetic mean, which, of course, cannot have a corresponding topic.

Years	Measures	Participants at protest events (N)	Corresponding topics (code)	Participants in signature campaigns etc. (N)	Corresponding topics (code)	Participating/organizing groups (N)	Corresponding topics (code)
2017–2020	Minimum	9	2	2,204	18	6	3, 19
	Median	500	14, 16, 17	75,770	15	39	20
	Arith. mean	5,172	n/a	185,596	n/a	104.5	n/a
	Maximum	50,000	9	1,100,000	1, 11, 13	400	13

Topic codes: 1 = Anti-discrimination law; 2 = homosexuality in general; 3 = Military Criminal Code §92(6); 4 = Youth Protection Act; 5 = Criticizing foreign church for pro-LGBT stance; 6 = Homosexuality in school textbooks; 7 = Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance; 8 = Against depiction of LGBT topics in movies, series etc.; 9 = Seoul Queer Culture Festival; 10 = Seoul Human Rights Charter; 11 = Same-sex marriage; 12 = 'ex-gay'; 13 = NHRCK Act §2(3); 14 = Multiculture Ordinance of Puch'ŏn city; 15 = Taegu Queer Culture Festival; 16 = AIDS; 17 = Against nomination of Kim Myŏng-su as Supreme Court judge; 18 = Constitutional amendment (on 'gender equality'); 19 = transition surgeries for trans people; 20 = Amendment of Kyŏnggi Province Gender Equality Ordinance.

Compared to the participants in concrete protests, the numbers of signatures for petitions are significantly higher throughout. The readiness to take to the streets seems to be lower than the willingness to sign a petition or write an anonymous online comment on a governmental bulletin board. This category has shown higher values from the beginning, yet, without showing a clear upwards trend. The maximum numbers of signatures for the respective campaigns are impressive, though. Already in 2007, 120,000 signatures were collected against the Anti-Discrimination Law, followed by 136,000 signatures against the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance in 2012, and 100,000 people who signed a petition against same-sex marriage in 2015. The anti-LGBT movement achieved the highest number of signatures in a broad campaign in 2020, which was directed against the anti-discrimination law, same-sex marriage, and the 'sexual orientation' clause in the NHRCK Act, reaching more than 1 million people.

The third category of quantifiable participation in protest events refers to organized collective actors. The groups within this category organize, or participate in a given protest event, or – as is mostly the case – they support and cosign a public declaration or (press) statement. The numbers given here have to be treated with caution, though. As chapter 10 will demonstrate, not all of these groups are active members of the anti-LGBT movement. In fact, there are only a few ones that can be called a social movement organization (SMO), that is, groups that actively, frequently, and continuously engage in the fight against LGBT rights. Many organizations that appear in the lists of undersigning groups seem to be token participants, since they are only listed without ever being mentioned anywhere else in Kukmin Daily reports on anti-LGBT activism.⁷ Kukmin

7 In a non-systematic Google and Naver (a South Korean search engine) search of groups frequently appearing on those lists, I found that no other data than the mentioning in the lists could be found

Daily also commonly refers to the undersigning groups as ‘church and civic groups’ (*kyogye mit simin tanch’e*). A closer look, however, reveals that the vast majority of these groups are in fact related to Protestantism, and to a minor extent to other Christian faiths.⁸ The reference to ‘civic groups’ has the apparent aim of making the general public believe that also non-Christian, secular groups are part of the fight. Several anti-LGBT groups have indeed names that conceal their activists’ Christian background, such as the *People’s Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (*kōn’ganghan sahoe-rŭl wihan kungmin yōndae*), the *Korean Sexology Research Association* (*han’guk sōnggwahak yōn’gu hyōphoe*), or the *Solidarity Movement against Homosexuality* (*tongsōngae pandae undong yōndae*).

The average number of groups and organizations taking part in anti-LGBT protest events has risen, with the median showing a peak in the period 2014–2016, but going down again 2017–2020. The arithmetic mean exhibits a peak in the period 2011–2013. This is due to an outlier, namely 3,000 Protestant churches in Inch’ōn Metropolitan City collectively joining the forces to fight against the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2013. Another relative outlier occurred in 2015, when 1,568 churches in Taegu Metropolitan City supported and held a congress against the promotion of homosexuality in the context of the Taegu Queer Culture Festival. The maximum number of groups involved in a protest event in the period 2017–2020 is 400, being part of a coalition fighting for the deletion of the category ‘sexual orientation’ in the NHRCK Act’s anti-discrimination stipulations.

In conclusion, the mobilization potential of the Korean anti-LGBT movement is high, bringing together 10,000 and more people at concrete protest events 11 times from 2014 until 2020. The majority of protests, however, attracts far less participants. If then considering that sympathetic media like Kukmin Daily may be reticent to report low numbers of participation, there could be a bias towards higher participant numbers. Moreover, the overall number of protest events, which feature data on participation in concrete protests and signature campaigns is rather low (2011–2013: 11 out of 49; 2014–2016: 37 out of 217; 2017–2020: 56 out of 228). Be that as it may, the anti-LGBT movement mobilizes effectively, particularly regarding the numbers of signatures that activists were able to collect in diverse campaigns over the years. A number of questions remains unanswered, though. For example, who exactly are the individual participants, what is their background? Are they mostly Christians or does the movement also reach other crowds? What role do the participants play for the general lineup of the anti-LGBT movement, taking into account the prominent position of a rather small group of movement leaders (cf. chapter 10)? Chapter 9 will elaborate on the concrete people mobilized and give some preliminary answers to the questions just posed.

To persuade people to be mobilized at all for a specific socio-political issue, however, alluring and inventive argumentative strategies are necessary. This study addresses this

on the Internet in the case of several groups, begging the question whether they exist at all. I am, however, lacking the time-related and financial resources to actually delve further into this investigation, which would perhaps be a journalistic one to fulfill. What is definitely true is that only a rather low number of the groups appearing in these lists is consistently and systematically active in anti-LGBT activities.

- 8 The list of groups produced through PEA reveals that already the names of the groups (including terms like ‘Christian’, ‘church’, ‘holy’, ‘mission’ or ‘ministry’) show their clearly Christian orientation. 156 (or 52.7%) of the total of 296 groups included such Christian or religious references.

crucial movement task by analyzing and categorizing the frames used by anti-LGBT activists. The following chapters thus investigate the ideological or ideational level of movement activities, bringing light into what I refer to as the 'war of position' strategy of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

7. Framing strategies of the anti-LGBT movement

This chapter investigates the way movement actors use frames to sustain their resistance against LGBT rights. Erving Goffman defines frames as “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman 1974: 21) that organize social experience and affect people’s actions. In social movement studies, more specifically, *collective action frames* have been defined as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)” (Benford/Snow 2000: 614). Collective action frames highlight the agentic and innovative aspect of frames, that is, “the conscious signifying work carried out by social movement actors” (Lindekilde 2014: 201). Successful framing serves the the movement’s purpose to change people’s thinking and, ideally, mobilizes them for collective action.

Frames represent one, if not the most important means used in the ‘cultural war’ that the Korean anti-LGBT movement is fighting. In Gramscian terms, the goal of this ‘war of position’ is to achieve ideological leadership in order to then exert concrete and stabilized influence in the political arena. For the purpose of gaining such hegemony, the movement tries to change the ‘common sense’ (*senso comune*), the taken-for-granted conception of the world so that it also actively includes anti-LGBT attitudes. As this chapter and the following chapter shall demonstrate, anti-LGBT activists make use of bits and pieces from common sense to change common sense itself. Put differently, they systematically reinforce and re-organize existing portions of common sense to create a ‘good sense’ (*buon senso*) – ‘good’ having the sense of being processed in an orderly and resonant manner. Such strategic redeployments of existing elements become manifest in the frame alignment processes enacted by the anti-LGBT movement:

- *Frame bridging*: “the linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem” (Benford & Snow 2000, 624), also called *frame articulation* (Snow et al. 2013, 229)
- *Frame amplification*: “the idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs” (Benford & Snow 2000, 624), also called *frame elaboration* (Snow et al. 2013, 232),

- *Frame extension*: “depicting an SMO’s interests and frame(s) as extending beyond its primary interests to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential adherents” (Benford & Snow 2000, 625), and
- *Frame transformation*: “changing old understandings and meanings and/or generating new ones” (ibid.).

These strategic processes of frame alignment show up in the workings of the anti-LGBT movement, with the addition of *framing contests*, which include counterframing against opponents and frame disputes within the movement (Benford & Snow 2000, 626–627).

These framing processes affect the mechanisms and conceptual determinants analyzed below. Frame bridging, for example, is part of the *bricolage* mechanism of combining old and new frames, while the amplification and transformation of frames is enacted in attempts at *identity shift*, with the corresponding *drift* (change of existing aspects due to environmental shifts) and *conversion* (change of existing aspects through their strategic redeployment) modes of identity change. All these, in turn, fall into the category of *dynamic continuity*. Dynamism is also present in the way movement actors turn towards LGBT themes after years of relative disregard, as exposed in chapter 5. This study shows which frames the movement uses for this *attribution of threat*. The analytical category of *opposing desires*, then again, manifests itself in framing contests, which in turn are an indirect part of the *boundary work* mechanism of determining a common opponent. Chapters 7 and 8 now delve further into the diverse framing strategies and corresponding mechanisms deployed by the anti-LGBT movement. Prior to presenting the main results of frame analysis, however, I will give a brief overview, along with a rough classification of the most-used frames.

7.1 Most-used anti-LGBT frames

Table 7 summarizes the frames used by anti-LGBT activists more than 14 times in the period January 2000 until April 2020. For this time, the PEA found a total of 2094 instances of frame usage, which can be roughly categorized into overarching topics. The relatively low number of explicitly religious frames such as Biblical arguments against homosexuality leaps to the eye. The cumulated percentages of Table 7 show that such frames only appear in about 13.7% of protest events and this number does not increase a lot when also considering religious frames with less than 15 usages. There are also frames that point towards Protestantism, but as an institution or group, for example, when anti-LGBT activists claim their own alleged victimhood due to the anti-discrimination law (what they call ‘reverse discrimination’). While such frames may directly appeal to adherents of Christian faith, the vast majority of frames does not have any religious inclination. This is surprising, considering the conservative Protestant background of most of the anti-LGBT movement. It is at the same time a reasonable choice from a strategic point of view. This is because only a minority of South Koreans (around 20%) belong to Protestant or evangelical denominations. In order to also win over other publics, the repertoire of frames must be larger. Anti-LGBT activists therefore commonly suggest that the majority of Koreans is against granting LGBT people same rights, thereby fueling a purported

confrontation between a ‘normal’ majority versus an overly demanding, ‘abnormal’ minority unworthy of rights.

Secular narratives commonly describe homosexuality and related themes as threats: an alleged threat to children, families or the whole nation, a menace to health, and one that is supposed to emanate from abroad. The next subchapter will elaborate on this aspect. Activists also often invoke alleged legal restraints that either formally make pro-LGBT legislation impossible or again consciously create an image of danger surrounding such bills. On another front, the movement uses frames in a conspiracy-like fashion, suggesting that pro-LGBT attitudes of (especially left-wing) politicians and related law proposals are part of a full-fledged hidden agenda, of ‘gender ideology’, or ‘Cultural Marxism’ – narratives that may resonate with the citizens of a country that still finds itself in a geopolitical position of ideological confrontation on the Korean peninsula. The public cost for supporting the LGBT community, for example, concerning the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients (as if only LGBT people were affected), is also a frame that may appeal to everyone regardless of one’s religious affiliation.

Another large part of the anti-LGBT movement framing efforts consists of symbolic frames, which is a type of frame and not so much a category in terms of discernable topics. Symbolic frames provide metaphorical images and symbolic representations of contentious issues rather than presenting more elaborate arguments (cf. Koopmans & Statham 1999, 207). This is the case when anti-LGBT activists speak of “destruction”, “chaos”, or use adjectives such as “toxic” in relation to LGBT issues.

From a temporal perspective, the PEA data does not depict a clear pattern of (types of) frames being used increasingly or decreasingly over time. Of course, some frames directly refer to specific events or occurrences and therefore only appear in that period. For instance, the MERS, SARS and Covid-19 pandemics were used to argue that queer culture festivals should not take place. In most other cases, though, the peaks in frame usage coincide with the increased number of protest events in that period.

Table 7: Most-used frames, 2000–2020 ($N \geq 15$)

Overarching topics	Frames	N ^a	Percent (%) ^b
Symbolic frames	“Destruction”, “collapse”, “harm”	75	10.8
	“Dictatorship”, “autocratic”, “Nazi fascism”	35	5.1
	“Confusion”, “chaos” [<i>hollan</i>]	29	4.2
	“Healthy society”/“healthy sex ethics”, “healthy nation” etc.	22	3.2
	“toxic” (“toxic clauses”, “toxic law”)	21	3.0
	“Obscenity” [<i>ŭmnan</i>], “perversion” [<i>pyŏnt’ae</i>]	20	2.9
	“Distorted” [<i>oegok</i>] sex culture etc.	16	2.3

Overarching topics	Frames	N ^a	Percent (%) ^b
Majority vs. minority/ Victimi- zation	Majority is against homosexuality/same-sex marriage etc., it is against the national sentiment	74	10.7
	"Reverse discrimination": violation of (human) rights of majority/churches/anti-LGBT activists	39	5.6
	If teaching that homosexuality is bad/if teaching the Bible/if pro-LGBT law gets legislated, one gets punished	30	4.3
	Homosexuals use "hate", "oppression", "victim", "discrimination" frames	21	3.0
	Pro-LGBT laws suppress/threaten Christian institutions (schools etc.), in general: oppression of Christians	20	2.9
	Homosexuals use "human rights (abuse)" frame	16	2.3
	Homosexuality is abnormal (but pro-LGBT laws aim to make it seem normal)	15	2.2
Religion	'Hate the sin, not the sinner': One should not hate/ discriminate/use violence against homosexuals	27	3.9
	Homosexuality is an (abominable) sin	23	3.3
	Bible condemns homosexuality (citing or alluding to Bible passages)	23	3.3
	Homosexuality/same-sex marriage is against the creation order, against God	22	3.2
Homosex- uality as a threat	Threat to national security/military combat power ^c	54	7.8
	Infringement of religious freedom, freedom of expression, of Christians' human rights	47	6.8
	Destroys/is bad for marriage and family (systems)	45	6.5
	Goes against/destroys (healthy sexual) morality and ethics	43	6.2
	Spread of homosexuality etc. ^c	36	5.2
	Fear that children/youth/students could be ruined through pro-LGBT legislation, teaching, or events	19	2.7
	Nation/country will be ruined/is endangered by/will collapse due to homosexuality/pro-LGBT legislation	18	2.6
	Homosexuality destroys tradition/traditional values/norms/is not compatible with Korean traditions	16	2.3
	Creates social conflict/division/controversy/turmoil	15	2.2
Legal as- pects/ law-re- lated	Pro-LGBT legislation is unconstitutional/incompatible with Korean law	44	6.3
	If homosexuality/same-sex marriage is legalized, it could have ripple effect	31	4.5
	Pro-gay legislation may/will promote/instigate homosexuality	26	3.8

Overarching topics	Frames	N ^a	Percent (%) ^b
Threat from abroad	Presenting 'worrisome' examples from abroad, like "fall of Christianity"	43	6.2
	One should not follow (Western) countries just because they are considered advanced, one should not be obsequious	15	2.2
	Western countries force homosexual culture upon Korea, "cultural imperialism"; interference into domestic issues	15	2.2
Accusation of hidden agenda/ biased position	Public institutions or TV stations etc. must not have a biased, (i.e. positive) position on homosexuality, must report 'truth'	37	5.3
	Advocacy for LGBT minority under the guise of human rights, "human rights logic"	37	5.3
	Need to procure and provide "expert", "real" knowledge and data, to educate about homosexuality and AIDS	25	3.6
	Hidden Marxist/communist agenda of spreading sympathy for LGBT themes, "cultural Marxism"	22	3.2
	Politicians/public institutions (and the underlying laws) promote homosexuality, there is a culture of promoting h.	19	2.7
	Problematic that homosexuality is taught/treated (as legitimate, normal, and not as harmful) at schools/by media	17	2.5
'Health'/ medicalization	Homosexuals are a high-risk group for AIDS	36	5.2
	Homosexuality is not genetic/innate, is caused by environment, education; can be cured	23	3.3
	Danger of (spread of) AIDS	21	3.0
	Churches should/one has to try to heal homosexuals	15	2.2
'Gender ideology'	"Equality of sexes" [<i>sōngp'yōngdŭng</i>] vs. "equality of both sexes" [<i>yang sōngp'yōngdŭng</i>] means supporting homosexuality and/or gender ideology	23	3.3
	'Gender ideology'	19	2.7
Other	It is not ok to use citizens' taxes/public budget for homosexuality/fight against AIDS/ gender education	25	3.6

^a There have been a total of 2094 instances of frame usage in the years 2000–2020 (April 30). ^b The calculation of the respective percent is based on the total number of protest events (693). The sum of percentages would be higher than 100 because multiple frames can be used at one given protest event. ^c These categories consist of pooled data, i.e., combining all the frames that refer to the overarching theme.

The following sections will now delve deeper into the framing strategies of the anti-LGBT movement. I cannot go into the detail of every framing approach, but will rather carve out – as already mentioned – the general types of framing strategies in light of *dynamic continuity* and *opposing desires*. I argue that through these lenses, we can make sense of a large part of the movement's framing activities. Some final remarks on the term 'strategy' are in order before proceeding to the next sections. It is of course difficult

to claim that all utterances of individual anti-LGBT actors follow an elaborate strategy. It would be an intricate matter for movement actors to control this or to educate all activists in this spirit in the first place. Be that as it may, as I have shown previously and will further elaborate in chapter 10, there is a clear-cut leadership circle who does announce recommendations on how to ideally act and approach things. What is more, the fact that certain types of frames are frequently used by diverse actors suggests that there must be some common understanding of which frames may be beneficial for the movement's purposes, for example in terms of using overt religious frames more often when protest events take place in Christian contexts. Against this background, generalizable statements on framing strategies seem not only possible, but necessary to bring light into the ways the Korean anti-LGBT movement approaches the fight for hegemony on the ideational level.

7.2 Attribution of threat: creating fear around LGBT issues

At the beginning of any socio-political struggle, an issue needs to be made contentious. Nothing is per se problematic or prone to conflict. Things only become contentious if and when there are actors who recognize and label them as such. From the perspective of political opportunity structures, the *Dynamics of Contention* research agenda asserts that opportunities do not exist as "objective structural factors". Rather, they are subject to attribution (McAdam et al. 2001, 43). The social mechanism of *attributing opportunity (or threat)* is clearly observable in Korean anti-LGBT activism. I argue that the Protestant Right has deliberately chosen LGBT issues for problematization. As chapter 5 demonstrated, homosexuality and related topics have been largely disregarded by conservative Protestant actors at a time when similarly oriented political and civic actors elsewhere in the world had already entered the fight against LGBT rights. Then, from the mid-2000s onwards, the Protestant Right in Korea did not merely react to pro-LGBT legislative proposals, but actively construed the whole issue as problematic. Over the years, such activism intensified, broadened its scope both in terms of participant organizations and mobilization, as well as concerning the contents, and thus developed into a mature movement. The forms of this activism have been demonstrated above, and the actors of this movement will be treated in chapter 10. This section shall concern itself with the contents of anti-LGBT activism in South Korea, and in doing so, carve out the country-specific features of the movement's framing strategies.

At the beginning of anti-LGBT activism, there was the creation of fear. In the case of many social movements, the attribution of opportunity is rather a process of invoking threats. In the case of right-wing movements, these deliberately constructed 'threats' often have the goal of legitimizing the exclusion and ill treatment of certain social groups. Ruth Wodak calls such a phenomenon "the politics of fear", which, she argues, right-wing populist actors use to instrumentalize "some kind of ethnic/religious/linguistic/political minority as a *scapegoat* for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and a threat 'to us', to 'our' nation" (Wodak 2015, 2). Wodak builds her analysis on David Altheide's book *Creating Fear* (2002), in which he argues that the creation of fear has become pervasive in large parts of US politics and media.

[F]ear has become a dominant public perspective. Fear begins with things we fear, but over time, with enough repetition and expanded use, it becomes a way of looking at life. Therefore, it is not 'fear of crime', for instance, that is so interesting to me, but rather how fear has emerged as a framework for developing identities and for engaging in social life. Fear is one of the perspectives that citizens share today; while liberals and conservatives may differ in their object of fear, all sides express many fears and point to 'blameworthy' sources – often each other! The fear 'market' has also spawned an extensive cottage industry that promotes new fears and an expanding array of 'victims'. (Altheide 2002, 3; cited in Wodak 2015, 4f.)

In his seminal book *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, Corey Robin argues that fear has in fact been a common denominator of politics irrespective of time and place. He differentiates between private and political types of fears, the latter being political because the fear stems from society and has consequences for it. Robin (2004, 2) defines 'political fear' as "a people's felt apprehension of some harm to their collective well-being – the fear of terrorism, panic over crime, anxiety about moral decay – or the intimidation wielded over men and women by governments or groups." The main argument of his study is that fear is political in the sense that it is used for political purposes, a fact that is, however, often ignored or underestimated (Robin 2004, 3).¹

Attempts at instilling fear do not necessarily predict the actual emotions of addressed publics. From the perspective of political psychology, measuring anxiety in individuals is an intricate matter (Wagner & Morisi 2019, 6f.), which shall not be covered in this study. Rather, the agentic and purposeful level of framing in order to create anxiety is at the center of this analysis. The creators of fear may, however, make use of social-psychological insights on the causes of anxiety. There are three main dimensions that render people anxious or fearful about a given situation: uncertainty, the feeling of lacking control, and unclear accountability. Yet if responsibility or blame can be attributed to an external actor, people tend to react more with anger rather than with fear (Wagner & Morisi 2019, 4).

1 A similar and widely used concept is that of 'moral panics', introduced by Stanley Cohen in his 1972 (2002) book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. Cohen defines moral panics as happening when "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (2002, 1). He also provides a list of constituent elements of a moral panic: "(i) *Concern* (rather than fear) about the potential or imagined threat; (ii) *Hostility* – moral outrage towards the actors (folk devils) who embody the problem and agencies [...] who are 'ultimately' responsible [...]; (iii) *Consensus* – a widespread agreement (not necessarily total) that the threat exists, is serious and that 'something should be done' [...]; (iv) *Disproportionality*: an exaggeration of the number or strength of the cases, in terms of the damage caused, moral offensiveness, potential risk [...]; (v) *Volatility* – the panic erupts and dissipates suddenly without warning" (Cohen 2002, xxii). This study will not use Cohen's concept of moral panics since it is interested in long-lasting, socially constructed 'threats' that serve to support counterhegemonic struggles rather than investigating short-lived phenomena. Moreover, the fear-related frames analyzed here go beyond mere morality issues. This does not mean that the Korean anti-LGBT movement does not create actual moral panics. Quite to the contrary, the protest events can be said to offer suitable platforms for sowing hostility, seeking consensus, and exaggerated rhetoric.

The framing strategies of Korean anti-LGBT activism tick many of the boxes offered by the above approaches to the political 'usage' of fears and threats, as this section shall demonstrate, and as previous research has found. The Protestant Right singles out lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and – to a lesser extent, yet more so in the recent years – trans people as a menacing minorities. This LGBT minority is used as a scapegoat to distract attention from grievances within Korean Protestantism such as declining membership and scandals (Siwoo 2018), as well as to create an "external enemy" for the purpose of closing the ranks internally and increasing political leverage (Han, Ch'ae-yun 2017). The anti-LGBT movement has the goal of making apprehension of LGBT issues ubiquitous, framing LGBTs as threatening 'others'. These politics of fear do not only concern the opponent, though. The goal is to change Protestant identity itself in a way to activate and reinforce the dislike of homosexuality and in order to present oneself as the actual 'victim' of an alleged pro-LGBT climate in politics and society.²

When taking a closer look at how anti-LGBT activists frame homosexuality and related topics, the threat that they create turns out to be virtually all-encompassing. The invoked threats cover a wide range of individuals and collective entities, for whose well-being and continued existence one should worry. These 'threats' are presented as targeting children and young people, and stretch to families, churches, and the nation as a whole. These groups are then claimed to be affected in various areas, ranging from concrete topics such as health, reproduction, their freedom rights, national security, and the taxes they pay. More abstract fears are created in relation to morality, values, tradition, and order. I argue that this broad spectrum of 'fears for any taste' is constructed in a way to resonate with as many different publics as possible. Faithful members of a conservative Protestant congregation, for example, may worry more about an alleged moral decay due to 'sinful' homosexuality, whereas non-believing individuals might be anxious about a purported spread of HIV/AIDS and an allegedly decreased combat power, which are both attributed to gay men by anti-LGBT activists.

Such fear-related frames around LGBT issues are not exclusive to Korea. For instance, the alleged danger posed by queers for children and the youth is commonly evoked by right-wing actors worldwide. They spread false information on LGBT people, purporting that they are trying to seduce, to 'sexualize', and abuse children. Consequently, right-wing actors promote the need to protect them – in short, to 'save our children' as a whole anti-gay campaign came to be named in the 1970s in the United States (Williams, 2018; McCreery 2008; cf. also Graydon 2011 on Canada; Kämpf 2020 on Germany). Narratives of seduction, family values, and disease have been widely used in early anti-LGBT activism in the US. They are still in place, but have been complemented by rights-based frames, presenting LGBT individuals as a minority undeserving of

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- 2 The strategy of creating threats around LGBT issues also came up in my research interviews and was confirmed by two pro-LGBT activists (Interviews 3; 18) and a theology professor (Interview 19). The latter explained that conservative Protestant actors do the same regarding Islam. "It's this islamophobia or homophobia. It is a phobia. It is about identity and fear. And this identity is not a thoroughly developed identity, but rather, I think, fear of the multi-pluralistic society. [...] It is not so much about religion, and I am very sorry that they do things like this in the name of Jesus. But the contents [of activism] are actually not related to Christianity" (my translation, from German to English).

rights, and focusing on the church members' own rights to religious freedom (Herman 1996; Williams 2018). Such framing contests on human and civil rights will be covered in a later chapter (8.1). I will now focus on three areas in which the Korean anti-LGBT movement engages in fearmongering in relation to LGBT themes. I do this to investigate commonalities with cases of anti-LGBT framing elsewhere and to carve out the Korean specifics. These topics are: (1) family values and child and youth protection, (2) health, and (3) national security. Further deliberately constructed threats such as the ones against churches will be treated in the then following subchapter 7.3.

The oddly unspecific queer menace to children, families, and the nation

Consider the following two short statements:

"If homosexuality spreads widely, families will be destroyed and the nation will collapse."

Kim Sun-hŭi, representative of the *Parents Association Loving Education and School* (*kyoyuk-kwa hakkyo-rŭl saranghanŭn hakpumo yŏnhap*) at a protest event against the National Human Rights Commission of Korea; cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, January 28

"The homosexual nude festival makes teenagers sick and ruins the Republic of Korea"
Text on a handwritten poster of the *Jesus Foundation* (*yesu chaedan*) at a protest to demand the withdrawal of the permission to hold Seoul Queer Culture Festival on the central Seoul Plaza; cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, March 30

These quotations show that Korean anti-LGBT activists are quick to press every button on the fearmongering keyboard. Owing to homosexuality and related events and policies, their story goes, young people and families are harmed. But the cascade of alleged doom does not stop there. It is not only the children and the heterosexual family system that is claimed to be threatened. It is the whole society, the country, and nation that must tremble in face of the LGBT menace. In many cases, the lists of purported threats proposed by anti-LGBT activists culminate in an imminent collapse of the entire social and political structures. The link between family and nationalist ideologies has been at the center of diverse social-scientific studies (e.g., Freiner 2012; Albanese 2006), as has the connection of these topics with anti-LGBT activities, also in Korea (Jung, Gowoon 2020; Kim, Nami 2016, 81–107). The family has traditionally played an important role in Korean society. Neo-Confucianism lies at the root of strong intra-familial hierarchies, filial piety, and the will to beget a worthy (male) heir. Chang Kyung-Sup argues that under industrial modernization in South Korea from the 1960s on, this traditional familism became even more pervasive. Chang emphasizes the newly appreciated affectionate dimension of families as against the hardship of industrial-style labor, as well as the instrumental aspects of family life. Koreans "came to develop an ideology that family has to function as the primary instrument for its members' social competition for status, wealth and power" (Chang 2010, 17–19; cf. also Johannemann 2021).

Unsurprisingly, the continuation of families and, ultimately, of the nation is a major concern in statements and texts of the anti-LGBT movement. Homosexuality is not only

presented as a moral vice from a religious perspective, but also as having direct consequences for the survival of Korea. South Korea has one of the lowest birthrates worldwide, and activists create the fear that it might even further decrease owing to an alleged spread of homosexuality. Families are at risk of being discontinued if sons and daughters are 'seduced' by the media or the educational system to 'become' gay or lesbian, if the state allows same-sex marriage and abandons the traditional family model. Low birthrates in themselves, however, are only the beginning of the potential damage – the economic consequences are also part of the movement's framing endeavors. One anti-LGBT activist puts it as follows: "In Korea, premarital cohabitation is on the rise, and if same-sex marriage is legalized, the birth rate will be lower than it is now, which will significantly slow down national competitiveness" (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, January 28). Another activist extends the danger to the alleged harm children experience if they were to be adopted by same-sex couples.

In the end, the biggest victims will be our children [...] The same-sex couples will be unable to give birth, which will lead to a decrease in population and a weakening of the national labor force, and even if same-sex couples adopt children, they will have serious emotional and psychological difficulties, as shown in many cases. (Cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, January 19)

While the linkage of homosexuality with the lowest-low reproduction level can be called a specifically Korean frame that may resonate in this national context, other frames are not exclusive to Korea, but no less powerful. This is especially true when claiming a threat towards children and the youth. They are described as a particularly vulnerable group, falsely claiming that homosexuality is a condition one acquires (see also chapter 8.3).

[...] because of the excessive exposure of homosexuality to students whose sexual identity is not yet properly established, many students could be turned into 'potential homosexuals', which shows that this [exposure] is not done for educational purposes. Rather, it can be expected to encourage a corrupted culture and to ruin the future of the students and of the nation. (KACC 2014, January 2)

The rhetoric gets quite harsh when it comes to alleged threats to children. In this context, activists try to arouse repulsion against LGBT people by suggesting that children themselves might turn against the traditional marriage and family systems, or that they could fall victim to alleged homosexual sexual offenders. Yi Chae-hüng, representative of the *Parents Union for Education of the Chosen People* (*sönmün kyoyuk hakpumö yöhnap*), characterizes this alleged threat at an event of ex-gay groups against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival: "Our children are in danger [...] What would you do if a man entered [your family] as your daughter-in-law, and a woman as your son-in-law? Homosexuality is love? Don't lie to me. Homosexuals are just sex addicts looking for food" (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, June 10).

The trio of children–family–nation is, as has been shown, a frequently used combination of frames, which indeed addresses what one might call rational or at least logical fears of a diminishing population. This insight cannot be drawn only from the PEA data,

but these frames were also used by several anti-LGBT activists interviewed for this study (Interviews 16; 31; 32; 34). Homosexuals are said to not be able to procreate, hence the alleged danger of even lower birthrates – without, of course, considering the responsibility of the way larger, heterosexual part of society. Anti-LGBT activists here engage in frame amplification: they extend the existing perception of problematically low reproduction rates by also blaming homosexuals and those supporting LGBT rights for it. Along with the narrative on low birthrates goes the framing strategy to invoke potential harm to children and adolescents through LGBT influence – also by falsely insinuating that scientific studies have shown a negative impact for children adopted by LGBT people. All this is done using extreme language, suggesting that destruction, collapse, corruption, chaos, and other mischiefs were imminent.

It is astonishing, however, that the vast majority of statements in relation to the alleged threat of homosexuality to children, families, marriage, and the nation as a whole fails to convincingly explain *why* this is the case. Most speakers at anti-LGBT events just present a list of (often unconnected) threats whose relation to homosexuality remains oddly abstract. It seems that the movement, to some extent, takes anti-LGBT attitudes for granted. One example from the founding statement of the minor *Christian Liberty Party* (*kidok chayutang*): “The Republic of Korea has achieved industrialization and democratization in the shortest period of time in world history, but it is threatened by suicide, divorce, smoking, homosexuality, pornography, homosexuality [sic!], Islam etc.” (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, January 31). Why exactly the ROK should fear homosexuality – or any of the other aspects mentioned, for that matter – is unclear, not only here, but also in many other statements made at protest events. Reduction of complexity is, of course, necessary when trying to convince people who are still unfamiliar with a certain topic, and to win over new adherents for the fight against this purported grievance. The frequent absence of any real explanation or evidence as to why homosexuality is something one should fear is surprising nonetheless, but not exclusive to the Korean case. Melinda Miceli (2005) argues that the US Christian Right uses morality frames of the kind seen also here, exactly because evidence and facts are not necessary when certain cultural beliefs are claimed to present something as abnormal or immoral. She cites Haider-Markel and Meier (1996, 333) in this context, who argue that “morality politics issues are highly salient with little need to acquire any information (technical or otherwise) to participate in the debate. Everyone is an expert on morality.” Many of my interviewees confirmed this strategy of stigmatization (Interviews 1; 2; 3; 5; 15), demonization (Interview 11), and creation of an external enemy to cover up internal problems (Interviews 1; 12; 13; 26; 29).

This particular way of framing and of combining seemingly unconnected frames (*frame bridging*) has the potential of yielding effects in two ways. First, the very uncertainty and unclear accountability may generate or increase fear around LGBT issues (cf. Wagner & Morisi 2019). The opponent remains obscure and unfathomable to a certain extent. When repeatedly hearing that homosexuality is bad, sinful, and detrimental to one's children, one may turn to opposing homosexuality and everything that is (said to be) linked to it. At some point, perhaps, it is enough to just mention the term ‘homosexuality’ to instill people with aversion. In a press statement from April 2020 demanding the cancellation of the Seoul Queer Culture Festival due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the KACC does not give proper reasons why this should be done other than the pandemic.

Rather, the KACC (2020, April 2) writes: “The anti-family, anti-social, anti-ethical and negative aspects of homosexuality are already well-known to all people.” In the year 2020, after around 10 years of fervent activism, one can expect that a certain level of anti-LGBT ‘knowledge’ got established, at least among specific constituencies within the Protestant Right. Regarding the general public, however, it is not so obvious that anti-LGBT attitudes became an unquestioned and manifest part of common sense. In this context, the above speech act of claiming that something is common knowledge is a potentially powerful means to make bystanders consider their position on the issue, at the very least to avoid the appearance of being ignorant.

The second aspect is – despite the relative diffuseness of the opponent – that the opponent can be pinpointed. Even though the reasons as to why homosexuality is harmful remain unclear at times, homosexual people can be named and, thus, be turned into a scapegoat. This way, fear and threats can be modified into something productive, canalizing potential anger into mobilization against LGBT rights. The question of what the opposing group can actually be held accountable for is of secondary importance. At least, this is the case for LGBT individuals and groups who – as I have shown previously – are not a frequent target of anti-LGBT activities. Concrete outlets for one’s anger, however, are available in most cases. These consist of the governmental, educational and media institutions that promote pro-LGBT policies and attitudes, or that are accused of doing so.

Overall, I argue that homosexuality has become a *master frame* of the Protestant Right. Master frames are special due to their flexible usage, wide interpretive scope, and influence (Benford & Snow 2000, 618f.). As this study will show also in other chapters, ‘homosexuality’ has not only developed into an organizational frame that is only used by actors from the Protestant Right. The generic use of this overarching frame has stretched to other actors, most notably politicians who discovered the potential of negative politicization of this topic as well (cf. chapter 10.5). Within the repertoire of issues commonly vilified by the Korean Protestant Right, homosexuality has risen to prominence besides anti-communist, anti-Muslim, anti-migration, and anti-feminist claims. As shall be shown later in this chapter, activists flexibly combine anti-LGBT impulses with these bones of contention in a *bricolage* way.

“For a healthy society”: evoking homosexuality as a disease and threat to public health

Presenting homosexuality – and to a lesser extent also transsexuality – as potential health risks is a common framing strategy of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Activists focus on two main aspects of this alleged threat to public health. First, they claim that homosexuality itself is a disease, an acquired condition that can be ‘healed’ rather than something one is born with. Second, homosexuals are presented as being prone to catching and spreading diseases, first and foremost HIV/AIDS. To prove their points, activists often refer to alleged scientific results or statistical information on infection rates. Many speakers at protest events are professors, medical doctors, and pharmacists, giving the image of educational and expert authority. Whether they are in fact experts on the topic at hand is questionable, though, as is the accuracy of the data they provide – and often

exaggerate, for example, in terms of the frequency and gravity of HIV/AIDS cases in Korea. The following statement by Min Söng-gil, a former psychiatry professor, summarizes many of the claims anti-LGBT activists make to conflate homosexuality with disease.

Homosexuals have mental and health problems, which add to the social, economic, and medical costs for the general public. [...] Advocates of homosexuality claim that homosexuality is inherited, but it has been proven to be a scientifically wrong claim. Some homosexuals naturally change into non-homosexuals as they get older, and some have changed to be heterosexuals by Christian faith. [...] Even if you have a homosexual tendency, practicing homosexuality is a matter of individual choice and it is not an ethically and morally responsible act. [...] It is necessary to properly inform all citizens, especially teenagers, about the truth on homosexuality from a perspective of medical science. (Cited in Paek, Sang-hyöŋ 2015, October 8)

Homosexuals are not only blamed for allegedly spreading diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, but also for the public costs needed for the treatment. Sexual minorities are displayed as a financial burden since taxpayers' money is used for supporting people who, the story goes, have themselves chosen their way of life. Anti-LGBT activists frame them as individuals unworthy of receiving health care like anybody else due to their immoral 'decision'. And worse, their self-inflicted misery entails consequences for everyone's financial situation.

Another aspect often invoked concerns the alleged possibility of 'healing' homosexual people, of converting them to 'healthy' heterosexuals 'again'. A phrase frequently seen on posters is that of demanding LGBT people to "come back", assuming that they succumbed to evil and unethical temptations and got corrupted (cf. Interviews 1, 12; Siwoo 2018, 189). Rather than treating homosexuality as a medical indication, the overcoming of one's 'unhealthy' sexual orientation is framed in a religious way. It is argued that by means of strong faith, by praying and following Jesus, one can 'escape' homosexuality. The lost sheep strayed from God's path, but is called to come back to the flock. Indeed, many anti-LGBT activists claim that churches, through teaching the 'truth' about homosexuality, can 'help' people leading 'normal' lives again. Many also call for providing explicit services to assist people on their path 'back' to heterosexuality. There are a few groups within the anti-LGBT movement that offer what is commonly called 'conversion therapy'. *Holy Life*, an ex-gay group around Pastor Lee Jonah (*Yi Yo-na*) in particular represents a spectrum of the movement which promotes the motto 'love the sinner, but hate the sin', showing sympathy for homosexuals willing to 'come back' rather than besieging them with hateful statements in public. However, the mainstream of the anti-LGBT movement criticizes this as thinning out the issue, while the ex-gay group around pastor Lee reproaches other organizations of the Protestant Right of merely using the topic for the purpose of increasing their political clout (Siwoo 2018, 78). Chapter 8.1 will elaborate on this internal conflict.

Creating fear of homosexuality spreading all over society fits in the image of an infectious disease. The youth are presented as being especially vulnerable to this 'health threat', since their sexual identity is viewed as still unstable during puberty. Besides homosexuals, the anti-LGBT movement also detects other alleged agents who propagate

und thus spread homosexuality. Schools textbooks, the media, the NHRCK, and the *Korean Disease Control and Prevention Agency*, to name only a few, are confronted with accusations of not reporting the 'truth' about the harmfulness of homosexuality. The following excerpt from a KACC press statement shows this reproach. It is also an example of the exaggerated claims on the HIV/AIDS infection rate of homosexual people.

The correlation between homosexuality and AIDS is almost absolute, but the media is not reporting it. The reason for this is that the National Human Rights Commission of Korea ordered the Journalists Association of Korea to create the 'Human Rights Reporting Rules', according to which one must not to report criticism about homosexuality or homosexual diseases, so most people's right to know is blocked. (KACC 2017, May 19)

In 2011, the *Journalists Association of Korea* in fact established such rules, but with the goal of preventing reports that include false, distorted, discriminatory or hateful content on sexual minorities – apparently the exact opposite of what the anti-LGBT movement intends to do (cf. Journalists Association of Korea 2022). It is a common strategy of the anti-LGBT movement to accuse others of withholding 'actual facts' and 'the truth' on sexual minorities and their alleged connection to diseases. This is duplicitous behavior since anti-LGBT activists themselves engage in circulating false or at least inaccurate information. For example, they exclusively speak of AIDS, concealing the fact that an infection with the HI virus does not necessarily mean that there will also be an outbreak of AIDS, even less so in a developed country like South Korea, which has a well-functioning health care system. An infection with HIV is not a death sentence any more these days, and, if treated, the transmission of the virus is virtually impossible. Rather than creating fear around HIV/AIDS in relation to one specific group only, it would be better to inform objectively about the disease without prejudice, for it is not only homosexual men who can get infected. It is to be doubted, however, that an actual concern about people's health lies at the heart of the anti-LGBT movement's health-related framing endeavors.

Overstating risks and presenting wrong information is not only done with respect to health issues, though. Siwoo (2018, 184–190) found that many anti-LGBT activists emphasize that they state the truth while in fact telling a lie, or at least sharing distorted information – which he analyzes as a "post-truth" strategy (cf. also Fuller 2018). As already mentioned above, the movement tries to hide the distinction between appearance and reality not only by claiming truthfulness in a speech act, but also by undergirding this with purported academic experts pronouncing their alleged expertise. 'Stretching' the truth is also part of this strategy. For example, it is true that numbers of HIV infections have been rising in South Korea until 2020, yet, on a relatively low overall level (about 1000 new infections per year). The share of infections due to same-sex activities passed the 50 percent threshold (of all HIV infections) for the first time in 2020, thus, revealing that assertions of an 'absolute correlation' are excessive (Kim, So-hyun 2020, July 14). Anti-LGBT activists also often claim that LGBT people suffer from loneliness and depression *because of* their chosen lifestyle. It is true that LGBT people, especially younger people, have mental health problems, but these are predominantly caused by the experience of discrimination, rather than being innate (Lee, Hyemin et al. 2021). It seems that the anti-LGBT movement engages in blame shifting here. It is cynical, however, when the very ac-

tor who makes the lives of LGBT people (increasingly) complicated in the first place takes recourse to such framing strategies.

To sum up, using health-related frames in one way or another proves effective for the anti-LGBT movement. Everybody has an interest in their health, which explains its high potential of resonating with larger publics. Therefore, the term ‘health’ is frequently used in symbolic and generic ways by anti-LGBT activists: ‘healthy family’, ‘healthy nation’, ‘healthy sex ethics’. At the same time, the fear around this issue remains diffuse and may therefore even get stronger. In view of the manifold avenues through which one can allegedly contract homosexuality, uncertainty prevails. However, this fear can be transformed into action because the ‘perpetrator’ – or, in some cases, the object of healing through faith – is well known, as are the institutions that are held accountable for their alleged pro-LGBT (and anti-health) complicity. The topic of health seems beneficial to the movement to the extent that two of the most important anti-LGBT organizations have the term in their names: the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (*kōnganghan sahoe-rŭl wihan kungmin yōndae*) and the *Korean Association of Family and Health* (*han'guk kajok pogŏn hyōphoe*). The latter SMO hosts an annual event on December 1st, World AIDS Day, to inform about dangers of this disease and, of course, about the alleged connection to homosexuality. In 2017, pro-LGBT activists disturbed this event by taking the stage and criticizing the spread of false information with slogans such as “Hatred related to AIDS is the problem, not the treatment of infected people” and “Hatred against homosexuals spreads AIDS” (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyōn 2017, December 1). This confrontation is noteworthy, since the pro-LGBT movement does not frequently enter into direct conflict with anti-LGBT activists, and it shows that deliberately false and vilifying narratives do not go unchallenged.

Securitizing gay men in the army: the geopolitical dimension of anti-LGBT fearmongering

The military plays a huge role in South Korea. In face of the North Korean military and nuclear threat, South Korea spends a considerable amount of its national budget on defense and requires virtually all male citizens to perform a compulsory military service. The South Korean army features its own jurisdiction with a *Military Criminal Code*. Since 1962, this Code includes a provision banning and punishing sexual acts between male soldiers that is in force until today. Since the turn of the millennium, there have been several attempts to abolish this provision, article 92(6). The Constitutional Court, however, upheld the article three times, in 2001, 2011, and 2016.³ Whenever such court decisions were pending in recent years, the anti-LGBT movement got active to lobby for maintaining article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code. This chapter shows how the movement has been trying to further politicize the issue of gay men in the military.

Table 7 demonstrates that matters of national security and the Korean military are frequent contents of anti-LGBT framings. I argue that the strategy of creating a threat

3 For more details on article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code and recent events around it, see footnotes 12 and 13 in chapter 5.2.

around LGBT people in the military can best be analyzed using the concept of *securitization*. Buzan et al. (2022 [1998], 25) define securitization as being “constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects.” Traditional international relations theory commonly regards such existential threats as pertaining to the area of geopolitics and the military. Securitization theory also takes into account non-traditional security issues, claiming that basically anything can be constructed as an existential threat, for example, to a state’s ideology in the political sector, to collective identities in societal affairs, or to the survival of species in the environmental arena (Buzan et al. 2022, 22f.). Securitizing issues is thus a form of politicization, but distinctive in that it designates a certain issue as a security threat. In this sense, securitization is similar to the *attribution of threat* mechanism of the DOC research agenda.

Several studies have focused on the securitization of LGBT issues. Nuñez-Mietz (2019), for instance, shows how LGBT themes have been turned into existential threats in Russia and Hungary as a means to fend off local advocacy for sexual minorities. Other studies in the field of social psychology focus on gay men in the Israeli military and demonstrate that preconceived ideas of gay soldiers as negatively influencing combat power – upon which policies like ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ (DADT) in the United States are based – are in fact flawed (Kaplan & Rosenmann 2012; cf. also Jones 2020). The DADT policy was abolished in 2010, but until then, it was a very concrete symbol of the suspicion against LGBT service members. In South Korea, this distrust persists until today on the legal level, and the anti-LGBT movement strives to maintain or even intensify the image of LGBT soldiers as security threats, also on the societal, ideational level.

Anti-LGBT activists use two main lines of argument against homosexual men in the army. The first follows the alleged threat to the nation state as a whole seen in previous sections. It is argued that allowing gay soldiers to serve openly (or at all) in the military would considerably weaken combat power and thus jeopardize South Korea’s defensive power and its geopolitical standing. The second purported threat is created through presenting the army as a homosocial breeding ground for homosexuality where male soldiers are claimed to fear molestation or seduction by gay ‘sex offenders’. In all this, we can often find a dash of conspiracy thinking like in the following statement by Kang Yöng-gün, a representative of the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* (*taehanmin’guk chik’gi pulgyo tongch’ong yönhap*), a right-wing Buddhist organization, which occasionally sends speakers to anti-LGBT protest events.

The reason why the provision of the Military Criminal Code, which does not have an equivalent in general society, exists in the military is because it is a special organization that requires strong discipline. [...] Homosexuality is not a matter of human rights and freedom, but a strategy of forces to topple the Republic of Korea. (Cited in Paek, Sanghyön 2016, June 22)

Another activist, Yi Hüi-böm from the *Korean Patriotic Citizens’ Coalition* (*taehanmin’guk aeguk simin yönhap*) also sees military discipline at risk. He argues that allowing openly gay soldiers in the army would be especially damaging in light of the important position that the army has in Korean society.

No matter how much Korean society suffers from extreme confusion among ideologies, generations, and regions, there is an organization that fulfills its duty, which is the army. [...] If homosexuality is allowed in the military, military discipline will be shaken, and defense capabilities will be undermined. I ask the Constitutional Court to declare the Military Criminal Code constitutional. (Cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, June 22)

Anti-LGBT activists create the fear that normally steadfast institutions such as the army would waver should homosexuality be allowed in its ranks. In an attempt to prove this point, the KACC uses foreign and historical examples, the substance of which is dubious, though.

It is a well-known fact that one of the reasons why the army of the Roman Empire, an ancient superpower, collapsed helplessly in face of the invasion of the barbarians was homosexuality and the promiscuous sex life prevalent in the army. Military power comes from military discipline, and if discipline collapses, the army will collapse in a moment without being able to fight properly like the Vietnamese army or Chiang Kai-shek's troops. Doesn't North Korea execute soldiers who engage in same-sex acts because it knows all this? (KACC 2016, May 23)

In this statement, North Korea is presented as a drastic example in the way it deals with homosexual service members. In other contexts, the KACC compares the issue of gay soldiers with that of the security threat posed by North Korea: "The issue of homosexuality in the army is a matter to be more vigilant about than the North Korean nuclear issue" (KACC 2014, March 19). Such hyperbolic statements are used to substantiate the alleged 'existential threat' emanating from queer soldiers in the army. The geopolitical conflict – on the military level, but also on the ideological level between South Korea and North Korea in particular – combines well with the movement's anti-LGBT fearmongering. With these securitizing moves, the anti-LGBT movement tries to make relevant audiences accept their threat claims (cf. Buzan et al. 2022, 25). The most important parts of the audience are, of course, lawmakers and judges, but also high-level military representatives, since they are the ones potentially performing countermeasures proposed by the securitizing actor. "If a given type of threat is persistent or recurrent, it is no surprise to find that the response and sense of urgency become institutionalized" (Buzan et al. 2022, 27). While one cannot discern clear-cut causalities between the activities of the anti-LGBT movement and the way decision makers act, I suppose that the constant reinvigoration of alleged LGBT threats to national security does leave its marks on political, judicial, and organizational decisions.

One if not the crucial demand of the anti-LGBT movement is the preservation of article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code. In fact, the Constitutional Court has upheld its constitutionality so far. This provision does not only concern security in the traditional sense but also, as hinted at above, but also defines further aspects as threatening, that is, the alleged spread of homosexuality and other 'non-traditional' types of gender identities within the military. Anti-LGBT activists create an odd narrative of how soldiers are allegedly put in danger due to the hierarchical and homosocial character of the army, as displayed in the following press statement.

The military consists of vertical human relationships in strict upper and lower orders, and has an environment in which a large number of vigorous young male conscripts live in closed groups for a long time, with no way to smoothly resolve sexual desires with the opposite sex. Therefore, compared to the general society, abnormal sexual bargaining between people of the same sex is significantly more likely to occur than sexual encounters between people of the opposite sex. (Cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, July 13)

In another strongly worded press release, the KACC problematizes the claim that consensual sex between men should not be subject to judicial persecution – a claim made by agents of “desecuritization” (Buzan et al. 2022, 29) such as the NGO *Center of Military Human Rights Korea* (*kun in'gwön sent'ö*). But the KACC goes even further, trying to create fear among parents who have conscripted children in the army and demanding that military officials proactively crack down on homosexuals in the army.

Even if there is a so-called ‘consensus’, it is very dangerous to think that everything is just as soon as consensus is reached. If so, is it possible to commit a felony such as a crime or a murder by ‘consensus’? When homosexual sex crimes occur within the military, the thing we have to worry most about is the parents who send their children to the army. Parents sent their children to the army to fulfill their sacred ‘duty of defense’, not to be asked to be homosexual by their superiors or senior soldiers, or to be sacrificed by same-sex sexual violence. If this is not prevented, what kind of parents would want to send their children to the army? [...] Our army must constantly track down homosexuals in the army, without an inch of error, fear or hesitation, and isolate them in the military organization. This is because homosexuality will ultimately harm the nation and its people. (KACC 2017, April 25)

The demand to actively track down gay soldiers within the Korean military was indeed fulfilled by military staff. The persecution of male soldiers who were accused of having sex with other men increased significantly in 2017, when 29 soldiers were investigated. This “gay soldier witch-hunt”, as the Center for Military Human Rights (2019, 1) called it, was bolstered by Kukmin Daily as well. In fact, one could argue that it was this daily newspaper that initiated the renewed application of article 92(6) in the first place. Paek Sang-hyön, a Kukmin Daily journalist who frequently covers anti-LGBT content, published an article in June 2016 scandalizing the fact that soldiers used a gay dating app, and especially, that one soldier used an explicit photo of himself that is presumed to be taken inside military premises (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, July 11). When in May of the following year, a soldier was sentenced to two years of prison for having had gay sex, Kukmin Daily welcomed this conviction, writing that homosexuality should never be tolerated in the army (Kukmin Daily 2017, May 24).

The securitizing efforts of the anti-LGBT movement thus proved ‘fruitful’, yielding the concrete result that military officials resumed the active persecution of gay soldiers in the Korean army based on article 92(6) of the Military Criminal Code – a provision that had actually not been applied at all for a long time. The securitization moves of anti-LGBT activists had, and continue having grave legal and personal consequences for gay soldiers. The court sentences, I argue, play into the hands of the anti-LGBT movement,

since they can be interpreted as an official, legal proof of the alleged danger of homosexuality for the army and for the nation as a whole. It is not so clear, however, that this perspective will prevail after all. In April 2022, the Constitutional Court changed its own interpretation of article 92(6) to a certain extent, retracting the sentences against two gay soldiers who had had consensual sex outside the barracks (Choe, Sang-Hun 2022, April 21). This decision was taken in the course of desecuritizing efforts of the Center for Military Human Rights and other pro-LGBT civil society groups. They provided legal and moral support and were thus able to chalk up this partial, yet important victory against the vilifying activities of anti-LGBT actors. It is to be expected, however, that the anti-LGBT movement will continue exploiting the 'potential' of securitizing LGBT issues in relation to the military, as well as in other societal areas, for they serve their deliberate construction of in and outgroups, as the next section shall demonstrate.⁴

7.3 'Us' versus 'them': boundary work and identity shift

Attributing threat to LGBT issues is not only done to create fear and a sense of urgency to counteract among the general public. It also serves to construct or refine collective identities. Through the attribution of threat, activists determine opponents and, consequently, provoke conflict. Alberto Melucci (1995, 47) argues that conflict strengthens internal solidarity, or what Snow and Corrigall-Brown (2015: 175) call a "shared sense of 'one-ness' or 'we-ness'". Self-identification and the identification of imagined or actual 'others' are crucial for collective identity (Melucci 1995, 47; Snow & Corrigall-Brown 2015, 175). In turn, a strong collective identity is important for the establishment of social movements and sustainable participation in the first place (Gamson 1991, 27). Creating threats around LGBT issues also contribute to other aspects that Melucci (1995, 44f.) defines as key elements of collective identity: the shared cognition of goals, that is, to make the 'LGBT threat' disappear, and emotional involvement associated with fear, which further reinforces the sense of unity.

This section demonstrates that two social mechanisms in particular can be observed in relation to the collective identity of the anti-LGBT movement – or rather, concerning its endeavors in relation to collective identity: boundary work and identity shift. *Boundary work* "involves creating a reciprocal identification between group members that simultaneously expresses commonalities with and differences from reference groups" (Flesher Fominaya 2019, 435). This is the typical creation of a collective 'us' versus a collec-

4 Another outgroup within the Korean military are trans servicemembers. The recent tragic case of Byun Hee-soo (*Pyŏn Hŭi-su*) is indicative in this respect. Sergeant Byun had undergone a sex-transition surgery in late 2019 and subsequently had her legal gender officially changed. The Korean army, however, declared her mentally and physically ill and thus unfit to continue working in the military. Byun did not accept her dismissal and, with the help of the NGO *Center of Military Human Rights Korea*, filed a lawsuit against this decision and went public – making her the first openly trans soldier in Korea. In October 2021, the Taejŏn District Court ruled that the discharge of Byun was invalid. Byun Hee-soo, however, was not able to witness the result of the lawsuit. She had committed suicide half a year before the court decision (Lee, Jian 2021, October 7).

tive 'them'.⁵ In this context, Ruth Wodak (2015, 28) speaks of "negative identities", that is, identity construction aiming at "contrasting 'our community' with dangerous 'others'", which also creates new social divides (ibid., 21). *Identity shift* is defined as the "formation of new identities within challenging groups whose coordinated action brings them together and reveals their commonalities." (Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 37). I slightly modify this definition by combining it with yet another mechanism, *appropriation*. In the context of identity shift, appropriation involves one newly emerging actor trying to reorient an existing group to a new conception of its collective purpose without necessarily altering a pre-existing collective identity in its entirety (cf. McAdam et al. 2001, 316). I argue that a group of actors within the Protestant Right 'discovered' the topic of LGBT rights and then increasingly engaged in identity work in order to change collective identity in a way to actively include hostility towards LGBT-related themes. In this sense, appropriation means (re)activating pre-existing negative attitudes so that they become, in Gramscian terms, an active part of 'common sense' and thus exploitable for socio-political contention.

Depending on the public addressed, the strategic outlook of change agents, and environmental factors, this study discerns three ways of attempts at identity shift, which are broadly based on Mahoney and Thelen's (2009) theory on gradual institutional change:

- *Layering*, the introduction of components of collective identity on top of or alongside existing ones;
- *Drift*, the changed impact of existing components of collective identity due to shifts in the environment; and
- *Conversion*, the changed enactment of existing components of collective identity due to their strategic redeployment.

All these three ways of identity change have an element of dynamic continuity. Layering, for example, can be observed in what I describe as *bricolage* – the combination of existing attitudes such as anti-communism with new ones. Drift and conversion also build upon 'old' identity components, namely the negative sentiments on homosexuality in Korean society in general, and in Protestantism in particular. The latter two mechanisms differ in terms of whether structure or agency prevail. While identity change in the form of 'drift' is induced due to external factors, 'conversion' is a process actively shaped by change agents. As I will show, drift and conversion are not easy to differentiate; most likely, they take effect side by side. It is, however, to be expected that conversion is especially effective in contexts where change agents have extensive authority, for instance, as church leaders of a Protestant denomination.

Let me point out that observing identity change is an intricate matter. Therefore, I do not describe or explain actual identity change here, but rather focus on the ways the anti-LGBT movement engages in framing in order to reach the goal of making LGBT issues

5 As chapter 12 will elaborate, boundary work is not only present in relation to 'apparently' opposing forces, but also *within* Korean Protestantism and even within the Protestant Right, where conflicts on how to deal with LGBT issues have emerged in recent years.

contentious and, ultimately, to have anti-LGBT sentiments engrained in people's common sense. This section thus gives an insight into the identity framing of the anti-LGBT movement, having foci: (1) framings which are geared to legitimize anti-LGBT activities by suggesting that a vast majority of people is against LGBT rights, (2) presenting Christians as 'victims', while at the same time claiming that (3) only Protestants can, and do protect Korea against alleged LGBT-related dangers.

Inciting 'the' majority versus a minority

Besides the fearmongering symbolic frames, which are intended to create the image of chaos, collapse, and crisis related to LGBT topics, the second-most used single frame suggests that the majority of Koreans is against homosexuality and LGBT-related laws and that these issues are contrary to the national sentiment (cf. Table 7). Statements in this direction look like this: "it is more dangerous to destroy the order of the majority than to pursue the happiness of the few", writes the Christian Council of Korea (CCK) in a press statement demanding the NHRCK withdraw its decision that certain websites with LGBT content are not harmful for youth (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2003, April 7). Depicting homosexuals as a very small minority whose needs and demands are presented as less relevant than the allegedly opposing opinion of a purported majority is imbued in many topics problematized by the anti-LGBT movement, such as the human rights of sexual minorities: "It is wrong to ignore the human rights of the majority in the name of protecting the human rights of the minoritarian homosexuals" (cited in Kim Chae-san 2016, February 28). Attacks against institutions that support LGBT rights are also often part of this kind of framing: "The National Human Rights Commission only protects the human rights of immoral minorities and ignores the human rights of many people who oppose it. [...] Don't destroy morality and ethics anymore in the name of human rights" (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2019, January 23).⁶ The framing thus does not only denounce the alleged neglect of the majority's opinion, but also – again – claims that the majority is, or may be harmed if it succumbs to the minority and its 'excessive' demands.

By playing off an unspecified majority against a minority, LGBT individuals are portrayed as a group unworthy, or undeserving of having equal rights, let alone of enjoying lives free of discrimination (cf. Herman 1996). Here, anti-LGBT activists display a questionable understanding of human rights, which are generally considered as being universal. Actors from the Protestant Right, however, frequently claim that any pro-LGBT measure and law needs to reach public consensus first – a consensus which, the argument goes, does not exist in Korea. Ahead of the presidential election in 2017, the KACC wrote a press statement, in which it cast doubt on the stance of presidential candidate and later president Moon Jae-in on LGBT issues. The latter had said in a TV debate that he opposed homosexuality. The KACC, however, fears that this may not be true and therefore reminds Moon of the lacking consensus on pro-LGBT issues and of the grave consequences for most people should pro-LGBT legislation be introduced:

6 For the way the anti-LGBT treats the topic of human rights or rights in general, see also chapter 8.1 on framing contests.

[..] sexuality is a matter of personal conscience and choice. If the state provides rights and power to homosexuals, this is not the protection of privacy but interference in privacy and therefore amounts to oppression of the vast majority of people, and it does not fit the emotions, humanity, and social consensus of the people. (KACC 2017, April 28)

The talk of needing to reach a social consensus first creates the image of a democratic concern. In a press conference against the Seoul Human Rights Charter, Christian groups demanded the resignation of the preparatory citizens' committee for acting "undemocratically" by pushing ahead with the charter and thereby ignoring the opinions of the majority of Seoul citizens (Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, November 28). According to this frame, lawmakers do not have the right to pass or change legislation or ordinances that go against the public opinion, social consensus, the 'majority' – or what is presented as such. While confounding representative and direct models of democracy here, taking recourse to public opinion is of course a powerful means to influence the political process when suggesting that challenging groups must win the sympathy of the majority of people first. Siwoo (2018, 141–149) shows that Korean politicians have in fact adopted the focus on societal consensus formation as a way of denying or avoiding political responsibility – also for anti-queer hate and discrimination. Former Seoul mayor Park Won-soon and vice-mayor Im Chong-söl, for example, put off LGBT activists by arguing that the public has to be convinced first. This strategy of postponement was met with resistance from queer activists. The official motto of the Seoul Queer Culture Festival 2017 was evidence for this: "There is no later, we [demand] change now" ("*najung-ün opta, chigŭm uri pakkunda*") (Siwoo 2018, 154).

The deliberate construction of ingroups and outgroups, of an alleged majority versus the LGBT minority has thus diffused successfully from the Protestant Right's anti-LGBT framing efforts to political circles. But how does the anti-LGBT movement substantiate their claims? Unsurprisingly, they use data from public opinion polls. Such data is frequently used at protest events and is part of the action repertoire of anti-LGBT actors. They commission opinion surveys themselves and hold press conferences to present the results. The KACC, for instance, commonly uses survey data in its press releases. Consider the following quotation, which criticizes the demand by progressive women's groups to include education on sexual minorities in school curricula.

It is argued that the prohibition of discrimination against homosexuals and transgender people should be taught in sex education classes, but the issue of the prohibition of discrimination against homosexuality has not reached public consensus. In several public opinion surveys, nearly 80 percent of Koreans oppose homosexuality. In a digital survey by a daily newspaper, this number reaches 99 percent. Still, insisting on teaching this is no different from the idea of ignoring the sound ethics and social concerns of the entire nation. (KACC 2015, August 26)

While the KACC claims that very high numbers of people are against homosexuality according to surveys, it remains unclear where the data stems from and, more importantly, if the methodology of the quoted survey is reliable. The second percentage, 99 percent,

seems to be unlikely, especially when considering that digital surveys often lack representativity. Other surveys directly commissioned by anti-LGBT organizations display similar methodological problems. A survey conducted for the group *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* holds that 82.9 percent of Seoul citizens opposed the Seoul Queer Culture Festival. However, the question and answer possibilities were highly biased, potentially influencing the way survey participants responded. One question of the survey read like this: “What do you think about the homosexuals’ queer festival, which is controversial due to excessive exposure and the sale and exhibition of adult goods?”, with the answer options being “It is inappropriate because it is a public place for citizens and children”, and “Excessive exposure and obscene performances are self-expression, so it is okay” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, July 12).

In all this, the anti-LGBT movement ignores or conceals the fact that other, arguably more objective survey data point in another direction. The Pew Research Center, for example, has continually surveyed public opinion on homosexuality in Korea and many other countries worldwide. The results for South Korea are illustrated in Table 8 below. The numbers of people saying that homosexuality should be accepted by society have increased from 25 percent in 2002 to 44 percent in 2019. Despite the fact that are majority of people still thought that one should not accept homosexuality (53 percent in 2019), the increase of accepting voices is remarkable. When including other demographic factors into the analysis, the picture of acceptance diversifies. There are massive divides in terms of age, political leaning, religiosity, and gender. 79 percent of people aged 18–29 have favorable views on homosexuality, but only 23 percent of people older than 50 think the same way. A similarly large chasm exists between people leaning to the political left (67% acceptance) as against those on the right political spectrum (28%, after all). The differences in these two categories are the highest among the 34 countries surveyed by the Pew Research Center. The second highest divide (after Israel) can be found in the area of religion. Only 22 percent of people who say that religion is very important to them think that homosexuality should be met with acceptance in contrast to 62 percent who are not or less religious.

Table 8: Acceptance of homosexuality in South Korea (Pew Research Center 2019)^a

Percent who say that homosexuality should be accepted <u>over time</u>				
2002	2007	2013	2019	'02–'19 change
25%	18%	39%	44%	+19
Percent who say that homosexuality should be accepted <u>by age cohort</u> (2019)				
18–29	30–49	50+	Youngest–oldest difference	
79%	51%	23%	+56	

Percent who say that homosexuality should be accepted by political leaning (left–right) (2019)			
Left	Center	Right	Difference
67%	51%	28%	+39
Percent who say that homosexuality should be accepted by importance of religion (2019)			
Religion is very important		Religion is NOT very important	Difference
22%		62%	+38
Percent who say that homosexuality should be accepted by gender (2019)			
Men	Women		Difference
37%	51%		+14

^a The surveys were commissioned by the Pew Research Center; Jacob Poushter and Nicholas Kent (2019) are the authors of the 2019 report where the data presented here stems from.

While these data show improvements in the public opinion on homosexuality, they also reveal a significant level of polarization on this very topic. One could on the one hand say that the efforts of the anti-LGBT movement to convince large parts of the general public of the danger of LGBT issues has not proven very effective after all. The high level of acceptance found in young people may raise the hopes that future generations of queer people will have to fear less hostility – should there be a cohort effect. On the other hand, the polarization could be an effect of anti-LGBT activism, which plays into the hands of the Protestant Right. Religious people leaning to the right-wing political spectrum may have developed into a secure support basis of anti-LGBT activities, featuring a consolidated hostile perception of homosexuality and related topics. Studies by Timothy Rich and others confirm this analysis, showing that Protestants in particular have consistently been less supportive of homosexual issues (Rich et al. 2012; Rich 2017).

While it is difficult to exactly quantify this consolidated support base of ‘hardliners’, I argue that they do not represent the majority of Koreans, as evinced by the survey data just shown. As we have seen, however, the framing of the anti-LGBT movement suggests the opposite. Often, anti-LGBT activists resort to blatant exaggerations to make current and potential adherents believe that the vast majority of Koreans opposes LGBT rights. They claim that they speak in the name of basically all people, thus extremely overstating their alleged solidarity basis. This corresponds to populist strategies, which commonly include the claim of speaking for an alleged ‘silent majority’ (Minkenberg 2011, 506). When the *National Institute of Korean Language* changed the definition of ‘love’ in a dictionary to also include same-sex couples, the fiery reaction of anti-LGBT actors also involved such questionable claims, specifically on the numbers of homosexuals and heterosexuals in Korea.

At present, the percentage of homosexuals in Korea is about 0.1 percent. If so, can the feelings and values of 99.9 percent of the people be ignored for 0.1 percent? Ignoring the people's social wisdom and sentiment when interpreting the words we use on a daily basis is never okay. (KACC 2014, April 22)

On another occasion, similarly exaggerated assertions were made by suggesting that *all* residents of Kyōnggi Province were against an LGBT-related policy, the province's *Gender Equality Ordinance*: "The Democratic Party of Korea is opposing God's absolute sovereignty and creative order by revising the Gender Equality Ordinance in the Kyōnggi Provincial Assembly, ignoring the absolute opposition of 13.5 million Kyōnggi residents" (cited in Paek, Sang-hyōn 2019, October 20). The speaker does not only co-opt the population of a whole province – which in fact counts about 13.5 million inhabitants – for anti-LGBT purposes, but also for a homophobic version of Christianity. Such hyperbolic statements may appear absurd to non-Christian bystanders, but they may very well invigorate conservative or fundamentalist Christians with even more fervor. The next section demonstrates how the 'Christian card' is played out in the creation of an imagined 'us' against an evil 'them'.

Using victimhood frames

Inciting majoritarian groups against minorities does not only concern matters of public opinion or an alleged lack of democratic legitimacy. Using such frames also – again – serves to create threats of the kind that a powerful minority is allegedly plotting against the rights and interests of the majority of people, with the majority ultimately falling victim to these schemes. Such victimization narratives are increasingly used by right-wing actors worldwide. Lee Bebout (2019, 66) argues, for example, that the US political right uses narratives of a "faux-victim status" to legitimize their exclusionary politics, but also to counteract a (felt) loss of power and esteem, a strategy he calls "weaponized victimhood". "While social justice movements have long pointed to injustice to achieve equality, those that deploy weaponized victimhood do so to maintain their positions in a social hierarchy" (Bebout 2019, 66). Claims of human rights violations have also entered the repertoire of contention of right-wing actors, as Ron Dudai's (2017) study on actors from the Israeli right-wing camp demonstrates. The "victimhood work" he identifies entails a purported underdog status and an anti-establishment ethos to gain moral authority and to substantiate self-justification. In divided societies, there can even be a dynamic of "competitive victimhood", such as in the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict (Dudai 2017, 876). Similar dynamics will be treated in chapter 8.1, in a section on framing contests, especially in terms of human rights claims.⁷

7 In religious contexts, self-victimization is often conflated with the concept martyrdom. From a sociological perspective, a martyr can be defined as follows: "The martyr will be seen as a member of a suppressed group who, when given opportunity to renounce aspects of his or her group's code, willingly submits to suffering and death rather than forsake a conviction" (Weiner & Weiner 1990, 9). Extreme right groups also use narratives of self-sacrifice and martyrdom (Koehler 2020). Be that as it may, this study will not make use of this concept. In contemporary discussions, martyrdom is mostly used in relation to religiously motivated terrorism and suicide attacks. This focus

The Korean anti-LGBT movement uses victimhood frames in two ways. First, anti-LGBT actors accuse queer people, activists, and their supporters of deploying victimization narratives while, secondly, also creating an image of victimhood for themselves. This double-track strategy may as well be regarded as a competition over who is the 'greater' victim and therefore worthy of recognition. At the very beginning of this overall section, we have seen such a reproach by an important anti-LGBT activist, Yi Su-jin: "homosexuals are suing for the legalization of same-sex marriage with the image of the weak and the victim" (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, June 8). Other anti-LGBT actors criticize that they are accused of discrimination and hatred against LGBT people, which they claim is just a strategy to block legitimate criticism. Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, another central figure of the anti-LGBT movement, said the following at a press conference, demanding to delete the term 'sexual orientation' from the NHRCK Law: "The 'hate logic', which unconditionally bans hatred, is a dictatorial ideology that suppresses the freedom of conscience, ideology, academia, and religion" (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2019, November 20). Using strong wording, he thus denies that the anti-LGBT movement acts in ways that could be perceived as hateful behavior, while at the same time denouncing alleged infringements on other people's rights. The purported "hate logic" is presented as a victimization strategy that he claims is not only used by LGBT groups, but also enforced by public institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission of Korea.

Actors within the Protestant Right assert that terms such as 'hate', 'discrimination', but also 'diversity' are used by progressive activists and politicians to introduce 'wrong cultures' into Korea. When the municipal council of Puch'ŏn, a city in the suburbs of Seoul, tried to pass a *Multiculturalism Ordinance* (*munhwa tayangsŏng chorye*) in 2019, anti-LGBT activists immediately mounted the barricades against this policy proposal, criticizing the alleged promotion and support of homosexuality should the ordinance be introduced. Despite the fact that the ordinance did not include any mention of homosexuality or related terms, the ordinance was eventually withdrawn owing to the massive pressure from anti-LGBT groups. Ko Yŏng-il, head of the *Freedom and Human Rights Research Center* (*chayu-wa in'gwŏn yŏn'guso*) describes the alleged strategy of instilling existing concepts with new meanings as follows:

Terms such as equality, discrimination, diversity, and hatred, which are claimed by advocates and promoters of homosexuality, are used as a kind of terminology strategy, but there is a big difference between these concepts and the general public's thinking. [...] There are attempts to accept wrong cultures such as homosexuality and radical Islam through using such ambiguous terms, which we should actively block. (Cited in Paek Sang-hyŏn 2019, June 25)

What Ko Yŏng-il omits here is the fact that the anti-LGBT activists do the exact same thing they accuse others of. They extend the interpretation of existing concepts to suggest that whenever terms like multiculturalism come up in political contexts, what is ac-

on 'dying for a cause' does not fit the Korean anti-LGBT movement, nor does the focus on suffering alone. The term 'martyrdom' is not used by activists and rather than merely concentrating on suppression, the movement also prominently highlights its strength and agency, as the following section shall demonstrate.

tually meant is the promotion of homosexuality. They claim that bills on gender equality, human rights, and multiculturalism in fact have the central aim of codifying LGBT rights through the backdoor, despite the fact that many of these proposals have no direct connection to sexual orientation or gender identity protection. This effort to attach additional semantic levels to existing terms is a case of frame amplification.

The concrete victimization framing reveals similar double standards: the movement creates an image of oppression, injustice, and victimhood especially of Christians and Christian churches while denying this status to LGBT people – even claiming that the latter deliberately fashion this image of vulnerability and exclusion. It may be that it is a strategic move in the form of victim blaming to distract attention from the fact that the Protestant Right actively and openly shows hostility towards LGBT people in Korea. I argue, however, that victimhood framing mainly has the purpose of closing the ranks of those opposing LGBT rights within the Protestant Right in particular. It is another example of creating competition between an ‘us’ and a ‘them’.

A frame that is frequently used by anti-LGBT activists is that of ‘reverse discrimination’. This storyline includes the claim that pro-LGBT legislation – first and foremost the anti-discrimination law – and any support for LGBT people would lead to disadvantages for the rest of the people. The *Esther Prayer Movement* (*esŭdŏ kido undong*) is a particularly active anti-LGBT group. In 2013, its head, Yi Yong-hŭi, criticized the Sŏngbuk District Office in Seoul for supporting the establishment of an LGBT counseling center. “It is wrong to use the Seoul Metropolitan Government’s budget to advocate and promote homosexuality. [...] The human rights of most citizens will be reversely discriminated against under the pretext of promoting the human rights of sexual minorities” (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2013, July 3). Especially Christians are claimed to be threatened by pro-LGBT developments in politics and society. At the start-off event of the newly formed *Korean Church Council for Countermeasures against Homosexuality* (*han’guk kyohoe tongsŏngae taech’aek hyŏbŭihoe*), So Kang-sŏk, chief pastor at the large *New Eden Church*, denounced an allegedly anti-Christian atmosphere. “The logics of supporting and promoting homosexuality and anti-Christian sentiments are surging like a tsunami to destroy the pastoral ecosystem of Korean churches” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, December 19). Attempts at passing a comprehensive anti-discrimination law in particular are framed as threats for living one’s Christian faith, creating the fear that one could get legally punished if sticking to one’s ‘Christian’ anti-LGBT attitude. At a meeting of Christian university presidents, where also the anti-discrimination law was a topic, one lecturer, the lawyer Yi T’ae-hŭi, put it like this:

As soon as homosexuality is normalized, the Bible will be reduced to an abnormal book, and churches and Christians will become an abnormal group. [...] If this happens, pastors and Christians must bear legal punishment and restrictions if they want to live according to Biblical teachings. The Biblical truth will be distorted into teachings against human rights [of Christians] and for the promotion of discrimination [against Christians], and anti-Christian sentiments will spread in our society. (Cited in Kim, A-yŏng 2015, June 8).

Also in the context of victimization, the frames used by anti-LGBT activists work with hyperbolic statements, suggesting as in the above quote that the Bible would be censored or even entirely forbidden, that people of Christian faith would have to fear draconic punishments for advocating the 'sinfulness' of homosexuality, and that Christianity as a whole would be pushed to the margins of society. In short, the anti-LGBT movement frames pro-LGBT laws and pro-LGBT societal developments as a danger to religious freedom. The movement presents itself as a victim, too, as expounded by Cho Yŏng-gil, a lawyer and leading anti-LGBT activist:

The core of the anti-discrimination law, which supports homosexuality, is to ban anti-gay activities. [...] If it is declared illegal to call homosexuality a sin as outlined in the Bible and if you then say it is a sin, you will be punished and religious freedom will be hindered. (Cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, June 7)

Framing Christian churches and believers as victims is not only done in relation to LGBT issues in the strict sense. The Protestant Right often denounces infringements on their privileges and interests and generally accuses politicians, government institutions, and non-Christian parts of society as having a penchant for 'Christian bashing'. When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in early 2020, the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK) demanded to "stop the oppression of churches", accusing the government of a biased position for restricting church services without also prohibiting the Seoul Queer Culture Festival (SQCF): "The state does not have the authority to enforce and suppress people's religious activities. [...] The government and local governments should stop threatening Korean churches" (cited in Ch'oe Ki-yŏng 2020, March 25). Eventually, the SQCF was postponed from June to September and took place entirely online. In another case, the NHRCK came under fire for a change in its leadership team. The newly elected national government under President Moon Jae-in had appointed a new human rights commissioner, whose position had previously been filled by a person of Christian faith during the two conservative administrations. The KACC criticized this nomination, fearing that the move may be part of a strategy to rashly introduce the anti-discrimination law and promote homosexuality. "This [appointment] amounts to depriving Christianity of its important role, failing to grant Christianity respectful treatment, and disregarding Christianity. It seems to mean to exclude the religious world" (KACC 2018, January 30).

These examples demonstrate that claims of oppression, reverse discrimination, and deprivation of rights have entered the action repertoire of the Protestant Right. Han Ch'ae-yun (2017) and Siwoo (2018) show that, in fact, Korean Protestantism finds itself in a state of crisis due to shrinking membership, and scandals such as embezzlement or handing down churches from father to son. The two researchers argue that Protestant churches do not really tackle these problematic issues, but rather chose the anti-LGBT movement as a means to overcome the crisis. Siwoo (2017, 96) assumes that by doing so, they even aggravate the crisis, for there is still an absence of genuine self-examination and open and critical discussion. While I agree with the general line of this argument, I am not convinced that it is only about internal conflict management. Han also points to the political leverage that the creation of an 'external enemy' intends to achieve. I agree with this perspective on the importance of political influence for the Protestant Right,

but argue that we can only make sense of this when taking a close look at the conundrum of scapegoating, victim blaming, self-victimization, and displays of strength. The latter aspect is of particular importance. The actual dire situation of Korean churches is combined with a deliberately constructed image of oppression in order to consolidate or reinforce unity among Christians – also in relation to the common LGBT opponent. However, I argue that this form of identity formation, or rather identity shift is only effective when this display of alleged victimhood is accompanied by a simultaneous show-off of power and assertiveness. The mere claim of being a victim due to external grievances may already serve to close the ranks and create a sense of urgency. Yet, in order not to give the impression of being powerless or driven into a corner, demonstrating (and not only having) agency is crucial. This insight is also present in the framing endeavors of anti-LGBT activists, as the next section shall describe.

Framing the Protestant Right as a ‘savior’

Besides identifying and attributing problems (diagnostic framing), and providing solutions for said problems (prognostic framing), one of the core framing tasks for a social movement according to Benford and Snow (2000) is to offer a motive for taking action. This *motivational framing* “provides a ‘call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action” (Benford & Snow 2000, 617). Benford (1993) claims that in order to reach this goal, actors resort to four types of vocabularies of motive, which they use to increase the issue’s salience with potential adherents. These vocabularies refer to severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety or duty. The first two types, severity and urgency, can be observed in the – often hyperbolic – framings in the areas of threat attribution and victimization seen in the previous sections (cf. also chapter 8.2). In order to mobilize effectively, however, framing agents also need to invoke the agency that they have or can potentially exert. Anti-LGBT activists in fact refer to Protestant churches as a crucial actor in this respect, one who goes to great lengths to struggle against grievances, also pointing out the duty and efficacy of so doing.

Many of the motivational frames used by anti-LGBT activists have an appellative character: “In an era where vicious human rights dictatorships are rampant, Christians should take the lead in protecting the truth, preventing social diseases and protecting the health of the people” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, November 25). Other statements take the shape of promises and expressions of willpower, like the following promise made by Pastor So Kang-sök: “We will do our best to protect the safety of the citizens of the Republic of Korea and the Korean churches from homosexuality” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2015, September 7). Another activist, Han Hyo-gwan, head of the group *People’s Solidarity for a Healthy Society*, claimed: “We will fight to the end without compromise to protect the freedom of expression, conscience, thought and religion of the people” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, October 12). Activists also often refer to the success stories they have been able to achieve like in the following quote. “So far, conscientious Christian efforts have prevented the attempts to enact an anti-discrimination law” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, June 2).

When framing the role and actions of Korean Protestants as efficacious and dutiful in terms of preventing equal rights for LGBT people, activists frequently credit this

sense of obligation to their historical legacies. The Presbyterian *T'onghap* denomination, for example, emphasized its continuous sense responsibility in the following statement directed against homosexuality:

Since its foundation in 1912, our General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*T'onghap*) has faithfully defended the Bible and Christian traditions, and has been striving to exert ethical, social, and political influence by implementing social movements such as the non-smoking and piety movements. Our General Assembly will take on the public responsibility to build the ethical foundation of the state and the national community by expressing its position on the problem of homosexuality. (Cited in Kim Tong-yöp 2014, April 9)

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian *T'onghap* denomination here combines its Christian mission with a political one and justifies its political actions – also, but not exclusively, against homosexuality – by referring to its volition to uphold sound ethics in Korea. In another press statement, the KACC also suggests such a historical continuity, making a link between the Protestants' fight against Japanese colonial rule and the present-day struggles against LGBT-related grievances.

The Korean Church was a patriotic religion from the early days of the gospel tradition and its spirit must be succeeded. The Korean church has devoted itself to the restoration of national sovereignty during the Japanese colonial period in the dark and challenging last century. [...] This was a patriotic manifestation in that the national and Christian spirits could not be taken away by Japanese ghosts. However, the cost was an indescribable and divisive pain. We can take great pride in the fact that the sacrifice of Christianity is a small contribution to the freedom of the Republic of Korea today. It is also a common heritage of our society. Also now, we protect the soundness of the social spirit, we care for the growing generations, we champion a right future for our nation and therefore oppose homosexuality. We have to respect the human rights and freedoms of individual homosexuals, but it would be very unfortunate if this eventually led to our own misfortunes and eventually broke down the sound morality of our society. In addition, it is already a well-known fact that the public opinion is against the anti-discrimination law, which would result in suppressing the majority for the human rights of minorities. (KACC 2013, May 24)

The Korean Association of Church Communication implies a connection between patriotism and anti-LGBT activities, also by referencing past heroic deeds of Protestants. This historical account is, however, inaccurate. After the March 1st independence movement in 1919, the Protestant community in Korea has not engaged further in nationalistic endeavors. In fact, many prominent Christian figures even became collaborators of the Japanese colonial regime (Park, Chung-shin 2003, 156). Also in other instances, actors of the Protestant Right conceal their dark past, for example, when accusing others of 'dictatorial' excesses while hiding away their own active role in the South Korean post-colonial authoritarian regimes (Park, Chung-shin 2007). Anti-LGBT activists often refer to South Korea's first president Rhee Syngman, his Christian background, and the involvement of Protestants in his government (cf. also Park, Chung-shin 2003), and apparently take

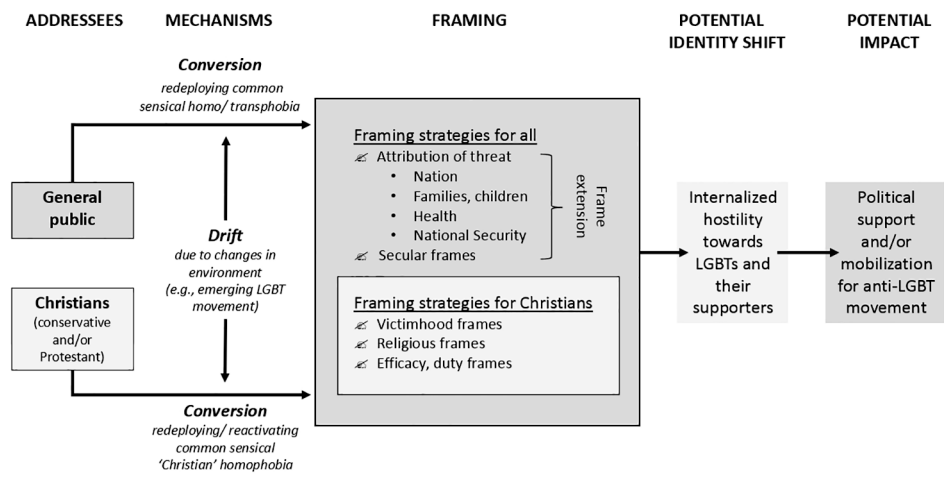
pride in this legacy. I argue that they do this to demonstrate the ways in which Protestants have been crucial to the socio-political development of Korea. They claim good deeds for themselves and vow to continue to protect Korea – also against newly emerging threats. From a Christian perspective, they present themselves as a unique ‘savior’ who unveils queer ‘ruses’ and, ultimately, is the only one able to defend not just the churches, but the nation as a whole.

Discussion: ‘conversion’ and ‘drift’ in attempts at identity shift

The othering strategy of the anti-LGBT movement seems like a tightrope walk. The framing alternates between assertions of representing the majority on the one hand, and victimhood claims on the other. Then again, the Protestant Right presents itself as an efficacious and historically proven actor against alleged bad influences on Korea. Along with the attribution of threat expounded in the previous subchapter, this strategy serves to create boundaries between a collective ‘us’ and an opponent ‘them’. The latter is being vilified and presented as a minority unworthy of equal rights since it purportedly puts the vast majority of people in danger. The anti-LGBT movement strives to change the perception about LGBT people in a way to make them look threatening. However, it is not only the opponent’s character that movement activists wish to alter in people’s perception. Importantly, they also aim for identity changes within their own constituency and among bystanders whom they wish to convince of their political goals.

We can divide the addressees of the identity shift strategy of the anti-LGBT movement in two broad groups: Christians, most likely those with a conservative outlook on their faith, and the (non-Christian) general public. Figure 5 summarizes how such identity work is performed. I argue that anti-LGBT activists actively try to appropriate people for their purposes by reinvigorating elements of their identity that had been dormant or, in any case, not regarded as a matter of socio-political importance. Antonio Gramsci’s concept of *common sense* (*senso comune*) helps us understand how such an appropriation proceeds. Gramsci’s model of gaining hegemony, and, ideally, achieving political power, centrally relies on transforming people’s common sense, that is, reconfiguring the “heterogeneous beliefs people arrive at not through critical reflection, but encounter as already existing, self-evident truths” (Crehan 2016, x). These popular conceptions of the world can be exploited by change agents who employ existing elements from common sense and recast them in a way that serves their purposes. They form a coherent body of thought – in Gramscian terminology ‘good sense’ (*buon senso*) – that has the goal of convincing and winning over people (cf. Olsaretti 2014, 375). This mode of appropriation has the benefit of building upon relatively familiar parts of people’s worldviews, thus avoiding the strenuous process of having to create completely new identity appeals.

Figure 5: Identity shift through ‘conversion’ and ‘drift’: different framing strategies depending on the addressee



In the case of the identity work of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, we can observe such continuous, yet dynamic aspects. Two main mechanisms help explaining the identity framings demonstrated so far in this chapter: drift and conversion. *Drift* takes place when external changes lead to shifts in the enactment of existing elements of collective identity. While it is possible that this passive form of identity shift takes place in the general public, I argue that it particularly affects people within the Protestant Right who identify LGBT issues as problematic and worth politicizing in the first place. As I have demonstrated in chapter 5, actors within the Protestant Right started to treat LGBT topics in earnest only when LGBT activism emerged, when LGBT concerns gained media attention and, importantly, when pro-LGBT legislation was proposed in the political arena. It is the people who would later become the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement who first experienced collective identity shift. In the 1990s, the Protestant Right did not show much interest in LGBT themes. But from the early 2000s onwards, conservative Protestant media, church organizations, and leading lay people ‘rediscovered’ their hostility towards homosexuality and related issues, which they founded in literal interpretations of Biblical texts and anti-gay church teachings. Upon this they subsequently built what would become a powerful anti-LGBT movement.

However, a social movement cannot properly work without people who support its ideals and goals, and who participate in collective action. This is where the *conversion* mechanism enters the stage. It is similar to ‘drift’ in the sense that existing identity components get enacted in altered ways. But this does not happen passively. Rather, it is a strategic move by change agents who engage in identity framing by redeploying existing elements of identity. This strategy needs different approaches depending on the public addressed. For Christians with a conservative or fundamentalist orientation, religious frames such as pointing out the alleged Biblical condemnation of homosexuality might do the work. Protestants with a strong bonding to their churches may also be intrigued by accounts of Christian victimhood, efficacy, and duty.

For non-Christians, however, such arguments will not work. This is why anti-LGBT activists employ a broader repertoire of threat frames, which ideally have the potential to speak to the entire general public – including conservative Protestants. The anxiety that the anti-LGBT movement intends to create among the general public also have precedents, which activists wish to ‘reactivate’. These are not based in moralizing contents as in the case of ‘Christian’ argumentation, but rather include the strong heteronormative familism in Korea, nationalist sentiments, and a continued unease in terms of security matters. In one of my research interviews, an anti-LGBT activist confirmed that the most effective frames included those on health issues and statistics since they are also convincing for non-Christians (Interview 7). Attitudes, convictions, and fears that are commonly held by supposedly large parts of the South Korean public get resuscitated and realigned in a way to also include hostility towards homosexuality and related topics. In fact, the mechanism of ‘conversion’ is accompanied by *layering* here: LGBT issues get introduced on top of existing sentiments. This strategy of combining originally unconnected themes is an example of *frame bridging*, which will be covered in detail in the next subchapter on ‘bricolage’.

Another framing strategy we can observe here is *frame extension*: anti-LGBT activists present the issue of homosexuality as being relevant to a public beyond the confines of Christianity. For the purpose of also reaching people outside their ‘natural’ Protestant communities, they engage in secular framing, which potentially resonates with larger publics. As I will show, religious, and secular frames compete within the argumentative repertoire of the anti-LGBT movement (cf. chapter 8.3). The ultimate goal of all these framing efforts is, first, to instill a shift in collective identity so that hostility towards LGBT issues becomes an integral part of people’s individual but also collective identities (e.g., as Christians, as Koreans, as people leaning to the political right). Second, if this identity shift is successful, leading activists hope to receive more political support and to mobilize new adherents for concrete movement actions.

It must be doubted, however, that the movement was able to reach out far beyond its traditional Protestant strongholds. As public opinion data show, the overall attitude towards homosexuality has been improving in South Korea over the past two decades.⁸ Only Protestants continue to depict very high levels of disapproval. It is true that the movement has been capable of mobilizing impressive numbers of people for signature campaigns and rallies. While data on the composition of participation is largely lacking, I assume that most of the participants are in fact Christians. Chapter 9 will provide some evidence to support this assumption. Despite the ‘secular’ frames employed in speeches and statements, anti-LGBT protest events continue to have a clearly ‘Christian’ nature, with prayers and noticeably Christian personnel playing important ceremonial roles. It seems that an identity shift towards integrating anti-LGBT sentiments has first and foremost impacted conservative Protestantism itself. Anti-LGBT activism may have

8 Some of the pro-LGBT people interviewed for this study are of the opinion that the fierce and partly extremely hostile activism of conservative Protestants has in fact had the unintended reverse effect of rather highlighting the bad situation of LGBT individuals in Korea, which might have led to an ameliorated public opinion and also to an increase in size and activity of the pro-LGBT movement (Interviews 11, 26).

contributed to creating a renewed sense of unity and 'we-ness' in these circles. However, this unity – if existent at all – appears to be rather unstable. There are many opposing desires to be found within the Protestant Right and its anti-LGBT framing strategies, as chapters 8 and 12 shall reveal.

7.4 Dynamic continuity in action: combining 'old' anti-communism with 'new' hostility against LGBTs

As shown above, movement actors draw on historical accounts of the alleged glorious role of Christians in Korean history, for example, against the Japanese colonial regime, to justify present-day socio-political involvement against similar 'evils'. Invoking elements from the past to utilize them for present purposes can be described as a form of dynamic continuity, namely the type that is situated on the temporal and ideologically congruent levels. This is also true for the specific types of identity shift mechanisms employed by anti-LGBT actors. In fact, all three mechanisms – drift, conversion, and layering – resuscitate long-standing convictions from the past (either actively or passively) and recombine them with current 'threats'. As just demonstrated, the anti-LGBT movement reactivates general or specifically 'Christian' hostility against LGBT issues by linking it to other concerns, some of which themselves bear on longstanding persuasions like nationalism or familism. This way, these connected or 'bridged' frames unfold relevance also in contemporary socio-political struggles – or so the activists who engage in these frame alignment processes hope.

This subchapter takes a closer look at this specific type of framing. The analytical tool for this specific analysis shall be 'bricolage', which "pulls together accepted and new frames to legitimate contention and mobilize accepted frames for new purposes (Tarrow 2011, 146). Bricolage consists of both continuous and dynamic parts. Past elements are being *revitalized* and then also *fabricated* or recombined. "Revitalization involves the resuscitation of forgotten or buried cultural elements and their linkage to current issues or events" (Snow et al. 2013, 225). This change process is akin to Swidler's (1986) concept of culture as a 'tool kit'. "Fabrication involves the melding together of different cultural elements in a *bricolage* fashion to create new ones" (Snow et al. 2013, 225). Della Porta and Diani (2006, 84) argue that the "creative manipulation of new symbols and a reaffirmation of tradition" is in fact a constitutive element of any socio-political collective action. While bricolage offers opportunities such as creating legitimacy, resonance, and saliency, it can also operate as an obstacle. Reference to a specific cultural heritage, for example, contains the risk of creating distance between adherents to this culture and the rest of society, discouraging the latter from joining the fight (cf. della Porta & Diani 2006, 85).

Despite such potential impediments, I argue that the Korean anti-LGBT movement prominently engages in such framing strategies. Conservative movements in particular can be supposed to make use of bricolage. They have an interest in referring back to traditional ideas and beliefs to create an image of continuity. It would be a misconception, however, to consider conservative movements (or conservative or rightist political parties, for that matter) as merely 'reactionary' proponents of bigotry. They have a fu-

ture-oriented outlook and political program just like progressive actors. My argument highlights the process through which conservative movements create the “appearance of continuity” (Oakeshott 1962, 170) as a strategic move to actually tackle current issues that they perceive as problematic.

This kind of dynamic continuity can take different shapes. The combination of LGBT issues with nationalist tendencies (‘homosexuality destroys the nation’) and ethno-nationalist impulses (‘homosexuality is un-Korean’), for example, are commonly used framings. I will now focus on another topic, that is, the way the Protestant Right uses its deeply rooted anti-communism to additionally disparage LGBT people and those who support them. The geopolitical dimension of the movement’s framing strategies has already been introduced above in the section on securitization. The combination of anti-communist ideology with anti-LGBT attitudes also pertains to this area, considering the continuous threat posed by North Korea. As I will demonstrate in the following, however, this bricolage-style framing goes beyond a mere focus on the enduring conflict on the Korean Peninsula. The anti-LGBT movement creates a chimera of an all-encompassing menace allegedly emanating from leftist and queer conspirators.

The legacies of right-wing anti-communism

As outlined in chapter 3.2 on the conservative historical bloc in Korea, conservative actors in society, politics, and churches have been fierce advocates of a sweeping anti-communism. Anti-communism has been described as the political ideology that has had the biggest influence in South Korea (Kim, Hak-chun 2004, quoted in Cho, Hyo-Je 2015, 369). The authoritarian regimes of post-colonial South Korea in particular made use of anti-communist ideology to justify their oppression of civil society – an anti-communism that was also sponsored by US-American patronage (Choi Yong Sub 2020, 1711; Kim, Dong-Choon 2020; Shin, Kwang-Yeong 2017). “Whenever a pro-democracy movement threatened the interests of conservatives, their response was to fall back on the discourse of anti-communism in attacking the dissidents” (Kim, Dong-Choon 2020, 185). This right-left divide continued also after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc in the late 1980s. The content of anti-communism, however, changed in a way that then linked anti-North Korea stances with market-liberal ideologies (Shin, Kwang-Yeong 2017; Shin, Jin-Wook 2008).

The ardent anti-communism of the Protestant Right can be explained by its close connection to the conservative historical bloc in the political realm (Clark 2008; Park, Chung-shin 2007). However, there are also church-internal reasons. When communist ideology made its entrance on the Korean Peninsula in the 1920s – at a time in which the Japanese colonial regime already promoted anti-Marxist stances – Protestants resisted anti-Christian campaigns advanced by communists. Western missionaries fueled this resistance with their antipathy towards Marxist ideas (Ryu, Dae Young 2017, 4; Hwang, Jae-Buhm 2008). The conflict between churches and communism intensified after the liberation from Japanese rule (1945) and especially through the Korean War (1950–1953). When communists seized the Northern part of the Korean Peninsula, many Protestants fled to the South and subsequently promoted both politically and theologically conservative views, as well as staunch anti-communism. Many of the defectors from the North be-

came leaders of Protestant churches and occupied important political positions in President Rhee Syngman's government. Rhee actively supported Christianity as an alternative to North Korea's Marxist ideology (Ryu, Dae Young 2017, 5f.; Clark 2008, 219; Kang, In-Cheol 2004). This strong anti-communism of the Protestant Right was carried on up until the time after democratization and especially regained traction during the administrations of the two progressive presidents Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2008). In the early 2000s, the Protestant Right figured prominently in establishing the Korean 'New Right', a loose rightist movement featuring strong pro-American and anti-communist ideology and decrying the governments' allegedly pro-North Korean and leftist policies.⁹ Ryu Dae Young (2017, 14) argues that the political and theological core of conservative Protestants' anti-communist ideology consists in a "Manichean dualism", that is, a simplifying view which divides the world into 'good' and 'evil', 'friends' and 'foes'. According to this ideology, anything that is (claimed to be) related to communism or leftist endeavors has to be met with resistance. As shown in chapter 7.3, conservative Protestants regard and present themselves – along with conservative governments – as the ones who have to, and who are able to fight these 'ills' in order to protect the Korean nation and churches.

Combining the threat of communism with other alleged dangers is nothing new. Barbara Epstein (1994), for example, showed how homophobia and anti-communism were used as vehicles to counteract the fear of declining masculinity in the 1940s' and 1950s' United States. In South Korea, researchers have studied the amalgamation of anti-communism with anti-asylum and anti-Islam sentiments (Heo 2021), as well as with anti-gay tendencies in recent years (Cho, Min-Ah 2011). Min-Ah Cho, like Siwoo (2018) and Han Ch'aeyun (2017), argues that the combination of classic anti-communist and nationalist ideological elements with hostility towards LGBT topics is a response to growing challenges faced by fundamentalist Protestants. At the same time, Cho maintains that this very amalgamation strategy reveals their actual political motivations, making apparent the discrepancy between religious and political identities of the Protestant Right (Cho, Min-Ah 2011, 305f.). While agreeing with Cho's claim that the mixing of these spheres may appear irrational, I do not agree with the argument that this framing strategy constitutes a "fallacy" that may jeopardize the political endeavors of the Protestant Right (ibid.). As the evidence on mobilization displays, these framings do resonate with at least the staunch adherents of the Protestant Right – presumably exactly because of their political *and* religious conservatism. I will now show that the anti-LGBT movement does not merely use 'old' anti-communist common sense, whose persuasiveness may in fact wear off after years and years of inconclusive fearmongering. Rather, anti-LGBT activists also attempt to liven up the established anti-communist master frame in dynamic ways by adding new narratives to its core.

The anti-LGBT movement has not amalgamated anti-communism with homophobia from its start. As Min-ah Cho (2011, 313f.) showed, such frame combinations only emerged around the year 2010, when the CCK ascribed the danger of military defeat

9 Shin Jin-Wook (2009) argues, however, that the establishment of the 'New Right' in South Korea did *not* involve ideological changes. He rather observed a significant continuity between 'old-right' and 'new-right' ideologies.

against communist North Korea to the presence of homosexual soldiers in the army for the first time. A term which condenses the mixing of these two topics is '*chongbuk kei*', which roughly translates into 'pro-North Korea gay'. Siwoo claims that this reproaching notion first emerged in the fight against the anti-discrimination law in 2013, reflecting the common usage of the term '*ppalgaeng'i*' ('commie', 'leftie') against left-wing politicians and activists (Siwoo 2018, 177f.). During the presidential election campaign in 2017, for example, Protestant Right activists used the term '*chongbuk*' to disparage Moon Jae-in as a 'pro-North Korea' candidate (Söul Sinmun 2017, April 30). According to Siwoo (2018, 179), presenting homosexuals as sympathetic to North Korea does not make sense since homosexuality is illegal there.

While Siwoo (2018), Cho (2011), and two of the pro-LGBT experts interviewed for this study (Interviews 5; 26) present '*chongbuk kei*' as being a generic invective used by anti-LGBT activists, the term hardly ever appears in the PEA dataset, nor in the additional Kukmin Daily articles analyzed. It seems to be an oft-cited catchphrase mainly used by scholars and pro-LGBT activists to analytically grasp the framing strategy of confounding anti-communist and anti-LGBT attitudes. This observation does not mean, however, that this form of bricolage does not find usage by anti-LGBT activists. Quite to the contrary, since 2015, they have been engaging in creating a new version of this anti-communist narrative, which buttresses their hostility towards LGBT rights. This novel framing strategy lumps together more recent variants of communist or socialist thought (or what is regarded as such) – Neo-Marxism, Postmodernism, and 'Cultural Marxism' – to justify anti-LGBT activities and reinforce the need to counteract against what is claimed to be a large-scale leftist conspiracy against the nation, traditional culture, conservatives, churches, and families.

Reviving anti-communism: LGBT rights as part of the new 'Cultural Marxist' threat

Among these 'schools of thought', *Cultural Marxism* has emerged as a master narrative in recent years, subsuming basically all grievances that (far) right-wing actors claim as being problematic. This is not only the case for South Korea, but also for right-wing movements in other parts of the world. The 'Cultural Marxism' conspiracy theory originated in the United States where the paleo-conservative politician Pat Buchanan popularized the idea of a 'cultural war' in the early 1990s. The idea regained popularity in the late 2010s in the context of the emergence of the so-called 'alt-right' and the election of Donald Trump (Tuters 2018, 32). "The alt-right represents cultural Marxism as responsible for or equivalent to every idea, value, person, group, organization, product and, practice that purportedly offends, challenges, or afflicts the identities of white conservative Christian Americans" (Mirrless 2018, 56). In this sense, Cultural Marxism is a resurrection of 'cultural Bolshevism', a term which was used in Nazi Germany for the equivalent purpose of denigrating anyone and anything oppositional (Mirrless 2018, 53). The far right's narrative on Cultural Marxism generally goes like this: Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich, and Erich Fromm, Jewish scholars from the Frankfurt School, had to flee Nazi Germany in the 1930s and migrated to the United States. According to the alt-right, these intellectuals sowed a Marxist seed in generations of US-Americans, using the Gramscian strategy of winning cultural hegemony ('war of position') through

taking control over educational institutions, the media, and cultural industries. The progressive social movements of the 1960s and 1970s like feminism, pacifism, and the LGBT and civil rights movements are depicted as direct effects of the Frankfurt School's cultural Marxist ideology. These days, the story goes, the ideology of 'political correctness' is a particularly pervasive part of Cultural Marxism in that it oppresses the freedom of speech of those in favor of conservative ideas (Mirrless 2018, 54). This essentially racist and antisemitic conspiracy theory commonly gets amalgamated with other branches of critical thought such as postmodernism and deconstructionism (Tuters 2018, 33). Tanner Mirrless (2018, 58–60) describes Cultural Marxism as a political instrument of "intersectional hate", which uses a cultural war strategy to create a threatening and antagonistic 'other' to obscure actual oppression, discrimination, and – ultimately – power structures. It is a strategy that "pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice" (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008, 3; cited in Mirrless 2018, 60). The cultural Marxist conspiracy theory attributes great power to the (alleged) ideas of the Frankfurt School and other leftist thinkers – an 'analysis' that does not stand up to actual historical facts. As argued by Marc Tuters (2018, 33), "we can nevertheless understand Cultural Marxism as a prime example of how the ideas of conservatism grow above all in reaction to those of the left."

As this study shows, right-wing actors do not only build their *ideas* upon left-wing thought, but also their strategies. I argue that the Korean anti-LGBT movement uses Gramscian tactics to achieve their goals. The Korean case is thus an example for the spread of right-wing ideological and strategical repertoires beyond their initial usage especially in the US and Western Europe (cf. also Mirrless 2018, 61f.). I will now demonstrate how anti-LGBT activists and organizations in Korea combine allegations of neo-Marxism or cultural Marxism with attacks against LGBT rights.

Resurrecting anti-communist attitudes in the guise of criticizing an alleged Cultural Marxism began in 2015. It is thus a rather new addition to the framing repertoire of the anti-LGBT movement. Korean anti-LGBT activists adopted most, if not all of the elements of this conspiracy theory while also adapting its narrative to the Korean context and, particularly, to the needs of the Protestant Right. The basic premises of this framing strategy are as follows: The political left tries to install communism in South Korea through the backdoor, with LGBT people acting as central revolutionary proxies or accomplices in this fight. The goal of the latter is to force the general public to accept non-heteronormative lifestyles, ultimately leading to an oft-cited 'homosexual dictatorship' where the freedom of expression and religious freedom become endangered, and churches, the traditional family model, and the nation eventually get destroyed – as intended by communist ideology. These 'dictatorial' efforts mostly take place at the cultural level, that is, at universities and other educational institutions, as well as through media and social media channels. Anti-LGBT activists commonly refer to foreign cases of such an alleged decay and doom, demanding that South Korea must not follow these examples. Protestant churches are presented as a crucial, if not the only actors who can, and do fight against cultural Marxist threats, claiming they defend liberal democracy. The Protestant Right sees itself involved in a Manichean fight of good against evil.

The anti-LGBT movement has expounded this narrative in many press statements, in Kukmin Daily columns written by central figures of the movement, and through lectures at anti-LGBT 'educational' events.¹⁰ In a 2019 press statement by the Korean Association of Church Communication (KACC), a rainbow flag performance by students of the private Christian Changshin University gets criticized. The KACC expresses the fear that cultural Marxist ideology in the form of the human rights protection of homosexuals has already made its way into the minds of Christian university students, taking this as an evidence for the eminent danger faced by Korean churches.

Homosexuality is not merely about a minority or weak persons, it is a satanic ruse that aims to destroy the churches through Cultural Marxism. Homosexuality is not just a matter of sex, it is sex politics, sex ideology and sex revolution. What they pursue is a strategy to destroy Christian values, families, society, and the church. [...] Homosexuality is no small matter. In the 21st century, homosexuality is the test of good and evil. Regarding the circumstances so far revealed, Changshin University students seem to have already been exposed to many aspects of homosexuality unknowingly. Changshin University should now be clear about the issue of homosexuality, and disciplinary procedures should be taken again through thorough investigation and analysis of the students concerned. One must not be trapped in the language play, which uses terms such as 'tolerance', 'love', and 'prohibition of hatred'. Rather, in order for the order of the Biblical law to stand upright, the seminary, denomination, and students should firmly protect the university with one voice, and strongly urge the Korean church to re-establish its honor. (KACC 2019, July 23)

In many texts, the alleged ideological infiltration of people is explained in rather broad terms as in the above quote. As I have demonstrated previously, leaving people in the dark about the exact character of a phenomenon can serve the purpose of creating fear. The KACC deliberately omits a precise explanation as to how a purported sex ideology can destroy churches. The press statement does propose, however, solutions to the vague, yet allegedly grave problem. That is, punishing the students involved, rekindling church unity from within, and relying on the church for protection against the enemy.¹¹

10 I conducted a participant observation at an event entitled 'Christian academy for countermeasures against homosexuality' on 18 March 2019, which was organized at the Hapdong Seminary by the *Committee for Countermeasures against Homosexuality of the Presbyterian Hapshin Denomination* (*taehan yesugyo changnohoe [hapsin] tongsŏngae taech'aek wiwŏnhoe*). Several of the lecturers at this 'educational' event referred to the alleged danger of North Korea and socialism. Before the lecture given by Pastor Kim Yŏng-gil, a representative of the *Just Military Human Right Institute* (*parŭn kun in'gwŏn yŏn'guso*), in which he decried left-wing thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, Giorgio Agamben, and Antonio Negri, the moderator said that he knew well the contents of the lecture, to which he had listened on many occasions already. It can be therefore assumed that anti-LGBT activists frequently bring up the conspiracy theory of Cultural Marxism in their talks and lectures. In fact, other speakers also attended to this narrative. Cho Yŏng-gil, a lawyer, for example, elaborated in his lecture that the sexual revolution was the new socialism and that homosexual ideology was much stronger than Marxism.

11 Cf. also chapter 12 for a thorough analysis on animosities within Protestant churches and denominations in Korea concerning LGBT issues.

In other instances, anti-LGBT activists provide more detailed accounts on the alleged dangers and workings of Cultural Marxism. Yöm An-söp, a medical doctor and active campaigner of the anti-LGBT movement, has been writing a recurring Kukmin Daily op-ed entitled “God’s righteous army against homosexuality”. In the 22nd issue of his column, he comments on what he regards as a distortion, that is, homosexuals claiming that they are a weak social group. Yöm maintains that this strategy is part of the Frankfurt School’s Critical Theory.

Critical Theory aims to criticize and destroy all systems that form the basis of Western civilization (church, family system, morality, etc.). To this end, homosexuals and others are used as new revolutionary forces. In other words, Christianity, the family system, and morality suppress homosexuality. So in order to be freed from this oppression, homosexuals and new left-wing forces must unite to destroy Christianity, the family system, and morality. In this way, if the homosexual movement succeeds and Christian civilization collapses, the communist revolution will be realized after that. [...] Major figures of Korea’s new left wing are making various laws and guidelines, saying that after they are elected to the National Assembly, they will be renovating the spirit of good citizens. People with common sense ideas are forced to undergo compulsory mental modification treatment such as human rights education, diversity training, and gender sensitivity education. (Yöm, An-söp 2020, March 24)

The activist here draws a clear connection between left-wing politics and pro-LGBT activism. Laws and ordinances such as proposals for an anti-discrimination and human rights bills are depicted as actually having the goal of distorting people’s minds, mainly through education. Yöm invokes the threat of collapsing morality, families, and churches and presents these menacing scenarios as a common goal of both LGBT rights activists and leftist politicians. According to the anti-LGBT movement, lying behind all this is the ultimate aim of introducing communism in South Korea.

Portraying and vilifying LGBT people as the central force of a far-reaching conspiracy allows anti-LGBT activists to divert attention from the actual grievances experienced by queer people. Among these grievances are in fact, among others, a fundamentalist interpretation of Christian scriptures and doctrines, as well as the heteronormative family model. Pointing out the exclusionary aspects of these systems is therefore a logical framing strategy for pro-LGBT activists and politicians. The Korean anti-LGBT movement, however, frames these activities as full-fledged attacks against the foundations of the nation and churches, and even aggrandizes this alleged threat by making recourse to the master frame of anti-communism, which can be expected to resonate well with large parts of the Korean public.

To substantiate this arguably far-fetched narrative, anti-LGBT activists frequently refer to historical events that they claim are testament to the steady infiltration of society with neo-Marxist ideas. So Kang-sök, head pastor at the New Eden Church, a Protestant mega church in the outskirts of Seoul, is particularly fond of such storylines. In his Kukmin Daily column, he commonly attributes all ‘ills’ faced by Korean churches, and by Korea at large to neo-Marxism.

Neo-Marxism is a clever mixture of communism and humanism, and on the surface, it seems to embody human rights, equality, justice, and philanthropy, but what is hidden behind it is its materialistic socialist ideas. When the Bolshevik revolution and Maoism ended in bloody failure, [Marxists] advocated Neo-Marxism and dreamed of a cultural revolution. The social movement that emerged from there was the 68 revolution that swept Europe, and the sexual politics movement that used homosexuality as a weapon. (So, Kang-sŏk 2018, March 6)

Pastor So indirectly refers to Antonio Gramsci here. Gramsci advocated the view that the strategy of introducing communism through force and active revolution (the 'war of movement') would not work in western societies, where more subtle tactics to convince people on the ideological level (a 'war of position') were needed to sustainably get hold of power (Gramsci 1971). What Gramsci certainly did not conceive, however, is the view that homosexuality would figure prominently in the fight for Marxist revolution. But So Kang-sŏk tries to make his readers believe that this is the case. He continues his column by quoting a law professor who gave a lecture at his church and who attributed the problems of present-day churches to 'anti-Christian' neo-Marxist endeavors.

In the words of Professor Yi Chŏng-hun, 'In one word, the whole anti-Christian movement is an act that makes the church shut up.' It makes churches and Christians no longer shout the gospel freely. That is why in Europe, where anti-discrimination laws and other bills have been passed, they [Christians] are subject to reverse discrimination. They are punished if they shout, 'Jesus is the only salvation' or declare that 'homosexuality is a sin'. As he [Yi Chŏng-hun] said, churches in Europe closed their mouths and became silent. As a result, the church is declined sharply. [...] Therefore, we should all join the holy ideological and spiritual war of this era and shout together. Isn't the Korean church the heart of the nation? Wasn't the Korean church the heart of the nation, not only during the enlightenment period, but also from the Japanese colonial era to the modernization and advancement of the country? If the Korean church collapses, the hope for the nation [*minjok*] cannot be guaranteed. (So, Kang-sŏk 2018, March 6)

What So Kang-sŏk is doing in this column is providing agency to church members and legitimizing their actions. His focus on purported anti-Christian endeavors of left-wing actors singles out Christianity, again, as a victim – this time combined with anti-communist ideology. Then again, he points to the alleged glorious history of Protestant Christians in Korea, claiming that it is only them who can protect and save Korea like in the past. This overemphasis of the role of Protestantism in protecting and building Korea makes Christians seem special. At the same time, this framing strategy attempts to extend the motivation to do so again in the present to fight new enemies.

Spreading false information and claiming wrong correlations undergirds this strategy. The freedom of speech of most European Christians is certainly not endangered – especially not by state actors. Also, there is no proof for the claim that pro-LGBT attitudes and policies lead to a decline in church membership. And referring to enlightenment additionally gives the impression that it is the Protestant Right that has spread the 'truth' and rational ideas in the past, and continues to do so these days. This self-victimization in combination with self-aggrandizement aims at mobilizing Christians for the

fight against LGBT rights. Pastor So strives to fight back the alleged silencing of Christian churches, which, conversely, means that churches and church members should be active in society and politics. The usage of military-style terms such as 'weapon' and 'war' emphasizes the urgency of the fight. At the same time, using the term "ideological and spiritual war" could also be a broad hint towards Gramsci's 'war of position'. So Kang-sök thus confirms that there are two sides in this cultural war for hegemony, indirectly admitting that the Protestant Right also engages in ideology-based Gramscian strategies for its socio-political struggles.

Part of this Gramscian struggle for cultural hegemony consists of, as I have argued before, resurrecting parts of, and at the same time changing 'common sense' in an attempt to convince people of the need to fight against LGBT issues and mobilize people for movement activities. Anti-LGBT activists recreate existing convictions shared by many Koreans (or so they expect) to establish a 'good sense' – 'good' having the sense of representing an organized, seemingly logical, and relatable narrative with the goal of eventually changing people's common sense. A pro-LGBT actor I interviewed for this study concisely summarized why the particular strategy of mixing Neo-Marxism with othering strategies works well in the Korean context.

The basic situation in Korea makes it possible. As a divided country Korea has long been a society with wounds and trauma due to ideological confrontation. Marxism is of course regarded negatively, especially by those who think that communism is a huge disaster. There is a theory of communism based on this theory [Marxism], and a link between liberation theory, women's rights, and sexual minority rights is created. Abortion and women are grouped together, and sexual minorities, migrants, and refugees are grouped together. It is too typical to connect [these groups] like this. Because sexual minorities, migrants, and refugees are complete 'others'. They create a target and say, 'These people are all impure and dangerous people, we must protect ourselves from these people.' These are people who then say that they would protect people, and they create the illusion that people would be safe under them. Neo-Marxism is fake news, but as soon as Koreans hear Marx, they automatically feel, "This is strange and dangerous." So it is all strange to connect these aspects, but they [the anti-LGBT movement] are taking full advantage of what people perceive without saying it. (Interview 18)

It would take us too far afield to go into the details of what neo-Marxism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism actually mean – beyond the largely untenable assertions of anti-LGBT activists. Clear-cut definitions are in fact not necessary. This is because I argue that in the Korean case, and presumably also in other contexts, Cultural Marxism and its derivations serve as a blank slate that can be inscribed with anything right-wing actors deem problematic or antagonistic. Besides LGBT rights, Protestant Right actors also commonly connect other issues such as multiculturalism, Islam, and feminism to neo-Marxism to disparage the people, contents, and convictions behind these concepts and movements. This subchapter revealed the anti-LGBT movement's flexible and yet continuity-prone framing strategy in terms of resurrecting old elements and combining them with new threats or grievances. The bricolage undertaken by the Korean anti-LGBT movement, this recombination of originally unconnected frames is dynamic in two respects: the obvious dynamic consists of melding old anti-communist impulses with hos-

tility against LGBT issues, which the Protestant Right has reactivated in the first place. The second dynamic aspect concerns the reframing of leftist dangers. The long-standing master frame of a communist or socialist threat gets revitalized not merely by repeating antiquated anti-communist narratives. Rather, new forms of leftist thinking and practice are being problematized and deliberately enriched with contents that do not have much substance when thoroughly investigated, but that serve to create a threatening image of ideological 'warfare' and conspiracy.

There is a twisted, yet cunning logic behind this form of bricolage, especially when analyzed from an international or transnational perspective. Cultural Marxism – an 'updated' version of communism – is presented as a dangerous school of thought developed abroad, more specifically by left-wing scholars from western Europe and the United States. It is true that Cultural Marxism was developed abroad. However, this was not done by left-wing thinkers but by people and organizations on the (extreme) right political spectrum as I have shown above. Be that as it may, Korean anti-LGBT activists willingly embrace the Cultural Marxist narrative, but not only to have a new module that they can fill with contents as they wish. I argue that most importantly, this narrative provides them with something they can dissociate themselves from. As the next subchapter demonstrates, the Protestant Right warns against negative developments abroad, for which it often blames Cultural Marxism. Along with this go endeavors to keep such 'bad' influences out of Korea. The transnational dimension of the narrative of Cultural Marxism, but also of the Korean anti-LGBT movement and its overall framing strategy comes to the fore.

7.5 A right-wing transnational network of ideas aiding in creating a foreign threat

"In order for the Korean church to win the great war of ideas, it must continue to establish a network." The network that So Kang-sŏk (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, March 2) has in mind does not only stretch domestically in South Korea, but also across borders.¹² He cautions against the dangers of homosexuality also by pointing out the allegedly dismal development of churches abroad that he claims have fallen victim to pro-LGBT ideas.

We should see where the tsunami-like phenomenon came from. The ideological background of the advocacy culture for homosexuality stems from the post-structuralism which dismantles all authority and standards. It is important for the Protestant church to keep its faith pure-blooded, but it should work harder to protect the pastoral ecosystem. Look at the European church and the American church. As the gospel giants like Billy Graham disappeared, they degenerated into independent churches [*kaegyohoejuŭi*], and the pastoral ecosystem was broken and the environmental structure changed. The Korean church must establish a network before facing such a tragedy. For the first time in Asia, Taiwan legalized same-sex marriage, and the embankment [dike] of the Taiwan Church collapsed. (ibid.)

12 For a closer look at the network of anti-LGBT actors *within* South Korea, see chapter 10.3.

Pastor So presents ongoing internal and external to churches as threatening to Protestantism. Internally, he regards the absence of leading figures such as the prominent US-American preacher Billy Graham as problematic – putting himself, a leader of a Korean mega church, in a crucial position. Externally, he references negative examples from abroad: he claims that US and European churches were not able to protect their ‘pure’ core, also due to the influx of pro-LGBT attitudes. In this context, the ruling of the Constitutional Court in Taiwan in favor of same-sex marriage in 2017 is not only seen as a sign for further church decline. So Kang-sök promptly creates the image of destruction of Taiwanese churches. Since it is the first time that an Asian country introduced same-sex marriage, the subtext suggests that Korean churches may face a similar fate because such negatively framed events are getting closer not only on the ideological, but also on the geographical level.

This subchapter deals with the transnational and international dimension of Korean anti-LGBT activism in general, and the movement’s framing in particular. I discern five intertwined elements of transnational framing processes: (1) anti-LGBT activists create a foreign threat by invoking examples from abroad where churches are alleged to be affected by decline and hostility due to pro-LGBT socio-political developments. (2) The activists popularize the idea that neo-Marxism and similarly oriented left-wing ideologies and strategies are the cause of grievances faced by conservative-minded people in general, and Christians in particular, abroad and at home. (3) The anti-LGBT movement frequently invites speakers from abroad, or refers to foreign rightist thinkers, many of which have a conservative Christian background. These foreign activists testify the allegedly bad situation in their countries and they are part of a transnational network – a *transnational conservative historical bloc* – of ideas within the conservative political spectrum. (4) Korean anti-LGBT activists use motivational frames urging people to fight against what they present as unwelcome external influence and cultural imperialism, and denounce obsequiousness to such western influences. (5) Finally, they present South Korea as a ‘haven’ that is still resisting, and should keep doing so. Corruption and doom come from abroad. Korea, in contrast, is presented as a fortress, as a place that is still largely unspoiled by harmful foreign influences, a sanctuary that one has to defend against inimical forces.

Internalizing external threats

Building connections with organizations and actors abroad is commonly referred to as the *transnationalization* of social movements. Transnationalization can take different forms. This section focuses on two mechanisms related to transnationalizing processes: *diffusion*, that is, the spreading of ideas, strategies, and frames, and *internalization*, the playing out of external conflicts in a domestic setting (della Porta & Tarrow 2005, 3–6).¹³ While direct diffusion channels are hard to detect, one can assume that the usage of

13 The mechanism of *externalization*, i.e., encouraging supranational and transnational organizations to get involved in domestic conflicts (Keck & Sikkink 1998) will be treated in chapter 8.1, which deals with the way anti-LGBT – and especially so-called ‘ex-gay’ activists attempt to reframe ‘human rights’, also by appealing to international organizations.

similar frames in different national contexts hints at adoption processes at work. I argue that the adoption and adaptation of the Cultural Marxism conspiracy theory by Korean anti-LGBT activists is an obvious case of diffusion. This narrative was not developed in Korea but abroad, by right-wing thinkers and political actors in the United States and in Europe, as demonstrated in the previous section. Internalization, on the other hand, is clearly observable in the framing activities of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Activists frequently report about developments and events abroad that they frame as worrisome and alarming. Among these disconcerting occurrences are, according to the anti-LGBT movement, for example, the introduction of same-sex marriage in many countries, laws acknowledging the rights of transgender and intersex people, and the alleged downfall of Christian churches due to homosexuality and related issues. Part of this framing strategy is to present exaggerated or just false accounts of what is going on abroad in terms of sexual politics. The following quote from a KACC press statement evinces this fact.

What is happening in countries that have allowed homosexuality and same-sex marriage in today's world is so serious that it is beyond our imagination. In their countries, homosexual education curricula in schools have been created, a third sex has been introduced, multi-marriage legalization is promoted (incest, pedophilia, polygamy, robot sex, zoophilia), they treat opponents of homosexuality as psychopaths, they check if people preach against homosexuality in churches, and their armies are weakening due to homosexuals in the military. (KACC 2017, July 19)

Another KACC press release ascribes problems faced by Christian churches abroad such as decreasing church attendance and membership to the influx of homosexuality in these societies. As already demonstrated above, in doing so, the Protestant Right's mouthpiece creates a wrong or at least inaccurate correlation.

Homosexuality is not only a problem in Korea. In 2001, homosexuality was legalized in the Netherlands, in the United Kingdom and in the United States in 2015, and in Germany, the home of the Reformation, in 2017. The problem is that the countries where homosexuality has entered and has been legalized have in common the decline of Christianity. (KACC 2019, July 23)¹⁴

As I have shown previously, it is not only Christian churches that are presented as being endangered by homosexuality. According to anti-LGBT actors, other social institutions are affected just as much, not only in Korea, but also and particularly in western countries. The KACC (2015, July 21) writes: "Recognizing homosexuality and same-sex mar-

14 Another inaccuracy of this statement concerns the usage of the term 'legalization' (*happŏphwa*). Homosexuality was not legalized, that is, decriminalized in the years quoted. Germany, for instance, abolished the criminal law punishing male same-sex act partially in 1969, and fully in 1994. Rather, these countries introduced same-sex marriage in the years mentioned. Anti-LGBT activists often describe the passing of marriage equality bills as a 'legalization of homosexuality'. I argue that they do this deliberately to construct the reverse – and incorrect – image that homosexuality is not a legal conduct in South Korea (cf. chapter 8.3).

riage is now evident in the widespread destruction of social order in the western society, as well as in the collapse of the family, dehumanization, and social conflict and division [...].” A frame that is frequently employed is depicting western countries as hotbeds for a degenerate and decadent sex culture. The image of ubiquitous destruction due to such allegedly immoral forms of sexuality lacks hard evidence. A cross-check, however, is difficult due to the geographical distance and the cultural differences between western countries and Korea. This type of frame thus comes in handy, for it amplifies the diffuse threat that the anti-LGBT movement strives to create (cf. chapter 7.2). This is done to construct threats that are claimed to exist abroad in a way that extends their relevance also to the Korean public. Anti-LGBT activists wish their audience to come to think that they do not want to experience such troubles domestically. It is, again, a type of identity framing and boundary formation, agitating against one group actor to rebrand and strengthen one’s own collective identity. The only difference is that this identity framing concerns whole countries, and not only societal subgroups and minorities. In this sense, it is actually the anti-LGBT movement that creates, or at least contributes actively to social conflict and division – a reproach that they launch against the pro-LGBT movement like in the above quote.

The framing strategy of creating foreign threats is rife with contradictions and inconsistencies. In the Korean case, the depiction of the United States as a country in mayhem due to its increasing socio-political recognition of LGBT rights seems to be incompatible with the Protestant Right’s perpetual emphasis on the utmost importance, and their general defense of the Korea-US alliance. The Korean anti-LGBT movement, however, uses this argument in reverse. In 2014 (as also in the following years), the anti-LGBT movement criticized the US embassy for participating with a booth at the Seoul Queer Culture Festival. The KACC commented in a statement that the US support for the rights of Korean LGBT people was illogical since “the forces advocating the homosexual movement are mostly progressive/leftist, and there are a lot of forces [among these groups] leading the anti-American movement” (KACC 2014, June 10). The KACC lumps together anti-US and pro-LGBT sentiments due to their progressive backgrounds. This purportedly contradictory behavior of the United States, the KACC warns, might have grave consequences. “A United States advocating for homosexuality is losing its traditional support base in Korea, and it can be said that it [i.e., this behavior] does not differ from an ‘act of invasion’ [*ch’imnyak haengwi*] using culture” (ibid.). While one may regard the mentioning of a dwindling support base for the United States in Korea as a statement of fact, it could be read as a threat by the Protestant Right to withdraw the support even further should the US continue such ‘acts of cultural invasion’. Anti-LGBT activists, in fact, commonly use accusations of ‘cultural imperialism’ and an ‘infringement of national sovereignty’ in their framing efforts. What they do not mention in this context is that they adopt ideological and strategical tools from abroad themselves. As already mentioned, the extensive framing efforts around the alleged dangers of progressive and leftist schools of thought, or the conspiracy theory of Cultural Marxism are prime examples for this.

Safeguarding Korea against unwelcome foreign influences

The transnational diffusion of right-wing ideas is apparent in other instances as well. In late 2017, a new alliance of conservative Protestant groups called *First Korea – People's Union to Straighten Up the Republic of Korea* (*p'ösūt'ŭ k'oria taehanmin'guk paro seugi kungmin yŏnhap*) was established. Its name is a clear replica of the 'America first' campaign popularized by Donald Trump. While the Trump administration served as a model for this new alliance, other foreign examples are presented as undesirable developments. Pastor O Chŏng-ho, chairman of the newly formed alliance, puts it like this: "We are following a series of failed European models, including the human rights of migrants and multicultural policies that were passed in Korea, the human rights movement for minorities, and the push for a constitutional amendment for homosexuality and same-sex marriage" (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017, December 6). The pastor adds: "We will focus on straightening up families, churches and the state through First Korea" (ibid.). The intended image is obvious: Protestant groups defend Korea in face of purportedly detrimental influences from abroad. In case such influences have already made their mark domestically, the Protestant Right will fight for "straightening up" (*paro seugi*) Korea.

In a similar vein, anti-LGBT activists use the frame that obsequiousness and toad-ism are not acceptable when it comes to allegedly un-Korean and unethical things like homosexuality. Referring to the danger of same-sex marriage being introduced in Korea, Yi Ae-ran, head of the *Center for Freedom, Unification, and Culture* (*chayu t'ong'il munhwawŏn*), raises the issue of levels of development. "Just because something belongs to advanced countries, it is not all advanced culture. [...] A homosexual culture full of obscenity should not be allowed to be embedded in the Republic of Korea where ethics and morality are still alive" (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, October 1). The activist portrays South Korea as a positive example in contrast to other countries where she sees moral decay becoming rampant. The KACC champions similar views regarding the anti-discrimination law, demanding the Ministry of Justice not to follow allegedly regressive developments abroad in an obsequious way. "[...] it [the ministry] should not be affected by the decadent toad-ism culture of the United States. No, there is no need to follow the US, which is falling into a backward country in terms of ethics and morals" (KACC 2013, June 27). South Korea is put on a pedestal as a shining example of 'healthy morals', which also outshines other self-proclaimed advanced countries. Such framing contributes to nationalist sentiments, presenting Korea as a fortress defying and desisting from foreign dangers. At the same time, foreign examples are used to argue that with its rejecting position against LGBT rights, Korea is in good company when compared to the attitudes held worldwide. The KACC (2015, May 20) notes: "only 18 of the world's 200 countries have legalized homosexuality, and most countries do not support it." Again, the KACC provides wrong or at least inaccurate information. Homosexuality is legal in many more countries than 18. But this narrative serves the anti-LGBT movement's purpose of pitting an alleged majority against the rights of sexual minorities – also on the international level.

Concrete transnational support on the ideological level

The Korean anti-LGBT movement also gets direct support from anti-LGBT allies abroad. This transnational cooperation works in two areas. First, on the relational level, interpersonal and interorganizational connections are established or intensified. Second, on the epistemic and ideological levels, foreign anti-LGBT activists or right-wing thinkers endorse and substantiate anti-LGBT frames used in Korea, especially in terms of threats from abroad.

Foreign speakers are often invited to anti-LGBT events. In some cases, these foreign activists have a Korean origin like Yi T'ae-hŭi, a US lawyer who frequently speaks at such events. In other cases, it is mostly western anti-LGBT activists without a Korean background who travel to Korea to give lectures and interviews and thus support the Korean anti-LGBT movement. What they have all in common is their conservative Christian background. When in Korea, these activists buttress the framing strategy of creating a foreign threat. Among the most prominent anti-LGBT advocates from abroad is Andrea Williams, head of the UK-based evangelical NGO *Christian Concern* (formerly: Christian Concern for Our Nation). In the period investigated in this study, Williams travelled to Korea three times. Within the Korean anti-LGBT camp, this UK activist is famous to the extent that a Kukmin Daily journalist called Kim Chi-yŏn, a central figure of the Korean movement, the "Andrea Williams of Korea" (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, August 19). Andrea Williams herself reinforces narratives that we have seen above, alleging that the British church has collapsed due to homosexuality and that "the issue of homosexuality is a global trend" (cited in Sin, Sang-mok 2015, March 19). Therefore, she appeals to Korean churches to remain steadfast in the face of such "trends", a point she reinforces during a trip to Korea in 2017: "The Korean church should be the last front to stop the spread of homosexuality to the world" (cited in So, Kang-sŏk 2017, June 20).

While Andrea Williams emphasizes the special role of South Korea as the 'last bulwark' against the spread of homosexuality, other foreign activists undergird neo-Marxist conspiratorial theses popularized by Korean anti-LGBT activists. Gabriele Kuby, a German Protestant-turned-Catholic activist, shows great eagerness in propagating this narrative. During a visit to Korea in June 2017, she was a keynote speaker at the 'Seoul Global Family Convention'.

Many universities deal with gender ideology, and the roots of this idea are based on Marxism. These ideas have the ultimate purpose of destroying families through sexual liberalization. [...] In the 1990s, radical feminism joined forces with homosexuals to create genderism. [...] Gender ideology networks are attacking Christian values under the guise of breaking down identities worldwide and sexual liberalization through legal coercion. [...] We need to know how to distinguish wrong gender ideologies wrapped in tolerance, inclusiveness, justice, and equality. (Cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017, June 3)

'Gender ideology' and 'genderism' have become buzzwords used by conservative and far-right actors in the religious and political arenas worldwide over the past two decades (Strube et al. 2021; Dietze & Roth 2020; Hark & Villa 2015). Common themes of anti-gen-

der actors include the opposition against LGBT and reproductive rights, the disparagement of the concept of gender mainstreaming, which strives to reach gender equality in all societal areas, as well as a critique of gender studies as an academic discipline. There is, however, no clear definition of what ‘gender ideology’ actually entails, leading some scholars to describe it as an “empty signifier” (Mayer & Sauer 2017, 23). The anti-gender discourse originated in the mid-1990s, when the 1994 UN conference on population and development and the 1995 UN conference on women recognized sexual and reproductive rights. The Holy See “feared that sexual and reproductive rights would become a vehicle for the international recognition of abortion, attacks on traditional motherhood and a legitimization of homosexuality” (Paternotte & Kuhar 2017, 9). As a result, it started pursuing the vilification of ‘gender’ as a dangerous concept promoted by allegedly ideological political and bureaucratic elites in the western world.¹⁵

Gabriele Kuby in particular has been very active in propagating such a discourse in Central and Eastern Europe, but also elsewhere (Paternotte & Kuhar 2017). She published several books on the subject, and her book *The Global Sexual Revolution: Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom* was translated into Korean (Kuby 2018). She claims that a new totalitarianism is breeding in the guise of equal rights for sexual minorities and combines this threat with anti-Marxist stances as in the above quote. The discourse on gender ideology is thus very much compatible with the conspiracy theory of Cultural Marxism. In fact, the PEA dataset reveals that the terms ‘gender’ and ‘gender ideology’ have found increasing usage among Korean anti-LGBT activists in recent years, especially from 2017 onwards.

Like Kuby, other politically and religiously conservative actors also argue that the 1968 sexual revolution laid the foundation for the alleged onslaught of ‘gender ideology’ nowadays. Pastor So Kang-sök (2015, June 3), for instance, quotes a book written by the far-right French journalist, politician, and presidential candidate of 2022, Éric Zemmour. In his 2014 book *The French Suicide* (*Le suicide français*), Zemmour argues that the French nation state began to decline in the 1970s, for which he blames a plethora of aspects such as feminism, the gay rights movement, Islam, immigration, the European Union, post-structuralism, and neoliberalism. The fact that So Kangs-sök refers to the writings of foreign far-right actors is yet another evidence of the Korean anti-LGBT movement’s transnational network of ideas. News stories of purportedly threatening events and de-

15 In contrast, the Catholic church in Korea has been reticent to actively oppose LGBT or gender issues. Korean Catholics are particularly reluctant to cooperate with Protestant or evangelical churches, as asserted by one Catholic interviewee of this study (Interview 4). Another interviewee who is related to the Catholic church explained that Catholics in general tend to not bring their faith all too much into politics due to the separation of church and state. While the attitude towards the issue of homosexuality is conservative according to the interviewee, people lean toward not talking about it. There are also almost no theological texts from Korean Catholicism on this topic (Interview 10). The PEA data shows that, in fact, only very few Catholic actors engage in the anti-LGBT movement. Among them are, most prominently, Kim Kye-ch’un, a Catholic priest and representative of the *National Alliance against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage* (*tongsŏngae tongsŏnghon pandae kungmin yŏnhap*), and the right-wing group *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* (*taehanmin’guk suho ch’ŏnjugyoin moim*).

velopments abroad get adopted and adapted just like more theoretical and 'foundational' works from abroad such as the book written by Zemmour.

Transnational support for the socio-political struggles of the Korean movement also stretches to the area of theology. Peter Beyerhaus, a German professor for Protestant theology who died in 2020, was a frequent visitor to Korea where he disseminated his conservative theological views. Besides his strictly theological activities, he also engaged in criticizing an alleged 'gender ideology' becoming prevalent in society. In 2014, he initiated a transnational ecumenical manifesto against 'gender ideology', which also found reception in Korea. At a 2016 special lecture held at the Korean *Academia Christiana* (*ki-dokkyo haksulwŏn*), he claimed that the 1968 sexual revolution with the ensuing gender mainstreaming movement represents the third big revolution in human history after the French revolution in 1789 and the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. According to Beyerhaus, 'gender ideology' destroys the naturally heterosexual family and has the ultimate goal of creating pagan societies. Kukmin Daily dedicated a detailed and extensive obituary to Peter Beyerhaus, in which the journalist highlighted his important role for the anti-gender movement, but also for other concerns of conservative Protestant Christians. Just like the Korean Protestant Right, for example, Beyerhaus was a fierce opponent of the *World Council of Churches*. Beyerhaus was highly regarded in Korea's conservative theological circles to the extent that the *Beyerhaus Society* (*paiddhausŭ hakhoe*) was founded in his honor in October 2018 (Sin, Sang-mok 2020, January 28).

Right-wing 'rooted cosmopolitans' on the level of ideas

Transnational channels play an important role in the framing activities of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Strategic and ideological elements such as the Cultural Marxism conspiracy theory have been adopted from abroad and adapted according to the Korean context and to the needs of the Protestant Right. The latter presents itself as a 'white knight' shielding Korean churches and society at large against putative foreign threats. At the same time, the Korean anti-LGBT movement receives support from foreign, similarly oriented activists. These substantiate the narrative of decaying western societies and call on Koreans to withstand such allegedly harmful influences.

As I have demonstrated, several social mechanisms are at work when it comes to the transnational connections of the anti-LGBT movement. Activists frame events and developments in other countries as threats and thus engage in the *internalization* of external conflicts for domestic purposes. This is a form of *boundary work*, that is, an effort to distance Korea and, particularly, Korean Christians from negative examples abroad, 'apostatized' countries that are claimed to regress in regard to morality and values. *Diffusion* of ideas and strategies is also taking place. The Korean movement does not, however, adopt these elements passively or uncritically. Rather, it accommodates them in a way to fit historical continuities and consequent constraints in the Korean context, as well as customizing them to the interests of the Protestant Right. This *norm localization* (Acharya 2004) goes hand in hand with *modularity*: action forms used by right-wing actors abroad serve as models for Korean anti-LGBT activists who reuse and adjust the 'modules', for example, the Cultural Marxism conspiracy theory, so that it exploits its full potential and resonates with Korean publics as well.

Marco Giugni (2002) argues that such transnationalization processes render social movements worldwide increasingly alike. Following his *structural affinity model*, one could argue that such homogenization is also taking place in the case of anti-LGBT movements in different countries. Conservative organizations worldwide share similar political perspectives and can therefore be expected to be eager to learn from each other. They are, effectively, part of the political opportunity structures and serve as models for other resembling social movements in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world – especially when it comes to the adoption of cultural elements like single frames or whole framing strategies, since this can be done without much cost. Ann Swidler's (1986) 'culture as a tool kit' thus also works transnationally, and for conservative movements. On the level of ideas and ideology, I argue that one can refer to Korean anti-LGBT activists as 'rooted cosmopolitans' (cf. Tarrow 2005, 29). As I have shown, they are cosmopolitan not in the sense of supporting an open, inclusionary, and multicultural society – quite to the contrary. But they do feature an openness to foreign influences as long as they are compatible with their general ideological orientation and hold promise to serve their needs and interests. At the same time, anti-LGBT activists, as well as the Korean Protestant Right as a whole, is 'rooted', meaning that they very much build upon domestic legacies, both in terms of Korean national history and 'Korean-ness' in general, as well as concerning their distinct conservative Christian foundation. The latter aspect is reflected in the concrete transnational connections of the anti-LGBT movement. Most if not all foreign activists who collaborate with the Korean movement have a conservative Christian background. Vice-versa, the outgoing anti-activism is predominantly directed towards Koreans or people of Korean descent living in other countries. One activist told me in the research interview that he/she often travels abroad to give lectures to popularize anti-LGBT issues in Korean Christian congregations abroad as well (Interview 7).

Through researching the transnational connections of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, I was able to demonstrate its growing embeddedness in right-wing and conservative Christian networks on the level of ideology and strategies. While concrete interpersonal or interorganizational connections are rather scarce and definitely lack institutionalization, foreign ideas are eagerly adopted and modulated in a way to suit the Korean circumstances. From a Gramscian perspective, I analyze this particular form of cooperation as a *transnational conservative historical bloc*, "a loose but increasingly interconnected network of right-wing actors worldwide who learn from each other, support one another and, ultimately, strive to gain socio-political power", as I have written in chapter 3.2 (p. 86). This mutual support and increasing interconnectedness occur mainly on the level of diffusing ideas – at least in the case of Korea. The fight for cultural hegemony against 'gender ideology', LGBT rights, and Marxism is fought using transnational means and thus builds upon the "the *ensemble* of the social relations" (Gramsci 1971, 366) to change common sense. This particular 'war of position' is fought on a global scale. But ultimately, these struggles remain firmly rooted in the domestic conservative historical bloc, its workings, legacies, values, and ideological underpinning. Overall, framing activities that cross borders – both in terms of contents like creating foreign threats and concrete relations – contribute to the dynamization of Korean anti-LGBT activism. Domestic and foreign, as well as old and new elements get combined in a way that supports the argument of 'dynamic continuity', also when it comes to transnational connections.

If assuming that the Korean anti-LGBT movement adopted a Gramscian strategy for reaching cultural and political power, this adoption can be described as a process of transnational diffusion and learning. This shows that rightist movements do not only learn from each other, but also adopt and adapt strategies and framings from opposing thinkers and movements, whether local or foreign. The next chapter shows how such a seemingly contradictory 'borrowing' actually makes a lot of sense and often develops into framing contests between anti and pro-LGBT actors.

8. The Opposing desires within Korean anti-LGBT activism

8.1 Opposing desires I: framing contests around human rights

The dynamic yet continuous aspects of anti-LGBT collective action in Korea become apparent also in framing contests that the movement is involved in. These contested processes reveal how opposing desires are at work in the framing activities and relations of the anti-LGBT movement. Such opposing or contradictory desires loom, for example, in the movement's counterframing efforts. Benford (1987, 75) defines *counterframing* as attempts "to rebut, undermine, or neutralize a person's or group's myths, versions of reality, or interpretive framework". Anti-LGBT activists fight against frames that pro-LGBT actors use while at the same time redeploying these exact frames, but in a way that serves the anti-LGBT camp's purposes. Contested framing processes, however, do not only emerge between a movement and its opponents. They can also take place internally when movement actors disagree over the best approaches and practices. Such intra-movement conflicts over the elaboration of frames have been termed *frame disputes* (Benford & Snow 2000, 626f.). In the context of framing, the opposing desires refer to the disagreements within the anti-LGBT movement over the ways to address certain issues. As I will demonstrate, parts of the so-called 'ex-gay movement' feature framings that diverge from that of the mainstream anti-LGBT movement. Both the adoption and transformation of originally oppositional frames as well as internal frame disputes are risky for a movement since they have the potential to jeopardize socio-political alliances and the overall consistency of arguments. Anti-LGBT activists frequently call upon church unity for the fight against LGBT rights – an appeal that may be necessary given the obvious divisions within the Protestant Right (cf. also chapter 12). Such pleas lay bare cracks and inconsistencies, which might eventually do more harm than good to the actions and reputation of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

This study has already pointed out types of counterframing that include the adoption of originally oppositional frame elements. The self-victimization of the Protestant Right is one example. The anti-LGBT movement recasts the image of vulnerability, weakness, and victimhood that LGBT people actually have in a way to deny LGBT people the

recognition of their anguish and, rather, ascribe this underdog position to themselves. Another example is the movement's framing around the concept of love. Siwoo (2018, 191–199) describes how anti-LGBT activists try to redeploy this term for their own purposes, claiming, for instance, that homosexuality is not real love, which they assert is only possible between a man and a woman. The Protestant Right also uses love-related frames to counteract the accusation of being 'hate forces' (*hyōmo seryōk*), a reproach commonly made by pro-LGBT activists. In a noteworthy twist, anti-LGBT activists claim in speeches and on protest posters that they oppose homosexuals exactly because they 'love' them (cf. also Interview 20). Siwoo argues that this is a mere marketing strategy geared to creating a better image for the anti-LGBT movement. In fact, the anti-LGBT camp continues categorizing people into groups worth of receiving love, and others that are not. This corresponds to the Christian expression 'love the sinner, hate the sin' (cf. also Moon 2014), which suggests that those who overcome their 'sinful' behavior can be met with affection and acceptance. This is why anti-LGBT activists keep claiming that LGBT individuals can change and that 'conversion therapy' is possible. Eventually, such a reframing of love – besides the intended effect of positively rebranding churches – contains an insidious core. Rather than granting actual love, understanding and recognition, queer people are put at risk through the propagation of measures that are scientifically proven to be harmful (Briken et al. 2019).

This chapter focuses on an aspect of framing contests that has not been covered by previous research, that is, counterframing and frame disputes in the realm of human rights. Rights discourses around LGBT communities have been studied for the US case (Herman 1996) as well as elsewhere, for example in Korea and Israel (Kim, Jongwoo 2019; Dudai 2017).¹ Yet, the specific approach and lineup of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in this respect – or, as I will demonstrate, its opposing desires – have remained indistinct so far. Other forms of 'opposing desires' are also present in the framing of the movement: radicalized narratives versus alleged moderation, and religious versus secular framings. These two themes will be covered after the now following section.

1 A special political and academic debate in this context is the one on so-called 'Asian values'. In the 1990s in particular, this concept has been promoted by politicians in Southeast and East Asia, claiming that Asian cultures and countries feature values different from the 'Western' concept of universal human rights, e.g., the preference for acting in and for the collective, and loyalty towards authorities – often citing the Confucian tradition as foundation. Early on, critics have put into question the distinctness from general human rights, as well as the idea that human rights politics are a form of 'cultural imperialism' in Asia. Furthermore, Asian values have been accused of being a means for authoritarian political leaders to justify their repressive and undemocratic political approaches (Freeman 1996). However, the concept of Asian values lingers on in academic discourses, also in relation to debates about LGBT rights, which are said to be unfit for Asia due to their alleged infringement of filial piety and of the familial loyalties based in Confucianism. Such a perspective has been rejected by scholars who call for queering Asian values (Hou 2020) and for reconstructing the universality of human rights for LGBT people in Asia as well (Lee, Po-han 2016). The Korean anti-LGBT movement does not explicitly refer to 'Asian values' in their activities. But they do, as I have shown in previous sections, denounce homosexuality as 'un-Korean' and as 'western imports'.

Relativizing the human rights of LGBT people and one's own hostility towards them

A common frame used by anti-LGBT forces is to pretend that they respect the human rights of queer people. These statements are, however, immediately followed by relativizations of this alleged respect, effectively contradicting the declaration of tolerance made only seconds before as the subsequent examples show. “We should protect the legitimate human rights of homosexuals, but we should not include sex acts between men who spread AIDS in human rights. Protecting the distorted sexual behavior of homosexuals will seriously harm the public health and family system of Korean society” (Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2015, December 13). “The human rights and diversity of all people should be respected, but if it makes the community sick and is contrary to common sense and truth, it must be firmly corrected” (Kim Yŏng-jin, cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2010, October 29). “The human rights of homosexual soldiers are important, but the human rights of parents who have sent their children to the military are also important” (Yi, Wŏn-dŭk, cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2015, May 31).

The beginnings of these statements make the speakers seem more moderate than they actually are. While pretending to care for the human rights of LGBT people, the latter part of their statements reveals that, in fact, they have the exact opposite in mind. The activists here wish to deprive homosexual people infected with HIV from their right to participate in society without discrimination, as well as limit the freedom rights of homosexual soldiers. At the same time, they compare the rights of LGBT people to those of other groups, suggesting that, ultimately, the rights of the majority outweigh those of the minority (cf. chapter 7.3). Such an argumentation strategy is commonly referred to as ‘whataboutism’.² In order to belittle the concerns of, or divert attention away from an actually disadvantaged group, other collectives are put into position, suggesting that the latter are more important or that the granting of rights to LGBT people would infringe upon the latter’s rights. This kind of whataboutism can also be observed in the way anti-LGBT activists allude to North Korea when attempting to present LGBTs as individuals undeserving of rights. While doing this, they commonly attack leftist political forces and state institutions, which they accuse of supporting LGBT rights. At a protest event aiming at dissipating the reproach of producing ‘fake news’ launched against the Protestant Right by the progressive newspaper *Hankyoreh* (Pak Chun-yong 2018, September 27), a pastor called An Yong-un spoke in the following manner: “Left-leaning figures anxious to enact a student human rights ordinance and anti-discrimination law insist on protecting homosexuals’ human rights, but they are silent about North Korea, which is

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- 2 Whataboutism is not commonly used as an analytical concept in social sciences. There are some studies that investigate the characteristics of whataboutism, for example its function in discussions (Barceló Aspeitia 2020) and its concrete usage in US media and politics (Dykstra 2020). According to Dykstra (2020, 4f.), media and public interest in whataboutism has significantly increased since 2017 when Donald Trump became president of the United States. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines whataboutism as follows: “The practice of responding to an accusation or difficult question by making a counter-accusation or raising a different issue. Also in later use: the practice of raising a supposedly analogous issue in response to a perceived hypocrisy or inconsistency” (cited in Dykstra 2020, 2). I argue that whataboutism has analytical value as a concept that describes quite well the discursive strategy used by Korean anti-LGBT activists.

committing the worst human rights abuses” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, November 2). Besides left-wing forces, another common target of criticism is the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK), as the following quote shows.

The biggest contradiction of the National Human Rights Commission is that it is silent about the severely violated human rights of North Koreans while emphasizing the human rights of homosexuals, of people engaging in polyamory, and prostitutes. [...] The National Human Rights Commission of Korea, which is mired in biased gender ideology and demands the legalization of homosexuality, polyamory, and prostitution, must be judged by the people. (Choe Po-gil, cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2019, March 20).

A common demand of anti-LGBT activists, also in the context of accusing the NHRCK of disregarding the human rights of North Koreans, is to abolish the NHRCK as a whole. Dismantling the NHRCK, however, would aggravate the human rights situation of LGBT people in Korea only further, demonstrating that, after all, the anti-LGBT movement's asserted respect for LGBT human rights is not honest. What the Protestant Right really cares about is their own vested interests and rights such as religious freedom and freedom of speech, which they see at risk owing to pro-LGBT bills like the anti-discrimination law. Their concept of human rights negates the universality of human rights. According to the anti-LGBT movement, some groups – like the purported majority of Koreans and, of course, Christians – are more deserving of rights than others. A press statement issued by several groups that organized a counter-rally against the 2015 Seoul Queer Culture Festival exemplifies this fact. “How can perverted sexual acts be human rights when at the same time criminally punishing those who do not acknowledge them? Is this human rights? [...] This is a policy to exterminate Christian churches, hidden behind the law banning discrimination against homosexuals” (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, June 10).

The actual lack of respect for LGBT human rights becomes apparent in another counterframing strategy, which is in partial conflict with the framing approach just presented. Rather than feigning tolerance, some anti-LGBT activists argue that the whole idea of LGBT human rights is wrong or ‘fake’. Paek Sang-hyŏn, a Kukmin Daily journalist, has been particularly active in promoting the frame of “fake human rights”. In 2017, he published a book entitled *Fake Human Rights, Fake Hatred, Fake Minority – Telling the Truth about the Homosexual Dictatorship Frame*. In this book, he uses the trope of something being fake to disparage LGBT groups and their strategies, as well as propagating the view that the latter and left-wing political forces strive to establish a “homosexual dictatorship” in South Korea. This sensational writing about alleged dangers of homosexuality fits into the conspiracy narratives analyzed in chapter 7. The adoption of the ‘fake’ frame can certainly be credited to the Trump Administration's and its allies' use of the very term (cf. Polletta & Callahan 2019). I argue that it is also a counterframing strategy in face of the accusations of deliberately spreading wrong information about homosexuality and related topics. In the case of Paek Sang-hyŏn's 2017 book, it could even be called a preemptive type of counterframing, since the reproach that Protestant groups engage in disinformation really gained traction only after the Hankyoreh investigation of 2018. Stigmatizing LGBT groups and their supporters of being ‘fake’

in manifold respects is a precautionary measure to fend off charges of a similar kind directed at the anti-LGBT movement.

Alongside Paek Sang-hyŏn's journalistic framing of LGBT human rights as 'fake' or 'false', other parts of the anti-LGBT movement also question whether demands for equal treatment of LGBT people have anything to do with 'true' human rights. At a protest at the private Protestant Handong University, for instance, participants also utilized the term "fake human rights". They alleged that the university and society at large are in danger of falling for 'bad' LGBT influence under the guise of human rights protection (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2019, January 23). The Christian Council of Korea (CCK) features a similar line of argument when attributing moves for legalizing same-sex marriage to the detrimental effects of the human rights discourse (cited in Ko, Se-uk 2014, December 5). Another activist attempts to delegitimize the demand for LGBT rights by bringing up a far-fetched comparison associating homosexuals with health issues: "Homosexuality breaks down social norms by shortening human life and allowing indiscriminate sexual freedom through AIDS infection. Homosexuality is not a true human right, just as happiness through drug inhalation is not a true human right" (Yun Sŏn-gyo, cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, June 23). Activists also argue from a Christian perspective that the concept of human rights does not extend to sexual minorities. In one press release, the KACC quotes the US Declaration of Independence of 1776, focusing on the definition of the concept of human rights outlined there. "In this concept, human rights are the rights granted by the Creator, meaning that nobody can infringe on them, and that rights not granted by the Creator cannot be included in the category of human rights" (KACC 2015, June 24).

Raising and externalizing 'ex-gay' human rights

The framing activities of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in the area of human rights is mostly of a deprecating kind. Human rights, if granted to LGBT people, lose their essence, the argument goes. But the overall image the movement strives to create is more extensive. In fact, the whole discourse on human rights for disadvantaged and excluded groups is a thorn in the side of the Protestant Right. According to conservative Protestant activists, refugees, Muslims, and feminists should not be able to enjoy basic human rights either (Kim, Nami 2016). The Protestant Right is right when concluding that human rights have become increasingly relevant in international and domestic politics over the past decades – both in terms of LGBT rights (Kollman & Waites 2009) and other rights-related topics in world politics at large (cf. e.g., Risse, Ropp & Sikkink 1999). However, for the most part, the Korean anti-LGBT movement does not engage in human rights framing in the sense that they actively, frequently and systematically claim human rights *for themselves*. If at all, activists denounce alleged violations of their rights, yet, without going much into detail and without using the term 'human rights' in this context.

In contrast to this, one sub-group of the Korean anti-LGBT movement does proactively claim human rights for themselves: the 'ex-gay' organizations around Pastor Lee Jonah (Yi Yo-na), which claim that 'escaping' one's homosexuality is possible and which

'help' people to do so through the power of faith.³ This they have in common with the rest of the anti-LGBT movement: advocating the 'healing' of LGBT people and alleging that it is 'true' human rights to help people overcome their homosexuality – or 'come back' to heterosexuality, a frame that has already been treated before (cf. chapter 7.2). As for the specifics of human rights, however, the framing strategy of this part of the Korean ex-gay movement diverges from the mainstream anti-LGBT movement's impulses to discard the concept of human rights altogether. The *Holy Life* ex-gay group around Pastor Lee Jonah engages in a different kind of counterframing, thus essentially creating a frame dispute within the larger movement. As I will demonstrate now, this dispute does not only manifest itself in different framing strategies. Rather, there is a distinct split within the anti-LGBT movement, which even leads them to hold separate events in opposition to the Seoul Queer Culture Festival all at one time.

Lee Jonah, senior pastor at the Calvary Chapel in Seoul, has been active in the Korean anti-LGBT movement from the beginning. Over the years, many subsidies of his original ex-gay group *Holy Life* were founded, such as the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Christian Association* (t'al tongsǒnggae in'gwǒn kidokkyo hyǒbbūihoe), the *Ex-Gay International Alliance* (t'al tongsǒnggae kukche yǒnmaeng), the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Professors' Forum* (t'al tongsǒnggae in'gwǒn kyosu p'orǒm), and the *Ex-Gay Movement Mothers' Meeting* (t'al tongsǒnggae undong òmǒni moim). The substance of at least some of these additional organizations is questionable, though. When searching the ex-gay mother's meeting on Google, for example, there is only one result. As for the other ex-gay groups, the acting personnel are often the same. Lee Jonah is virtually always involved when these groups meet or when they appear in news reports. Be that as it may, the ex-gay movement around the Calvary Chapel pastor can be described as very industrious in that it establishes diverse sub-groups and strives to expand its activism and network transnationally.

At some point, however, the mainstream anti-LGBT movement and the ex-gay groups that were created around *Holy Life* started drifting apart. In his study *Queer Apocalypse*, Siwoo argues that the mainstream movement wants to prevent homosexuality from spreading because they think it is a sin and dangerous, whereas ex-gay groups act out of the wish to 'help' homosexuals (Siwoo 2018, 72). Even though these two camps cooperate with each other, Siwoo sees competition between them. Anti-LGBT groups criticize the ex-gays around Lee Jonah for thinning out the issue, while the latter accuse the mainstream movement of exploiting anti-LGBT sentiments merely to increase their political power (Siwoo 2018, 77f.). These internal animosities between the ex-gay and mainstream anti-LGBT movements have been confirmed by both pro-LGBT (Interviews 8; 18; 35) and anti-LGBT actors interviewed for this study (Interviews 17; 22). A result of this rift was the establishment of yet another ex-gay group in December 2018. The counselling service *I Ministry* (ai minisūt'ūrī) is led by the self-proclaimed ex-gay mission-

3 The term 'ex-gay' is commonly used in English to denote people that claim having abandoned their 'former' sexual or gender identity, or organizations that encourage people to 'overcome' their non-heterosexual sexual orientation or non-cis gender identity, for example through the means of so-called 'conversion therapy'. Although the word 'gay' figures prominently in the term 'ex-gay', it encompasses more sexual identities than just male homosexuality.

ary Pak Chin-gwŏn and is actively supported by several mainstream anti-LGBT social movement organizations (Paek Sang-hyŏn 2018, December 9).

The internal discord also becomes apparent in the way ex-gay activists around Lee Jonah frame human rights. Like the mainstream anti-LGBT movement, they connect human rights to the 'need' to 'heal' queer people. Kim Kyu-ho, an ally activist of Lee Jonah's, puts it like this at the second *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum* in March 2015: "It is true human rights to help homosexuals escape from the pain of homosexuality" (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, March 22). Pro-LGBT activists worldwide, however, repudiate such statements, citing scientific research which proves the harmfulness 'conversion therapies' and similar practices. In recent years, an increasing number of states like Canada, Ecuador, France, and Germany acknowledged this danger posed to LGBT individuals and consequently prohibited 'conversion therapies' within their jurisdictions.⁴ It is perhaps also against this development of mounting pressure through criminalization of 'conversion therapy' in many states that ex-gay activists turned to human rights narratives to defend their practices. In Korea, ex-gay activists hold their own 'human rights forums' with 'expert' lectures and self-declared ex-gays (and ex-lesbians and ex-transgender people) who testify their experiences. The term 'human rights' figures prominently already in the name of these events, which also stretch transnationally. Ex-gay activists from outside Korea are commonly invited to such forums.

A frequently used frame in the context of demanding human rights of ex-gays is that, as a minority themselves, they deserve non-discriminatory treatment. At an event against the Seoul Human Rights Charter in 2014, the participating ex-gay and anti-LGBT groups published a press statement which reads like this: "Seoul City must first and foremost protect the human rights of ex-gays who are more of a minority than homosexuals" (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2014, November 28). By claiming the minority status for themselves, ex-gay activists thus contradict the mainstream movement's strategy of emphasizing the rights and opinions of the majority. Besides this frame dispute, ex-gay activists also engage in counterframing, claiming that they themselves are victims of hate, especially emanating from pro-LGBT rights groups, and that they, therefore, need to fight for their very own human rights as ex-gay individuals (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, March 24). In this context, they also directly attack pro-LGBT activists like in the following press statement.

If the organizers of the homosexual queer festival [sic!] are truly in favor of the human rights for homosexuals, they should not turn a blind eye to the cry of ex-gays. They should immediately stop anti-social acts that wrap up their sexual depravity as human rights and that lead young people in our society to such sexual depravity. (Cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, April 21)

Part of the fight for ex-gay human rights is to also promote legal changes. At the first installment of the 'Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum' in 2014, Lee Jonah stated that is a pity

4 Germany, for example, introduced a nationwide ban on 'conversion therapy' in 2020, however, only for minors until the age of 18, but including a prohibition of advertising for such practices. The bill also forbids 'conversion therapy' for adults in case they did not freely decide to undergo such a 'treatment' (Deutscher Bundestag 2020).

that Korean churches only dealt with homosexuality in terms of condemnation rather than concentrating on ex-gay pastoral. Therefore, he and his allies formed the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Christian Association*, an organization that has the goal of fighting for ex-gay human rights and preparing an “ex-gay human rights law” (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, November 20). Such a law, however, has failed to materialize in Korean politics so far.

It is perhaps also owing to the absence of political success in Korea that the ex-gay movement turned from the domestic turf towards the transnational and international arenas. In June 2015, Korean ex-gay groups held a meeting together with ex-gay activists from ten other countries to prepare the foundation of the *Ex-Gay International Alliance*. In their foundation statement, these actors again emphasize the minority status of ex-gays and argue that “their human rights are not properly protected by the United Nations and other countries and societies, and are being violated under the pretext of protecting the human rights of sexual minorities” (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, June 29). Essentially, ex-gay groups accuse the UN of hypocrisy and double standards when espousing the human rights of one group, but ignoring or even dismissing the rights of others. In 2016, Korean ex-gay groups traveled to Europe to advocate for ex-gay human rights at the European Union in Brussels and at the United Nations in Geneva. According to the Kukmin Daily reports, they held small protests in front of EU and UN buildings, praying and holding a banner that reads “The United Nations! Protect the Ex-Homosexual Human Rights!”. They did not speak with officials from these organizations, but presented a declaration for the protection of ex-gay rights, which they also distributed to international media (Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, October 26; Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, October 27). A Google search, however, reveals that the trip to Europe of these Korean ex-gay groups did not get wide media attention except for the reports in Kukmin Daily. In 2018, Korean ex-gay activists again went to Switzerland, submitting the “Forth Declaration for Ex-Gay Human Rights” to the *United Nations Commission on Human Rights*. In the declaration, ex-gays are presented as victims in need of protection, emulating frames that are normally used by pro-LGBT groups, to which they negatively refer:

[...] homosexuals who have disconnected from their homosexuality suffer from all sorts of verbal abuse, accusations, and even death threats by pro-homosexual actors. Also, in some countries, laws are being implemented that require people to pay high fines or go to jail if they claim to be ex-gay or support ex-gays. The human rights of ex-homosexuals are being ignored all over the world today. As a result, ex-gays and their families suffer greatly and their hearts get injured. We hereby declare that we will take the lead in the protection of the human rights of ex-gays and of those who are struggling to escape homosexuality. (Yu, Yöng-dae 2018, November 10)

Aside from using self-victimization frames – arguably more credibly than the mainstream anti-LGBT movement because such criminalizing laws do in fact exist in some countries and regional entities – ex-gay activists from Korea here demonstrate that they go to great lengths in the fight for the protection of ex-gay human rights – while at the same time withholding information on the harmful effects conversion treatments can involve. Their commitment reaches to international and transnational arenas. Within the whole spectrum of anti-LGBT activism in Korea, the ex-gay groups around Lee Jonah can

be called the most active ones in transnationalizing the movement. What we can observe in this concrete case of claiming ex-gay human rights with international organizations is the mechanism of *externalization* (della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Keck & Sikkink 1998). Korean ex-gay groups encourage external actors to get involved in domestic conflicts. However, they have not been able to attain concrete success with this strategy – at least when the resonance from the international organizations addressed is concerned. Rather to the contrary, UN bodies tend to condemn practices such as ‘conversion therapy’. In 2020, the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* issued a report written by an independent expert who called for a global ban for such practices. The Office’s accompanying press release summarizes the reasons for demanding such a ban, quoting the expert Victor Madrigal-Borloz: “‘conversion therapy’ practices have been consistently debunked by the scientific community and have been repeatedly linked to long-term harm to the physical and mental health of LGBT persons” (OHCHR 2020).

Be that as it may, I argue that these transnationalizing efforts of the ex-gay groups are not futile. The ex-gay groups have not been able to score concrete returns in their attempts at receiving support from international organizations. Yet, it is quite possible that this was not their goal or expectation in the first place. Rather, the fact that Korean ex-gay activists travel all the way to Europe and try to build transnational networks testifies their volition to fight for ex-gay human rights – giving the whole narrative on ‘ex-gay human rights’ more credibility. These actions legitimize the framing of ex-gays as subjects in need of human rights, human rights being a topic that has become increasingly important in international politics. In addition, building alliances with foreign ex-gay activists fulfills the function of creating the image of a global problem that is not limited to Korea. The target audience, however, remains Korean. The images created and the statements given in international contexts serve the purpose of convincing people in Korea to join the fight for ex-gay human rights. It is questionable, though, whether Korean audiences outside the established church base let themselves be won over that easily. The inconsistencies and animosities that emerge in the framing contests analyzed in this section may cast doubt among the publics addressed.

Emerging animosities and inconsistencies

The framing contests demonstrated above reveal three main cleavages. The obvious one exists between the pro and anti-LGBT movement’s dealings with human rights. The anti-LGBT movement adopts human rights frames from pro-LGBT actors, but changes their content according to their interest, mostly by engaging in a kind of counterframing that devalues the whole concept of human rights. The second rift is between pro-LGBT actors and the ex-gay movement, with the latter arguing they want to ‘help’ queer people whereas the former focus attention on the harmful effects of practices like ‘conversion therapy’. The third, and most surprising example of opposing desires can be found in the diverging ways ex-gay groups frame human rights. Unlike their mainstream anti-LGBT fellows, they do not discard the concept of human rights as wrong or ‘fake’, but rather actively deploy it for themselves. By claiming minority status and reframing ex-gays as individuals who lack human rights protection, they almost create a one-on-one reproduction or ‘mimicry’ (cf. Dudai 2017) of arguments put forward by pro-LGBT human rights

activists. At the same time, they – unwillingly? – fabricate a frame dispute within the entire anti-LGBT movement. Inconsistencies as well as slight animosities come to the fore.

Borrowing and transforming frames from rival groups holds the potential of perturbing the opponent's arguments, especially when it comes to a general framing strategy as successful as the one around human rights. At the same time, however, counter-framing has the risk of revealing discord and disunity within a movement. Decrying the concept of human rights, but claiming them for oneself all at once does not make sense. The ex-gay groups around Lee Jonah appear to be willing to bear the consequences of their partly diverging forms of activism. For years now, they have been staging a counter-event against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival. This *Holy Festival* has taken place at the same time and in the immediate vicinity of the mainstream anti-LGBT movement's counter-rally. Apparently, ex-gay groups do not disagree with other anti-LGBT actors only over the way human rights should be framed. As the separate Holy Festival shows, the rift goes deeper. It remains to be seen whether these opposing desires and inconsistencies have negative implications for the Korean anti-LGBT movement. In any case, it is to be expected that these internal rifts make it easier for pro-LGBT actors to tackle their anti-LGBT opponents by exposing these contradictions. I shall now proceed from framing contests to a different kind of opposing desires within the anti-LGBT movement: radicalized narratives versus alleged moderation.

8.2 Opposing desires II: radicalized narratives versus alleged moderation

When the counter-protests against the 2014 Seoul Queer Culture Festival (SQCF) escalated into violence, leaving ten people injured and four anti-LGBT protesters arrested (Kwön & Yi 2014, June 9; Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, June 8), the reactions and media coverage beyond conservative Christian newspapers was rather negative for the anti-LGBT movement. Pro-LGBT activists and other human rights groups harshly criticized the violence emanating from anti-LGBT protesters, as well as the hindrance to exercise their freedom of assembly. Critique also came from within the anti-LGBT movement. Leading organizations of the Protestant Right such as the CCK, CCIK, and the KACC published a press statement ahead of the following year's Seoul Queer Culture Festival, in which they demanded counter-protesters to refrain from violence and overt expressions of hatred. They feared that this could, again, lead to negative news reports and argued that, ultimately, such harsh behavior would only benefit the pro-LGBT movement (cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, June 4). The sustainability of this advice from the anti-LGBT movement leadership turned out to be not that great since violence reappeared in the counter-protests against the *Inchön Queer Culture Festival* in 2018 (Yi, Yu-jin 2018, September 11).

Be that as it may, the movement leadership seems to be very intent on avoiding the image of malign, hateful, and violent anti-LGBT protests. On some level, they wish to appear moderate, as representatives of common sense, of majoritarian attitudes as against allegedly 'extreme' demands and displays by pro-LGBT groups. Several aspects that I have illustrated in previous parts of this study contribute to this intended favorable impression. The hollow assertion of being in favor of human rights for LGBT people is one ex-

ample. Another is the emphasis on 'love' in many instances, for example, when anti-LGBT protestors claim that they oppose homosexuality out of love for homosexuals. The 2019 counter-rally against the SQCF was entitled 'Love is Plus Festival'. Judging only from the sophisticated design of the main stage which featured the same love-related motto, one could not tell that this 'festival' was actually directed against LGBT rights. The event even exhibited a professionally produced protest song with the title 'Love is plus'. The concept of 'love' expressed at the counter-rally, however, was of course a restrictive and heteronormative one. The stage design highlighted the love between one man and one woman, as well as the love parents have for their children.

It becomes apparent that the anti-LGBT movement makes a lot of efforts to pretend to be more benevolent and moderate than they actually are. The impression they want to construct is one of anti-LGBT groups as caring and thoughtful actors who have in mind the best interest of church members, of Koreans in general, even including LGBT individuals. This is also why there are some church groups that seem to be unwelcome at the large counter-rally with its festival-like character. Many church groups and explicit anti-LGBT organizations have booths on the area of the counter-event, which is situated just across the street from the SQCF. The SQCF has been taking place on Seoul Plaza, a central square in front of Seoul city hall, since 2015. Other church groups, however, have their smaller stages elsewhere around Seoul Plaza, disseminating more explicit and radical anti-LGBT messages. At my participant observation of the protests against the SQCF on 1st June 2019, I was able to capture several such examples. One stage came up with young children wearing military uniforms and boasting posters akin to the 'love' frame: "I was born because mom and dad love each other." Other posters featured far more radical messages, though. "Exterminate homosexuality! Eradicate homosexuality! For a clean Korea. Hallelujah." Or: "Homosexuality is the worst. God's judgment!" Interestingly, messages of an explicitly religious nature were to be seen and heard more outside the main counter-rally's area. People on another smaller stage on the opposite side of Seoul Plaza held up posters reading "Homosexuality is sin! Return to Jesus!" Posters, flags, sashes, and banners that people flaunted at the main rally had more 'neutral' contents such as "Against homosexuality" (*tongsöngae pandae*), "Marriage is between one man and one woman" or "Prevent the bad influence of homosexuality!" These materials were all preproduced, had a common design, and were distributed to the participants in the course of the counter-rally. While the vast majority of participants at the main rally can be expected to be Christians,⁵ this avoidance of religious framing seems odd at first glance. However, the preparatory committee of this counter-rally consciously decided to organize it "without a Christian undertone" as a Kukmin Daily report reveals (Paek, Sanghyön 2019, April 26). I argue that the leadership of the anti-LGBT movement chose to go for less radical and less 'Christian' imagery at this event in order to be compatible and resonate with the general public beyond their traditionally strong Protestant support base.

5 I conducted a small survey of the participants at the counter-rally (cf. chapter 9), which also has an item on religious affiliation. All of the 26 randomly chosen interviewees stated that they belonged to a Christian church. Out of these 26, 17 claimed to attend religious services more than once a week. Two interviewees said they attended church service every day. These results suggest that the majority of participants were of Christian faith, and at that, very active members of their churches.

Of all anti-LGBT events over the years, the counter-rallies against the SQCF can be assumed to get the most attention. Against this background, too radical or extreme positions would rather deter potential future adherents and supporters. The context of every protest event, as well as the public addressed, therefore do matter greatly in the way a movement presents itself and frames its issues.

While the leadership of the mainstream anti-LGBT movement is mostly concerned with its public image, others prefer to remain true to themselves and even pride themselves in boasting extreme and fundamentalist messages. This does not mean that the leadership holds different, actually moderate positions. Rather to the contrary, I argue that they in fact fully agree with such radical positions. The only real difference is that they care more about the ‘marketability’ of the movement. This is, however, again a blatant inconsistency within the anti-LGBT movement – just like the discord with the ex-gay groups around Pastor Lee Jonah analyzed above. The inconsistencies become even greater when taking a look at the overall tendency of increasingly using radical rhetoric. The intended appearance of moderation and temperance clash with framings that invoke alleged ruin, decay, and oppression.

I have already demonstrated large parts of this symbolic framing of the anti-LGBT movement in other parts of this study. A short recapitulation: activists deliberately create the threat of churches, families, and the whole nation being destroyed by leftist LGBT ideology and pro-LGBT legislation. To symbolically substantiate these claims, they use strong vocabulary such as “destruction”, “collapse”, “harm”, “corruption”, “decadence”, and “running out of control”. They invoke “chaos”, “distortion”, “confusion”, “crisis”, and attribute manifold negative adjectives to anything queer, like “evil”, “toxic”, “obscene”, “perverse”, “dirty”, “impure”, and describe homosexuality as “social cancer”, as a “poisonous mushroom”, and a “ruse by Satan”. Queer Culture Festivals are depicted as “panties festival”, “naked body parade”, and “gay porn festival”.⁶ Many of these symbolic frames are among the frames most used by the anti-LGBT movement (cf. Table 7). The function of using such extreme rhetoric is, as I have analyzed before, to instill people with indignation and outrage, to create fear and anxieties, and to vilify LGBT individuals as dangerous ‘others’ unworthy of equal treatment.

It is not surprising that anti-LGBT activists use such drastic frames. The point I want to make here is, rather, that it is hard to harmonize the juxtaposition of purported moderation of rhetoric and action forms on the one hand, and their radicalization on the other. One would expect that these opposing desires within the movement should be negotiated and resolved internally to guarantee external consistency. But this does not seem to materialize, at least not successfully. I argue, however, that these diverging strategies do not necessarily entail negative effects. Rather, the anti-LGBT movement displays adaptability, a capacity of dynamically accommodating different desires. The differing degrees of radicalness do not only show up between the above-mentioned groups. From event to event, from speaker to speaker, the ways anti-LGBT issues are framed vary significantly, supposedly according to the public addressed. Longstanding

6 For the sake of clarity, I refrain from providing sources for each of these quotes, also because most of the terms used appear several times. The PEA dataset offers more information and the corresponding protest events.

supporters of the movement as well as members of churches that are part of the Protestant Right can be expected to be more open to radical and explicitly religious framings. The general public, in contrast, has to be approached differently. If such a custom-made framing strategy proves successful must be doubted, though. As I have already mentioned above, the attendees of the counter-rally were for the most part, if not entirely Christians. The effects on people who only read reports about the counter-rally remain of course unclear. It is therefore to be expected that the anti-LGBT movement principally reaches and finds resonance with its traditional, conservative Protestant adherents – despite the efforts to create a more ‘neutral’ image at some protest events.⁷

Framing anti-LGBT collective action as a war against ‘homosexual dictatorship’

It is perhaps also due to the absent success with people outside the traditional support base that anti-LGBT activists increasingly turn to extreme accusations and aggressive rhetoric, hoping to win over new supporters this way. Let me present two examples to illustrate this: the usage of war-related terms, and the reproach of ‘dictatorial’ and ‘totalitarian’ tendencies charged against pro-LGBT actors. The usage of warfare metaphors is not specific to the Korean anti-LGBT movement or the Protestant Right. In fact, war-related vocabulary is ubiquitous in diverse areas of public discourse, be it the ‘war on terror’, ‘battles with cancer’, or ‘wars against poverty’ to name a few examples. Flusberg et al. (2018, 1) argue that they are commonly used because they refer to widely shared knowledge and “they reliably express an urgent, negatively valenced emotional tone that captures attention and motivates action.” Particularly in South Korea – a country that is still officially at war with its Northern neighbor – war metaphors can be expected to be both generally intelligible and to instill people with fear.

Anti-LGBT activists present LGBT people and their allies as opponents in a war such as in the following statement: “The homosexual war is covering the political, educational, cultural and medical sectors, and has already become a global issue, so we need to be alert” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2015, October 8). This ‘war’ does not just emanate from the pro-LGBT camp. Korean churches are also depicted as being involved, or motivated to actively take part in battles that are commonly framed as ‘spiritual’. A speaker at an event on the role of churches in the fight against homosexuality, for example, said that “[t]he Korean church must come to its senses in the spiritual battle” (cited in Kim, Na-rae 2018, June 4). For him, this spiritual battle is related to fighting against gender mainstreaming as well as “the Marxist communist ideology behind homosexuality”. The symbolic ‘war’ frames are closely related to the fight against Cultural Marxism. This ‘cultural war’ has been omnipresent in recent years, as I have demonstrated in previous chapters. The ‘cultural war’ is both seen as a battle against foreign influences and interferences (i.e., from foreign cultures), and as a fight against what is framed as harmful Marxist and LGBT cultures. A 2016 press statement issued by the KACC exemplifies this view: “The fact that many US and European ambassadors participated in Korea’s queer festival and exercised

7 Chapter 8.3 will present similar results in relation to the seemingly opposing framing strategies of using religious frames on the one hand, but also ‘secular’ frames, e.g., relating alleged scientific facts on the other hand.

national pressure shows that Korea is becoming a battleground of the global cultural war" (KACC 2016, October 14). This cultural war takes place on the level of ideology, values, and beliefs – or, as Gramsci would call it, using a war metaphor himself: a 'war of position' to change common sense and, ultimately, achieve cultural hegemony.

On the part of the anti-LGBT movement, this cultural war includes associating pro-LGBT politics with far-reaching accusations. Activists frequently frame activism in favor of LGBT rights as threatening freedom rights and even democracy as a whole. They assert, as I have already shown in previous parts of this study, that religious freedom and freedom of speech are at risk should LGBT rights be introduced. They go even farther in their fearmongering, claiming that Korea is in danger of falling back into "dictatorship", "totalitarianism", and "tyranny" owing to 'LGBT ideology'. In a statement directed against the introduction of human rights ordinances, the Protestant associations of all 17 Korean provinces and cities explicate this strong reproach.

As the attitude of the law, which had a balance between conflicting values, turns to protecting one-sided values, it results in the unjust suppression of the freedom of the other side. Demanding that one must not criticize or oppose homosexuality is equivalent to past Nazi, fascist, and proletarian dictatorship laws that have abused freedom by suppressing all opposition expressions in the name of the law. The attempt to enact enforcement rules [for human rights ordinances] should be withdrawn and scrapped immediately. (Yu, Yöng-dae 2017, March 7)

Anti-LGBT actors started using such far-fetched accusations in 2012. The usage increased in 2018–2019, especially in contexts in which they feared (or rather: created the fear) that freedom rights would be restricted. The KACC has been particularly keen on drawing connections between pro-LGBT bills and alleged dictatorship-like side effects. In 2012, the KACC issued a press statement lambasting the *Student Human Rights Ordinance* planned by the Seoul city government. "The Student Human Rights Ordinance should neither be a goal for political gain nor be considered a panacea for education. Moreover, it is the product of dictatorship for 'human rights advocates' to monitor schools and teachers" (KACC 2012, May 11). The subtext of this statement is the critique that left-leaning political elites try to impose their ideology upon people 'under the guise' of human rights, and that such ideology would now also find its way into the educational system. Be it teachers, Protestant pastors, or conservative-minded people, the 'dictatorial scare' that anti-LGBT activists strive to create is always about the fear that people get punished when stating 'sound' criticism against homosexuality and related topics.

Invectives of a similar kind have been launched against several law proposals, ordinances, and guidelines in favor of LGBT rights. But also state institutions and private organizations come under fire for supporting LGBT rights. The NHRCK is, as so often, a target in this context, with anti-LGBT activists arguing that the human rights watchdog is paving the way for dictatorship. At a rally against the NHRCK, a host addressed the 150 participants like this: "The National Human Rights Commission of Korea is muzzleing those who oppose homosexuality in the name of hate and discrimination. [...] This is a dictatorship to block criticism of homosexuality" (cited in Im, Po-hyök 2019, April 24).

Similar criticism was launched against *Newsnjoy*, a rather progressive Christian online newspaper. Like the daily newspaper *Hankyoreh*, *Newsnjoy* had been reproaching anti-LGBT activists of producing fake news. The anti-LGBT movement, in turn, accuses *Newsnjoy* of using the “fake news frame” because of ideological dissent. One activist said the following at a press conference that also demanded to defund *Newsnjoy*. “If our society stigmatized others for having different opinions like *Newsnjoy* is doing, we will eventually end up in a totalitarian society” (cited in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, December 27). It is telling that anti-LGBT activists often retaliate ‘fake news’ accusations by either reproaching the opponents of producing wrong information themselves, or by resorting to harsh defamations. It seems that, in most cases, they indeed cannot prove the verisimilitude of their own claims. What is more, the freedom of speech argument gets strained significantly here. It is questionable whether you can call something an opinion when this ‘opinion’ has the potential of debasing and harming people. This notwithstanding, the anti-LGBT movement extends this argument also to the academic sphere, where they see scientific freedom in jeopardy. For example, the KACC criticized Seoul National University, Korea’s most prestigious university, for planning to introduce a human rights guideline, suggesting that the fact that sexual minorities are also mentioned would thwart any expressions of disapproval against homosexuality. In this context, the KACC proposes the following analysis.

This is essentially the same as the laws of Nazi fascism or proletarian dictatorship, where any voice of opposition was suppressed and freedom violated in the name of the law. In other words, it can be said that the university’s human rights guidelines contain the essence of ‘homosexual fascism’ and ‘homosexual dictatorship’. (KACC 2016, October 6)

Likening certain good practices of human rights protection to activities of political regimes that afflicted millions of people with suffering and death is a daring framing strategy. Admittedly, the anti-LGBT movement derives its accusations mainly from the correct historical observation that the German Nazi regime, as well as fascist and communist governments worldwide have heavily limited people’s freedom rights in the past. However, when considering all implications of such far-fetched comparisons several contradictions leap to the eye. On the one hand, the attempt to transform the meaning of terms describing abhorrent political regimes so that they also serve to vilify LGBT individuals and their allies may have certain benefits. The abominations committed by these regimes are known to an extent that they can be expected provoke immediate rejection with large parts of the audience. The aim is to depict homosexuality and transsexuality more shockingly than already done before to create a sense of urgency. Furthermore, older South Koreans have experienced authoritarian military regimes themselves so that they might react sensitively whenever such threats are raised. The historical horrors of communist regimes are well known anyways (cf. chapter 7.4). Therefore, anti-LGBT activists may expect that this framing resonates well with the general public.

However, this counterframing strategy could also backfire, again, owing to inconsistencies and the sheer overstatement. It is absurd when anti-LGBT groups like *People’s Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (2017) refer to homosexuals as “Nazis” and use invented

terms such as “gaystapo” (*keisyut’apo*; the ‘Gestapo’ was the secret police of Nazi Germany), since homosexuals themselves have fallen victim to Nazism and fascism (Schwartz 2014). What the Korean anti-LGBT movement is doing here is a deliberate inversion of victims and perpetrators. They completely disregard other aspects of these authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, such as the systematic discrimination against, the persecution, and killing of certain groups of people because of their ethnic origin, religious affiliation, political attitudes, sexual orientation, or gender identity. And it is the anti-LGBT movement which indirectly succeeds such horrendous and tragic wrongdoings – on a different level, of course, but certainly also very damaging. The activists may get away with the lack of historical consistency, for many Koreans might not be familiar with the historical details. But still, bystanders can be expected to be deterred rather than convinced by such exaggerated allegations. People may come to think that such unsettling accusations are in fact proof of a self-radicalizing movement and turn their backs on them. Pro-LGBT activists, in turn, can also use such examples as evidence for the nonsensical and extreme positions held by actors from the Protestant Right and disclose blatant contradictions. One such contradiction is the relationship between the Protestant Right and past political regimes in Korea. As I have elaborated before, it is actually them who have the legacy of cooperation with ideologically rightist authoritarian governments in the past.

This study does not have the means to analyze the actual individual-level effects of this two-pronged framing strategy, which oscillates between alleged moderation and radicalized rhetoric. It is certainly a continuous balancing act for anti-LGBT activists in general, and for the movement leadership in particular. The opposing desires within the framing strategy of the anti-LGBT movement do not stop here, though. The next and final part of this chapter will deal with the way the movement juggles with religious and secular framings.

8.3 Opposing desires III: religious versus secular framing strategies

Religion plays an important role as the social movement basis of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Christian faith and the Protestant Right as a loose organizational structure serve as resources for identity formation, mobilization, and as a ‘toolkit’ for constructing frames. As I have established in chapter 7.3, the anti-LGBT movement uses different framing strategies depending on which kind of public it wishes to persuade and win over. In this process of identity formation, one can expect that explicitly religious frames are suitable for conservative Christian audiences, whereas non-Christian publics need to be convinced by proffering another kind of framing. Displaying overly religious arguments and action forms may even deter and discourage potential adherents from considering the movement’s messages and joining their ranks. While religious and ‘secular’ (such as scientific) arguments do not necessarily contradict each other, there is still the risk of eventually only reaching one’s traditional support base. The previous subchapters have already touched upon similar intricacies and resulting opposing desires within the movement. This section briefly recapitulates religious and secular framing strategies and concludes that the Korean anti-LGBT movement does not succeed in concealing its Christian foundation – a strategy that the movement leadership has been pursuing

as demonstrated before. I argue, however, that the movement does not require such a concealment. They may not succeed in mobilizing many people outside the confines of Christianity, but it is exactly this Christianity, its organizational, human, and relational resources that have laid the fundament for the ‘accomplishments’ of the anti-LGBT movement so far. Even if assuming that both religious and secular frames mostly served to consolidate the conservative Protestant constituency and to re-create and reinvigorate their self-conception in the direction of henceforth harboring anti-LGBT attitudes, this development of a loyal following is crucial for movement success.

‘Christian’ frames against homosexuality

When it comes to framing strategies, Christian faith can serve as a symbolic resource (cf. Kniss & Burns 2004, 701). Gramsci claims that religious worldviews have the potential of being a significant hegemonic power, along with the structures that religious organizations provide (Gramsci 1971, 382; cf. also Forlenza 2019, 4). This potential is primarily situated on the ideological level. Christian doctrines, values, and beliefs provide orientation, first and foremost, in the area of ethics and morality. Morals play an important role in the religious framing of the anti-LGBT movement. Activists refer to homosexual acts as sinful behavior, a claim they base on fundamentalist, that is, literal interpretations of the Bible. A common religious argument is that homosexuality and same-sex marriage are against God’s creation order, which is interpreted as including only two distinct sexes – male and female – that are destined for each other. Sexual acts are only seen as legitimate when performed in heterosexual marriage. Homosexuality is presented as something acquired by sinful people, an immoral behavior that one has to overcome. To undergird these views, anti-LGBT actors frequently quote or allude to Biblical texts that, according to literal or conservative interpretations, condemn same-sex acts. The Presbyterian *Tonghap* denomination, for example, issued a general statement against homosexuality in April 2014, listing several Bible passages that they regard as supporting evidence for their rejection of homosexuality.

We believe that the Bible teaches that homosexuality is one of the sinful phenomena of fallen humans, contrary to the will of the holy God, and that is the result of unclean motives and learning (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, 1 Timothy 1:9–10). (Cited in Kim Tong-yöp 2014, April 9)

Such lists frequently appear in statements issued by anti-LGBT actors. Interestingly, it seems to suffice to just mention these Bible passages without providing further theological insight or exegesis. One could say that the sinfulness of homosexuality is so obvious from a conservative Christian point of view that it does not need further explanation. Some activists do include more concrete references in their statements, such as on the notorious Sodom and Gomorrah story. However, both the actors just alluding to Bible passages as well as those going a bit more into detail follow strictly literal interpretations of the scripture. They withhold the fact that other interpretations exist, for instance from

a historical-critical perspective, and explicitly position themselves in opposition to liberal theological approaches, which they often denounce as heretical (cf. chapter 12).⁸

Framings in the hermeneutical tradition of literalism claim that interpretations and doctrines condemning homosexuality are the only true and legitimate way of theologically and pastorally dealing with homosexuality. They have a clear orientation towards the internal workings of churches. Yet they also point towards the effects that sinful behavior can allegedly have on societal areas outside the Christian realm. Early on, in 2001, another Presbyterian denomination in Korea, *Hapdong*, interpreted the acceptance of, and socio-political support for homosexuality as signs of an increasingly unbelieving society losing its ethical foundation. The *Hapdong* leadership demanded that churches fight against such developments (cited in Ko Se-uk 2001, October 9). In a similar way, Protestant church leaders create the threat that homosexuality is not only a violation of Biblical 'truths', but that it also entails dangers for the rest of society. "The Korean church can never tolerate homosexuality, which destroys God's creation order and drives the world into conflict and chaos" (cited in Kim, Mu-jǒng 2015, November 2). "Conflict and chaos" that is allegedly caused by LGBT issues are thus not only regarded as problematic for churches internally, but for society as a whole. It is in this manner that Protestant anti-LGBT activists vindicate their activism against the rights of homosexual people. On top of this, they even attempt to justify outright discrimination by referring to the Bible as in the following statement made at a conference on the problems of homosexuality.

It is not Biblical to compare homosexuals to slaves and blacks. [...] It is because homosexuality, unlike slavery, as well as discrimination against blacks, women, and people of other races, regional backgrounds, and cultures, is not based on the creation order, but on human sin. The rights of people should be asserted according to God's law. (Cited in Kim, A-yǒng 2015, November 30)

Basically, homosexuals are presented as people without rights due to their sinfulness. Even their mere existence is questioned, for it is claimed that they are not part of the creation order. Besides essentially excluding and outlawing homosexual people, another noteworthy aspect becomes manifest in this quote. That is, the view that religious laws

8 The historical-critical method of Bible exegesis transcends merely literal interpretations by also including into the analysis perspectives on the temporal and local circumstances at which Biblical texts were written, and critically considering ways of translation and usages of terminology, as well as questioning common, allegedly obvious interpretations of Christian scriptures. In the course of such historical-critical endeavors, many theology scholars have come to interpret the Bible as a work that is, after all, not so clear in its condemnation of homosexuality or homosexual sexual acts. To give one example, liberal theologians interpret the well-known Bible passage on Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1–28) as a story showing God's strong disapproval of inhospitable behavior and sexual violence, rather than being a condemnation of same-sex acts between men. Recent theological schools of thought such as *Queer Theology* have substantiated such claims and started interpreting Bible passages using the method of 'queer reading', going also beyond the Biblical texts commonly cited as allegedly treating same-sex behavior (cf. e.g., *The Queer Bible Commentary*, edited by Mona West and Robert E. Shore-Goss 2022; for liberal Bible hermeneutics on homosexuality, see e.g., Badini Confalonieri et al. 2021; Gagnon 2001).

should be superior to secular legislation. In the fight against LGBT rights, a larger religious and religio-juridical agenda of the Protestant Right comes to the fore.

As demonstrated in the previous section, however, the anti-LGBT movement is intent on not showing too much hostility, since this would, in the long run, delegitimize their actions. Especially from a Christian point of view, one would expect compassion and forbearance from activists with a Protestant background. In fact, anti-LGBT activists do not only use 'Christian' frames to criticize allegedly immoral behavior or existences. As explicated in the previous section, they also show a certain degree of tainted benevolence towards LGBT people. The opposing desires of on the one hand strictly rejecting 'sinfulness' but on the other hand also showing mercy, can be expected to be particularly pervasive in Christian communities. Dawne Moon (2014) has shown in her study that the strategy of 'hating the sin, but loving the sinner' is a common approach of conservative, yet moderate Christians. As I have demonstrated before, however, it is questionable whether the mainstream anti-LGBT movement actually abides by its claims of 'loving homosexuals'. The majority of its activism is, rather, characterized by more or less overt hostilities directed towards LGBT people and their supporters. Be that as it may, activists frequently use this kind of framing – also combined with an explicitly 'Christian' focus. At an event kickstarting a campaign to evangelize gays and lesbians supported by Lee Jonah's 'ex-gay' groups (cf. chapter 8.1), for example, the chairman of the *Busan Holy City Movement* made the following statement: "Homosexuality should be hated, but homosexuals should be loved. Saving homosexuals through the gospel is the most active way for the Korean church to deal with homosexuality" (cited in Yu, yŏng-dae 2017, October 20). The Korean Methodist Church issued a similar statement when it established a 'Homosexuality Task Force' in 2017: "The purpose of the committee is not to hate and condemn homosexuals, but to serve them with the love of the Lord so that they can live a Biblically and socially healthy life through enlightenment and repentance" (cited in Sin, Sangmok 2017, May 29). Denominational leaders and anti-LGBT activists lead themselves and other Christians to believe that they have power over people, that they can 'save' homosexuals through conducting them towards atonement through faith. However, they deliberately disregard the damage potentially inflicted upon LGBT people, their families and friends by such allegedly well-intentioned offers or actions.

The religious framing against LGBT people is mostly of a moralizing kind. Homosexuality is depicted as a sinful practice that people can decide to engage in or not. The scientific fact of homosexuality as a given identity trait of people that cannot be changed through external efforts (Briken et al. 2019) is largely ignored. In general, anti-LGBT activists mostly do not differentiate between homosexual acts and homosexuality as an identity. Anything related to homosexuality is presented as sinful according to an allegedly God-given and Biblically verifiable 'natural order'. This moral framing is exclusionary in essence. The very action of Christian anti-LGBT activists detecting homosexuals as objects to care for, objects to be healed and led towards penance, effectively results in denouncing homosexuals as strange, adverse, and harmful 'others'. Superficial benevolence just serves to disguise the continuing exclusion and defamation of LGBT people and their allies. Moralizing homosexuality – especially when done predominantly from a 'Christian' perspective – can be expected to be less effective with non-Christian publics. In Korea, outside the confines of Christianity, it is the area of heteronormative family

values that could be expected to be most likely amenable to moralizing frames. In fact, anti-LGBT activists frequently create the image of homosexuality threatening families. Korean familism, however, particularly relies on a sense of duty to successfully continue the family lineage rather than being rooted in morality in the strict sense (Chang 2010).⁹

Secular frames directed against homosexuality: 'scientific knowledge'

The anti-LGBT movement is aware of the varying potentials of different framing strategies. In the research interviews conducted for this study, anti-LGBT activists revealed that their framing approaches vary depending on the public targeted (interview 16). One activist, for example, related that the most convincing frames were health issues and accounts that include statistical data, for they are also convincing for non-Christians (interview 7). This study has already treated many of such 'secular' framings like national security, health issues, and the social costs for treating HIV/AIDS patients. I will now concentrate on two aspects of secular argumentation that the anti-LGBT movement uses in addition, and also in contrast to religious framings: alleged scientific 'truths' and legal arguments beyond human rights.

Anti-LGBT activists often refer to scientific research in the context of claims that homosexuality is innate – the 'born this way' argument often used by pro-LGBT activists. In contrast to this, the anti-LGBT movement questions the substance of this claim by mentioning studies that allegedly prove that homosexuality is not hereditary but rather something acquired. Activists also criticize studies of having a pro-LGBT bias like in the following statement:

There is no scientific basis for the claim that homosexuality is an innate sexual orientation, and scientific research supporting this claim has already proven to be the result of unfair sampling and manipulation of figures. Homosexuality is not innate, it is abnormal and immoral, it should be described truthfully that homosexuals get infected with diseases and lead unhappy lives. (Cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, July 3)

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- 9 Wondong Lee's (2021) recent study on "The Shifting Moral Authority of the Conservative Evangelicals' Anti-LGBT Movement in South Korea" focuses on moral justifications that anti-LGBT activists use to oppose LGBT rights. He also cites the Bible and family values as sources for such moral justifications, but also the constitution, scientific research, and national security. I disagree with Lee concerning these three latter categories, which I argue are precisely not used as 'moral' arguments, but rather as secular additions to the framing repertoire in order to also appeal to non-Christians. In political science, there is a growing field of policy studies which focus on 'morality politics' or 'morality policies', i.e., a category of public policies where "at least one advocacy coalition involved has portrayed the issue as one of morality or sin and used moral arguments in its policy advocacy" (Haider-Markel & Meier 1996, 333; cf. also Doan 2014; Mooney 2001). This research approach also commonly deals with the fact that political processes around LGBT rights, sexuality in general, and reproductive rights are particularly frequent targets of moralization (cf. e.g., Knill & Preidel 2015; Doan 2007). This study does not build upon, nor contributes directly to this field, since its focus does not lie on policies (for this aspect, cf. Kim Ol Teun 2021) nor on aspects of morality *only*. This study is situated in movement studies and aims at providing a broad overview of the framing strategies of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, including, but not exclusively treating aspects of moralization.

Scientific 'knowledge' is, however, only used to the extent that it serves the purpose of the anti-LGBT movement. Certain details and explanations are left out from the explanations as in the above quote. First, the selection of research results presented by anti-LGBT activists can be biased itself. Second, while it is true that in many countries, gay men are more likely to contract sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), anti-LGBT activists present STDs as a problem of homosexual men only. They withhold the fact that everybody can get infected, for example, with HIV, and by doing so contribute to unscientific disinformation which might put the health of the general public at risk (cf. also chapter 7.2 on alleged health threats). Third, while there is evidence that homosexuals are more often afflicted with mental health problems, anti-LGBT commonly conceal the reasons for this. In many cases, mental health problems of LGBT people are caused by unaccepting or even hostile social environments. One can say that, ultimately, it is the anti-LGBT movement that centrally contributes to "unhappy lives" of LGBT people. Finally, anti-LGBT activists deliberately hide the fact that the 'scientific' research results they refer to represent easily falsifiable minority opinions within the academic community. Similarly questionable arguments in the area of biology, medicine, and psychology are also made with regard to transgender people. It is claimed that trans people 'choose' their sex and that trans – and also intersex people – do not exist since there are only two distinct, genetically determined (cis-gendered) sexes: women and men (cf. e.g., KACC 2012, October 12).

The – factually unscientific – claim that homosexuality is something acquired is often accompanied by allegedly scientific assertions that homosexuals can become heterosexual 'again'. Min Söng-gil, a former psychiatry professor at the prestigious Yonsei University, is a frequent speaker at anti-LGBT events sharing his 'expert' knowledge. At a forum on the problems of homosexuality, he stated that

[...] advocates of homosexuality claim that homosexuality is inherited and that one should overcome prejudice, but this has proven to be scientifically wrong. Some homosexuals naturally change into non-homosexuals as they get older, and some have changed to heterosexuals by Christian faith. (Cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2015, October 8)

'Experts' such as Min Söng-gil commonly participate in anti-LGBT events with the goal of bestowing scientific legitimacy on the anti-LGBT movement and its claims. Other activists also exploit their alleged 'expert' positions, such as the medical doctor Yöm An-söp and the pharmacist Kim Chi-yön, two very active movement figures. In order to provide these 'experts' with even more credibility, they are often introduced by stating the university they studied at, especially in cases of degrees from renowned universities like Seoul National University or Yonsei University. The anti-LGBT movement also creates organizations that are, *prima facie*, civil and scientific, but that actually still have a religious agenda that they strive to 'rationalize' by superficially disseminating 'scientific facts' on homosexuality. The prime example for this is the *Korean Sexology Research Association* (*Han'guk sönggwahak yön'gu hyöphoe*) (cf. Baek, Jo-yeon 2018).

Secular frames directed against homosexuality: legal approaches

Along with 'scientific' arguments, another secular area of framing is using legal arguments, which has also been analyzed in two other studies on the Korean anti-LGBT movement (Lee, Won-dong 2021, 100f.; Baek, Jo-yeon 2018, 99–109). I have discerned seven types of frames pertaining to legal reasoning. Five frames claim the illegality or legal incompatibility of proposed bills in the strict sense, claiming that (1) same-sex marriage and other pro-LGBT laws, if introduced, would be unconstitutional, (2) such laws would lead to 'reverse discrimination', (3) ordinances require as a basis a higher law on the national level, (4) previous court decisions are anti-LGBT precedents, and (5) pro-LGBT events are in violation of certain laws. Two further types of frames are situated on the counterfactual and symbolic levels, asserting that (6) a 'legalization' of homosexuality in Korea is still pending although it had never been criminalized on the national level and (7) that the NHRCK Act is the root cause of all 'problems' related to homosexuality.

At the beginning of anti-LGBT activities in the legal arena, however, the Protestant Right still used religious arguments. When, for example, the Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that trans people have the right to change their legal gender in official documents after having undergone sex confirmation surgery, churches reacted by claiming that this court decision would break down God's creation order and that homosexuality was sinful – apparently confusing the latter sexual orientation with transsexuality (cited in Paek, Chae-ch'an & Chi, Ho-il 2006, June 23). Later in the development of anti-LGBT collective action in Korea, activists seem to have realized that religious arguments are not convincing in the areas of law-making and judiciary. Previous research on Christian-based anti-LGBT lobbying also showed that religious actors came to the conclusion that they need to turn to explicitly legal arguments if they want to be taken seriously in the democratic processes of a secular state, for instance, in the case of Catholic efforts against the introduction of civil partnership and same-sex marriage in Germany (Johannemann 2017).

A frequently used legal argument against pro-LGBT legislation is that it would violate the South Korean constitution. Anti-LGBT activists claim that same-sex marriage, for example, must be rejected since it would go against article 36(1) of the constitution: "Marriage and family life shall be entered into and sustained on the basis of individual dignity and equality of the sexes, and the State shall do everything in its power to achieve that goal." The term for 'equality of sexes' is "*yangsŏng-ŭi p'yŏngdŭng*" in the Korean original. The '*yang*' in '*yangsŏng*' means 'both' or 'two'. A literal translation would thus be 'both sexes' or 'two sexes', which is why anti-LGBT activists argue that the Korean constitution only allows heterosexual marriage between a woman and a man. It is also for this reason that the anti-LGBT movement opposed a constitutional amendment proposed by the Moon Jae-in government, which wanted to change the term '*yangsŏng*' to just '*sŏng*' (i.e., 'sexes'), because they feared that this would lead to the recognition of sexual identities beyond the binary heterosexual model and ultimately facilitate the introduction of same-sex marriage.

The proposals for an anti-discrimination law also came under fire from a legal perspective. Activists commonly list several alleged breaches of law, however, often without explaining the exact nature of the violations claimed, as in the following statement by the head of *The Korea Institute of Church Law* (*han'guk kyohoe pŏp yŏn'guso*).

The bill in question violates the constitutional principles of liberal democracy and rule of law, and it violates the fundamental rights of physical integrity, freedom of religion, independence of education and the right to health, the marriage and family systems, and the independence of jurisdiction. (Cited in Yu, Yöng-dae 2013, October 2)

Alternatively, anti-LGBT activists claim that LGBT people are already protected under the anti-discrimination provisions of the constitution or that there is actually no discrimination against LGBT people on the legal level like in other countries where homosexuality is or was criminalized, arguing that therefore, no separate law is necessary (Interview 35).¹⁰ Another common frame in this context is to suggest that if a pro-LGBT law gets introduced, this could result in a 'ripple effect' (cf. Table 7). Activists go as far to claim in a fearmongering way that if pro-LGBT laws get passed, the legalization of incest, sex with animals, and polygamy could ensue. Another fear they create is that of 'reverse discrimination', which has already been analyzed in previous parts of this study. The anti-LGBT movement claims that laws such as the anti-discrimination bill would, in turn, lead to rights violations for Christians, for instance, in terms of their alleged religious freedom to oppose homosexuality.

Referring to the formal level of the Korean legal system, anti-LGBT activists claim that ordinances or charters on the regional or local levels are illegal since they lack a basis in form of a nationwide higher law. Targets of such a criticism have been, for example, (student) human rights ordinances in many provinces and cities, and the Seoul Human Rights Charter. In the absence of a 'mother law', the argument goes, such legal texts are in fact void. An anti-discrimination law on the national level could provide such a basis. This is where we can observe how this particular legal frame interlocks smoothly with the movement's indefatigable activism against this very law. Interestingly, anti-LGBT activists themselves provide arguments that contradict the 'mother law' narrative. *The National Human Rights Commission Act*, which was enacted in 2001, can be described as such a higher law. It is perhaps because of this that this bill has become contentious in recent years, mainly due to the inclusion of the category 'sexual orientation' in its anti-discrimination provisions. Anti-LGBT activists have described the NHRCK Act as the root cause for any 'problems' that have occurred in relation to LGBT rights in Korea: "If you look at the root of the anti-discrimination bill, which is feared to undermine freedom of faith, conscience and expression, there is the National Human Rights Commission of Korea" (Kim Chi-yöñ, cited in Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, January 4). After repeated demands by anti-LGBT activists to delete the clause on sexual orientation from the NHRCK Act, 40 members of parliament introduced such a bill into the law-making process in late 2019 (Paek, Sang-hyön 2019, November 14), however without yielding legislative success so far.

Another common legal argument is that past court decisions have denied the extension of rights to LGBT persons. Important rulings in this context are those of the Korean Supreme and Constitutional Courts, which repeatedly upheld the criminalization

10 As I have elaborated before, contrary to this latter claim, concrete discrimination, or to be precise, criminalization of homosexuality does exist in Korean law, namely article 96(2) of the *Military Criminal Code*. For more details, cf. footnotes 12 and 13 in chapter 5.2.

of same-sex acts between soldiers in the Korea military as stipulated in Military Criminal Law article 92(6). Anti-LGBT activists often cite a 2008 Supreme Court ruling in this context, which describes homosexual acts as acts that “objectively cause aversion in the general public and go against the good sense of sexual morality” and “violate the healthy life and discipline of the military community” (Supreme Court of Korea 2008, ruling 2222). This passage is used to lend legal credence to their fight against LGBT rights. Despite this discouraging legal precedents, pro-LGBT activists continue their legal battles against this overt discrimination of gay soldiers in Korea. In fact, a recent ruling of the Supreme Court in April 2022 hints at a slightly changing legal assessment in this respect. The judges declared the conviction of two gay soldiers void, explaining that consensual same-sex acts outside the barracks were not to be persecuted by the provisions of the Military Criminal Law (Choe, Sang-Hun 2022, April 21).

The usage of the term ‘legalization’ (*happŏphwa* or *pŏpchehwa*) is another legal, yet peculiar framing. Anti-LGBT activists often describe the passing of pro-LGBT bills as a “legalization of homosexuality”. I argue that they do this deliberately to construct the reverse – and incorrect – image that homosexuality is not a legal conduct in South Korea. Presently, only the Military Criminal Law forbids same-sex acts, but there has never been a similar criminalization law at the national level. Alternatively, it may be that activists wish to problematize the actual act of creating a law with pro-LGBT content. This, however, has already taken place with the passing of the NHRCK Act in 2001, and several human rights ordinances in the following years. Therefore, it is more probable that this framing strategy aims at misleading the public (cf. also Interview 35).

The final type of legal framing of the anti-LGBT movement is arguing that the activities of pro-LGBT actors or of whole pro-LGBT events are in violation of existing laws. The Seoul Queer Culture Festival is faced with such accusations ever since it has taken place on Seoul Plaza, a central square in the center of the capital city. Anti-LGBT activists employ the *Seoul Plaza Ordinance* to argue against the queer event. The ordinance stipulates that the space can only be used for “citizens’ healthy leisure usage and cultural activities”, which the anti-LGBT movement claims is not the case for the SQCF (cited in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2015, April 6). The opponents of the SQCF denounce “obscene” displays of nudity in a public place, which they judge unfit and ‘unhealthy’ for families and children. They decried that participants of the SQCF drank alcohol and that some booths sold food in violation of the ordinance. The anti-LGBT movement also supported filing a lawsuit against the allegedly unlawful usage of Seoul Plaza by the LGBT community (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, June 5) – however, to no avail.

I argue that by framing issues through the lens of legality – as well as through taking a ‘scientific’ perspective – the anti-LGBT movement intends to address people that are difficult to reach with religiously inspired frames. One anti-LGBT interviewee confirmed this analysis, mentioning that a long-term goal and strategy of the movement was to have Christian lawyers fight in the area of law (Interview 23). At the same time, this framing strategy serves to present the movement as a serious and firm defender of the rule of law and of the constitution as against pro-LGBT activists who they depict as obscene lawbreakers disloyal to the legal foundations of Korea. The subtext of the movement’s legal framing is yet another kind of othering, of allegedly protecting law-abidance and order versus alleged attempts at creating disorder. This disorder is, purportedly, cre-

ated by people that the anti-LGBT movement effectively declares outlaws, for example when asserting the illegality of homosexuality. This framing strategy may act as a counterbalance to human rights claims by pro-LGBT activists. Human rights for LGBT people are described as incompatible with the Korean legal system. More importantly, however, anti-LGBT activists pit LGBT rights against rights of the majority, creating the fear of 'reverse discrimination' and 'ripple effects', which are claimed would eventually undermine freedom rights and contribute to an ever greater legal and social disarray. In this way, the Protestant Right presents its anti-LGBT activism in a proper light, a light that is also designed to increase the resonance of its overall framing beyond the presumably limited effectiveness of religious arguments.

9. Discussion: does the anti-LGBT movement mobilize effectively in its 'cultural war'?

The 'cultural war' waged by the Korean anti-LGBT movement takes, as the previous chapters have shown, manifold shapes. Activists use diverse framing approaches to fight against LGBT issues. However, the question remains whether theses struggles have been successful at all. In the political and judicial arenas, the movement was able to chalk up several victories, such as preventing the Anti-Discrimination Law and the Seoul Human Rights Charter, abolishing the Human Rights Ordinance of South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, and thwarting the deletion of the anti-gay provision in the Military Criminal Code. Yet, the anti-LGBT movement also suffered various failures in the course of its activism during the past 20 years. The Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance was passed despite their ferocious resistance, they were not able to delete the category of 'sexual orientation' from the NHRCK Act, and the success in South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province was only ephemeral, since the regional Human Rights Ordinance was reintroduced as soon as the majority situation in the regional parliament changed. The record of the movement in terms of political achievements can therefore be called ambivalent.

Another indicator of success – especially when considering that the movement is waging a Gramscian 'war of position' on the level of culture, ideas, and ideology as presented in the previous chapters – is the degree to which activists are able to change the 'common sense' (*senso comune*) in a way that serves their socio-political endeavors. A convenient measure in this context are opinion polls. As I have illustrated before, however, public opinion on homosexuality has been getting increasingly benevolent in South Korea over the past 20 years. According to the Pew Research Center (2019) the acceptance of homosexuality rose from 25 percent in the year 2000 to 44 percent in 2019 (cf. also Table 8). While the majority of the surveyed Koreans were still against homosexuality in 2019, the positive trend cannot be denied and is also confirmed by other opinion surveys. When considering additional demographical data, it is mostly people leaning to the political right and religious survey participants who consistently show less support for homosexuality, with Protestants scoring particularly low in this respect (Rich et al. 2012; Rich 2017). Two conclusions can be drawn from this survey data. First, while direct causalities cannot be ascertained, the opinion polls seem to support the assumption

that the anti-LGBT movement has not been successful in convincing the general public of their positions. Rather to the contrary, the overall public opinion has been developing in the exact opposite direction of what anti-LGBT activists wish for. Especially younger Koreans feature predominantly positive attitudes towards LGBT people these days. Secondly, one can assume that anti-LGBT collective action has been more successful in the traditional strongholds of the Protestant Right, that is, politically and religiously conservative members of Protestant churches. Their rejection of homosexuality has remained steady over time.

Against this background, one can expect that the movement mostly mobilizes conservative Protestant Christians for its diverse actions. Mobilization has increased over the years in terms of participation at protest events and in signature campaigns, as well as concerning the increasing number of participating group actors (cf. chapter 6.3). The following chapter will elaborate more on the background of social movement organizations and the movement leadership of anti-LGBT collective action in Korea. Now, I bring into focus the individual participants at anti-LGBT protest events to answer the question whether the movement is able to mobilize effectively – also beyond looking at the mere numbers of protest participation. Put differently, one can ask whether the anti-LGBT has achieved a change of the common sense of individual protesters towards greater or consolidated hostility against LGBT people?

For the purpose of giving an approximate and preliminary answer to these questions, I use survey data that I myself have collected among participants of the counter-rally against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival on 1st June 2019. Before looking into the dataset, however, let me first say that this data has to be analyzed with caution. I was only able to interview 26 out of several thousands of participants, using a largely standardized questionnaire. Despite attempting to pick interviewees randomly, I can thus not claim representativity of the results collected. The reliability and validity of this small survey cannot be guaranteed either, since I was not able to conduct a pre-test.¹ These flaws notwithstanding, I argue that the survey data can nevertheless give some indication of who participated in this particular event, and for what reasons they did so.

1 Methodical intricacies include the fact that this event only takes place once a year only. I could have conducted a pre-test or further rounds of questions at other protest events. I refrained from doing this, however, because other events generally have a far smaller number of participants, making it even more difficult to guarantee representativity. Moreover, I also abstained from doing so for reasons of personal safety. It is easier to avoid attention in bigger crowds, while a survey at smaller events could have raised suspicion with the organizers and, consequently, could have complicated further research, e.g., qualitative research interviews during field work. The questionnaire used for this small survey can be found in the appendix (A.3).

Table 9: Survey of 26 participants of the counter-rally against the SQCF 2019

ITEMS	ANSWERS AND NUMBER OR RESPONDENTS				
Origin	Seoul	Inch'ön/ Kyönggi Prov.	Ch'ungch'öng Prov./Taejön/ Sejong	-	n/a
	13	5	5		1
Age	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 and above
	4	3	7	3	9
Gender	Male	Female	-	-	-
	12	14			
Party prefer- ence	Liberty Korea Party	-	-	-	n/a
	12				14
Religious affiliation	Presbyterian	Methodist	Baptist	Catholic	Other Chris- tian
	15	3	3	1	4
Religious service at- tendance	Every day	More than once a week	Once a week	-	-
	2	17	7		
Participation at anti-LGBT events	First time	2–3 times	More than 10 times	'Uncount- able'	n/a
	10	11	2	2	1
How have you known of this event? (free an- swer)^a	Internet/ print news, social media	Heard in church about it	From Esther Prayer Move- ment	Activist her- self/ himself	Participation by chance
	7	10	2	2	2
Member of anti-LGBT or- ganization?	Yes	No	-	-	n/a
	6	18			2
Most import. socio-politi- cal issues in Korea? (mul- tiple & free answers)^a	Economy	Homosexual- ity	North Korea	Ideology/ socialism/ communism	Security
	10	8	7	6	5
	Political conflict	Anti-US attitudes	Youth unem- ployment	Endangered democracy	Gender (ide- ology)
	5	2	2	2	2
ITEMS	ANSWERS AND NUMBER OR RESPONDENTS				
Motivation for participa- tion (multiple & free answers)	Religious reasons (against creation order, sinful, unbiblical) (10), 'I am against ho- mosexuality' (6), Danger of AIDS (4), homosexuality must not be instigated in youth (3), gender ideology (2), homosexuality destroys family (now 1 each), destroys so- ciety, human values collapse, against abortion, only homosexual's voices are being heard, homosexuality is un-Korean, bad things happen in the name of human rights, resistance against untruth, to inform public and government about anti-LGBT move- ment, to rebuild church, against queer festival, no special reason (2)				

^a Only the answers with the highest frequencies are shown here.

Table 9 demonstrates the results of the survey. The demographic data show a fairly evenly distribution of gender and age cohorts. One can expect that people of all ages were able to attend since the event took place on the weekend. My impression from participant observations at other anti-LGBT protest events was that the participation rate of elderly people and women was higher than at this event, especially when the events happened during the week (i.e., Monday–Friday). The place of origin of most participants interviewed was in Seoul or in the adjacent Kyōnggi Province or Inch'ōn city. However, there were also five participants who came from a bit farther away, from Ch'ungch'ōng Province. In order to get a general idea about the political leaning of the participants, I included an item on party preference into the questionnaire.² Twelve interviewees indicated the *Liberty Korea Party*, the largest conservative political party in Korea which in the meantime changed its name to *People Power Party*, as the party they supported. The rest did not have a preferred party or refrained from answering this question. What is noteworthy is that nobody chose the *Christian Liberal Party* (*kidok chayū tang*), a minor party that is strongly intertwined with the anti-LGBT movement and the Protestant Right at large (cf. chapter 10.5). The Christian Liberal Party was the only political party being present with a booth at the counter-rally.

The general political attitudes were also part of the item asking about the three most important socio-political issues in Korea. I had asked this question before delving deeper into motivations of participating in this anti-LGBT event in order to guarantee unbiased answers. Interestingly, only 8 interviewees mentioned homosexuality here and nobody indicated it first, that is, other aspects came to their minds before the issue of homosexuality. Many interviewees were concerned about the economy (10 mentions), as well as about North Korea (7), the political ideologies of socialism and communism (6), security, and political conflict in different shapes (5 each). Apart from the economic situation in the strict sense, the protest participants display similar concerns as the anti-LGBT movement at large, as expressed in framings that combine these socio-political topics with LGBT issues. The answers given to the question of why the interviewees participated in this particular event also reflected the topics covered in the movement's framing. 'Christian' arguments are the most frequent reason (10), followed by the danger of AIDS (4), the demand that homosexuality must not be promoted with young people (3), and gender ideology (2). Multiple other reasons were indicated as well, yet only appearing one time each, such as regarding homosexuality as un-Korean, claiming that it destroys families and society, and that this event helps rebuilding the church. Two interviewees said they participated having no special motivation. One remarkable aspect was that six participants stated they took part in the counter-rally just because they opposed homosexuality, without indicating further, more specific reasons.

This begs the question whether these latter interviewees actually have further reasons and knowledge about the issue at all, or whether they may have participated for other

2 In hindsight, it would perhaps have been better to instead, or additionally include an item asking the interviewees where they put themselves on right-left spectrum, since not all interviewees indicated a party preference. But owing to the limited space available on the questionnaire sheet, I opted for the more straightforward question about concrete political parties.

reasons, for example, because they were asked by their congregation's pastor to join. Alternatively, it is possible that homosexuality in itself elicits such negative feelings that it appears 'natural' to the participants to just state this as a motivation for participating. This conundrum prompts the question as to how the interviewees ended up with their convictions. One possibility is that, after more than a decade of anti-LGBT activism, they have internalized the basic frames put forward by anti-LGBT activists to the extent that they became part of their common sense and mobilize them to participate in concrete anti-LGBT events. On the other hand, it may also be the case that the interviewees have had such socio-political attitudes irrespective of the anti-LGBT movement's workings, and that, conversely, anti-LGBT activists built their frames exactly on these commonly held attitudes. While this study cannot provide conclusive answers regarding this analytical problem of causalities, I argue that both possibilities have most probably operated side by side. The politically conservative attitudes of the traditional support basis of the Protestant Right may have led anti-LGBT activists to merge issues like security and anti-communism with anti-LGBT impulses. In reverse, the protesters in fact appear to have adopted common anti-LGBT frames – also beyond the 'obvious' religious arguments.

It is the category of religion, however, which offers the clearest insights to be drawn from the small survey. All 26 interviewees belonged to Christian churches, with a large majority of members of Protestant and evangelical churches (25). And all 26 people interviewed seem to be devout and faithful members of their churches, as indicated by the frequency of participating in church services. Of the interviewees, 17 said they attended church service more than once a week, 7 did so once a week, and 2 participants even claimed they went to church on a daily basis. Consequently, 10 people stated they received the information about this event at church, while 7 heard of this event through diverse media channels. This data suggests that the participants of the counter-rally against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival have a strong affiliation with Protestant Christianity. And not only that, 6 interviewees indicated that they were members of anti-LGBT groups. The survey data is also indicative of a certain commitment and allegiance to the anti-LGBT movement in particular. 15 interviewees answered that they have already participated several times in anti-LGBT events. 10 participants said they took part in such an event for the first time.

Considering the general opinion polls and the survey data just presented, I argue that the 'cultural war' of the Protestant Right in the area of LGBT issues was mainly successful with politically and religiously conservative Protestants. They seem to have internalized hostility against homosexuality and related topics, and they can be effectively mobilized for anti-LGBT protest events. The causal mechanism behind this mobilization, however, remains uncertain. It is unclear whether people participate out of homophobia or due to their allegiance to conservative churches, which call for broad participation in such events. More definite conclusions can be drawn concerning what the anti-LGBT was *not* able to achieve. The movement seems to have problems mobilizing people beyond conservative Christian confines. This could mean that the efforts to also appeal to non-Christian crowds, for example, through using secular frames, have been largely ineffective. The 'war of position' waged by anti-LGBT actors seems to have had an impact mainly on people that had been close to the movement anyways due to their affiliation to conservative Protestantism. In the general public, however, such an identity shift and change

of common sense in the direction of increased hostility towards LGBT people and LGBT issues has not materialized. While such an ample ideological shift would be necessary to sustainably grasp power eventually – at least when following a Gramscian line of argument – the partial power of the anti-LGBT movement cannot be denied. The movement has demonstrated considerable political clout in their fights against pro-LGBT laws. The potential to mobilize conservative Protestant church members is an important asset in this context, presumably capable of making significant impressions on lawmakers. As chapter 10.5 shall demonstrate, the anti-LGBT movement in fact maintains close relations with politicians from diverse backgrounds.

9.1 Conclusion: a partly successful anti-LGBT ‘cultural war’ rife with productive inconsistencies

Section 2 of this study started off by demonstrating the scant interest of the conservative Christian newspaper Kukmin Daily in homosexuality in the 1990s, to then proceed to the early, rather sporadic collective actions of Protestant actors against several pieces of pro-LGBT legislation. By and by, the movement consolidated itself and really took off from 2013/2014 onwards, with a steep rise in protest events, topics covered, actors involved, and opponents targeted. The Protest Event Analysis data revealed that large parts of anti-LGBT activism in Korea are situated in the area of communication, issuing press statements, hosting ‘educational’ events, and using media channels (online or traditional) to disseminate anti-LGBT narratives. Considering these particular action forms, I argue that the anti-LGBT movement centrally engages in a Gramsci-inspired ‘war of position’ to change people’s common sense in a direction of actively opposing LGBT issues, with the ultimate goal of increasing the political influence of the Protestant Right. It turned out that, indeed, most protest events revolved around political topics – rather than fighting against the LGBT movement in the strict sense. Consequently, the majority of targets of anti-LGBT protests consists of organizational and individual opponents belonging to the governmental and political spheres. One can therefore call the Korean anti-LGBT movement an *opposing movement* in that it struggles against a concrete topic (cf. Dugan 2004), rather than a direct countermovement of the pro-LGBT movement.

An important part of the movement’s struggles for cultural hegemony is its claims-making. Anti-LGBT activists employ diverse framing strategies that this study analyzes through the lenses of *dynamic continuity* and *opposing desires*. The opposing desires within the framing approaches include different kinds of framing contests, with seemingly contradictory tendencies. Activists adopt frames from opponents and use them in a counter-framing manner, but frame disputes within the anti-LGBT movement also exist. Among these are, for example, presenting oneself as ‘normal’ and as representing ‘the’ majority versus a potentially threatening ‘other’, while at the same time claiming a certain victimhood status for themselves. Moreover, the concept of human rights gets reshaped in a way to present LGBT people as undeserving of rights. Radical rhetoric and hyperbolic accusations are paralleled by claims of moderation and attempts at concealing factual hostility and violence. Reproaches of disinformation are accompanied by disseminating ‘fakes’ or inaccurate information themselves. Activists depict LGBT issues as a dangerous

'ideology' from abroad while hiding the fact that important parts of their own ideological, conspiracy-like narratives have a foreign origin. And finally, religious frames are used alongside secular ones.

Dynamic yet continuous elements are present in many of these seemingly inconsistent ways of framing 'realities'. On the ideologically congruent and temporal levels, the anti-LGBT movement combines the established, historically 'proven' framing around anti-communism with LGBT issues. An 'old' master frame is complemented and augmented with a new element, that is, anti-LGBT hostility. One could even argue that 'homosexuality' itself has become a new master frame for the movement, since it combines flexibly with other vilification strategies, for example, when homosexuality gets conflated with dictatorship, security threats, alleged pro-North Korea attitudes, and current political elites. We can also assume that 'homosexuality' developed into a master frame for the Protestant Right since activists, while covering a great many topics, often describe the actual 'threat' or 'danger' of LGBT issues in abstract terms only, hinting at the fact that they take for granted hostility against these topics among the general public. Further dynamic continuities are situated on the ideologically congruent and relational levels. This becomes apparent among ideologically 'compatible' actors, for example, through the adoption of the 'cultural Marxism' narrative from right-wing actors in the US and in Europe. In this context, the ideological transnational ties are the 'continuous' part, while the active adaptation of the adopted frames according to domestic needs and specific interests bring in the dynamism. Finally, on the ideologically adversarial and relational levels, the anti-LGBT movement also makes use of strategies and framings originally developed and used by the direct opponent. Examples for this are the Gramscian 'war of position' strategy as well as counterframings employed by the movement. Here, the dynamic element is the adoption of action repertoires from antagonistic forces, whereas the continuous aspect is that these frames or strategies had already been created and proven effective before, allowing the movement to piggyback on such established elements in a modular fashion.

At first sight, these framing strategies may appear contradictory and inconsistent. It is true that engaging in such opposing framings is an intricate matter, especially when they uncover cracks within the anti-LGBT movement. Altogether, however, I argue that activists chose such action repertoires consciously and intentionally. A main goal of their activism is to convince the general public of their socio-political positions. The general public, however, is not homogeneous. While explicitly religious frames may work well with Christians, they will not have a similar effect on non-Christian parts of society. Therefore, tailor-made secular frames are being used as well, which can be expected to find resonance with both Christians and non-Christians. Yet, as the analyzed data suggests, the anti-LGBT movement seems to have failed to persuade and mobilize people beyond its traditional support base. The intended identity shift and change of common sense in the direction of making hostility towards LGBT issues an active part of people's self-conception seems to have mostly worked with conservative Protestant church members.

This does certainly not mean that the situation for LGBT people in Korea is all rosy by now – quite to the contrary. The anti-LGBT movement did achieve at least one important thing. It centrally contributed to rendering LGBT issues highly contentious in Korea at

large, and particularly in Korean politics. This shows that the anti-LGBT movement, and by extension, the Protestant Right as a whole remains a political force to reckon with, especially because of their very assiduous and rigorous activists. They are almost always present when anything pro-LGBT emerges in society and, particularly, politics. I argue that the enduring political influence of the anti-LGBT movement is precisely due to its considerable capacity to mobilize the faithful. As Antonio Gramsci rightly claimed, religion is a forceful hegemonic power, both as a symbolic resource for collective identity and framings, and a potent resource for mobilization. Aware of their assets, anti-LGBT activists actively promote an image of Korean Protestant churches as being an important socio-political player, purporting that it is only them who keep a clear view, who have critical thinking, and who can ultimately protect Korea. This sense of 'election' or 'chosenness' created by activists of the Protestant Right may also fuel the increasingly proactive willingness among conservative church members to get active in the fight against LGBT rights.

In order to better understand such internal workings of Korean Protestantism in general, and of the anti-LGBT movement in particular, the next chapters will delve into specific topics that this first analytical section could only touch upon cursorily. The now following chapter 10 focuses on the structural and relational aspects of the anti-LGBT movement, investigating the networks among social movement organizations of the anti-LGBT movement, and the important role of movement leaders in appropriating established church structures for the fight against LGBT rights, as well as in establishing new organizations themselves. This chapter will also cover the explicitly 'political' relations of the movement, as well as its own political endeavors. Some topics that this section has briefly broached will be detailed in the then following chapters. Chapter 11 treats the shifting ways in which the movement approaches the crucial task of communicating its contents to the greater public, above all in the areas of traditional media, social media, and education. The final analytical chapter 12 is devoted to the internal animosities within Korean Protestantism on the question as to how to best deal with LGBT issues. It zooms in on the way anti-LGBT activists and movement leaders busy themselves with safeguarding church unity and covering up internal conflicts.

Section 3: Actors, actor networks, communication strategies, and conflicts of the Korean anti-LGBT movement

10. Anti-LGBT norm brokers within the Protestant Right: social movement organizations, movement leaders, and their political endeavors

In late August 2017, Kim Yi-su, candidate for the presidency of the South Korean Constitutional Court, came under fire for his alleged pro-gay stance. The anti-LGBT group *National Alliance against Homosexuality, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Constitutional Amendment* (*tongsŏngae tongsŏnghon kaehŏn pandae kungmin yŏnhap*, short: *Tongbanyŏn*)¹ ran full-page advertisements in Korea's three most-read newspapers Chosun Daily, JoongAng Daily, and Dong-a Daily, slandering Kim as a supporter of LGBT rights. As a constitutional judge, in 2012, Kim had issued a minority opinion in a court case on the constitutionality of the criminalization of homosexual acts in the Korean army, arguing that consensual sex could not be regarded as harassment and did not constitute a threat to combat power. In an apparent attempt at instigating indignation, *Tongbanyŏn's* advertisement also featured photos from a gay dating website, showing men wearing military uniforms in explicit positions. Other emotionalizing statements were also included in this text-heavy ad, claiming that parents should worry about their enlisted sons contracting AIDS and that the danger of a general "legalization of homosexuality" was imminent should the nomination of Kim Yi-su be successful (quoted in GMW Union 2017, August 30).

The attempted creation of a moral panic (cf. Cohen 2002) in this context is hardly surprising. Chapter 7.2 has demonstrated that the anti-LGBT movement commonly tries to construct threats around LGBT issues. At least in the case of Kim Yi-su's chief judge nomination, this kind of vilification proved effective. The National Assembly voted down Kim's appointment in early September 2017. Over the years, the anti-LGBT movement has frequently posted such large ads in major Korean newspapers on many different topics. Beyond their slandering nature, another common feature is a long list of organizations supporting the advertisement's statement. In the case of the ad against the appointment of Kim Yi-su as Constitutional Court president, a detailed list of 49 groups was attached at the bottom of the page, as well the information that in total,

1 *Tongbanyŏn* included the term 'constitutional amendment' in its name in the beginning of its activities, but later shortened its name to *National Alliance against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage*.

247 groups participated in the above mentioned *Tongbanyŏn* alliance. One year later, *Tongbanyŏn*'s number of supporting groups had risen to 314 (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, September 18) and by 2022, *Tongbanyŏn* published anti-LGBT press releases with the support of another large alliance, the *National Union Against the Bad Anti-Discrimination Law in the Hope of True Equality* (*chinjŏnghaŋ p'yŏngdŭng-ŭl paramyŏ nappŭn ch'abyŏl kŭmjibŏp chejŏng-ŭl pandaehanŭn chŏn'guk yŏnhap*, short: *Chŏnp'yŏngyŏn*), which claims bringing together 505 groups (cf. e.g., *Tongbanyŏn* 2022, July 11).

These large numbers of participating groups beg the question of how so many collective actors could be reached for anti-LGBT purposes, who these groups actually are, and what exactly they endeavor. One may also wonder whether all these groups are in fact *active* parts of the movement. It is possible that only a part of the groups are really active social movement organizations (SMOs), while others participate in name only, without much actual involvement. Are the vast lists of supporting groups thus just a simulation of grandeur without much substance? This chapter sets out to investigate these questions, focusing on the *who* of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. The previous chapters focused on the *what* and *how* dimensions of activism: the movement's action forms, its targets, and framing strategies. Now, the actor level will be analyzed in detail, examining the background of actors, their interconnections, roles, and ambitions.

Actors of a social movement as analyzed in this chapter can broadly be categorized along two dimensions: the degree of collectivity or organization on the one hand, and the importance or centrality of actors on the other. Concerning the first dimension, one branch of social movement studies highlights the largely informal, nonhierarchical, and grassroots character of social movements (Sutherland et al. 2013; Voss & Sherman 2000). In contrast, other scholars have argued that also social movements tend to professionalize (McCarthy & Zald 1973; 1977) and, in fact, need to bureaucratize and concentrate authority in a leadership circle to be successful – what Michels has termed the 'iron law of oligarchy' (Michels 1958; cf. also Piven & Cloward 1977). The latter scholars thus argue that social movements do not only consist of individual participants who uphold only loose structures of cooperation. More often than not, professionalized social movement organizations and leadership circles emerge, playing an eminent role in the fate of a movement – the second dimension mentioned above. This study strives to contribute to this debate through investigating a conservative religious movement, going beyond the traditional scholarly focus on progressive movements.

This chapter demonstrates that the Korean anti-LGBT movement has indeed a broad organizational support base. However, the data of the protest event analysis (PEA) reveals that only a small core of SMOs and individual movement leaders are in fact very active. They fall under the category of important and central actors mentioned above. In essence, it is this rather small leadership circle who runs the movement, despite the attempts at pretending to represent a large number of interest groups and adherents – and, allegedly, the majority of Koreans (cf. chapter 7.3). A network analysis of anti-LGBT SMOs uncovers the most central actors over time. PEA provides data showing that, over the years, new anti-LGBT actors have established themselves and that previously unconnected organizations have joined the movement. This quantitative increase comes along with a differentiation of SMOs. At least when the outward appearance is concerned – there are specialized anti-LGBT groups and alliances as well as SMOs with specific the-

matic priorities such as health, 'research', and military matters. I claim that the few central anti-LGBT SMOs and, particularly, the movement leaders act as *norm brokers*, meaning that they pursue the establishment of new relations to enlarge the movement and to disseminate their normative view of the badness of anything related to LGBT topics. In Gramscian terms, the movement leadership takes the role of *organic intellectuals*, that is, as organizers and ideological multipliers.

The fact that the Korean anti-LGBT movement is embedded in the Protestant Right does make a difference for the way movement actors constitute themselves and relate to other actors both within and outside Protestantism. I have shown in the previous chapters that while attempting to reach the general public, much of the movement's framing is directed at conservative Christian crowds. Such Christian adherents of the Protestant Right are particularly likely to be mobilized for anti-LGBT activities. As this chapter shall demonstrate, 'opposing desires' – having a Christian background, but trying to win over non-Christian publics as well – also reemerge when looking into the concrete movement actors. Anti-LGBT activists consistently claim that both church groups and civic groups – that is, non-Christian organizations – are part of the movement. The names of SMOs also increasingly tend to disguise the actual Christian background of the groups. The network analysis of anti-LGBT SMOs, however, demonstrates that the existing relations remain largely confined to connections among Christian groups. I argue that this is not necessarily a disadvantage for the movement. As I have argued before, the conservative Protestant base of the anti-LGBT movement is a benefit both on the ideological and structural levels. This is why key brokers of the movement engage in appropriating churches and whole denominations for the fight against LGBT rights. What is more, they also nurture relations with party politicians and, to some extent, have managed to inculcate them with anti-LGBT attitudes.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I shortly recapitulate some theoretical and methodological aspects of the analysis of SMOs, movement leadership, as well as network analysis. I then, secondly, delve into the SMOs of the anti-LGBT movement and investigate the internal networks they build, including an analysis of the diversification that has occurred since the first steps of collective anti-LGBT activism. I offer a typology of anti-LGBT groups and analyze their embeddedness in conservative Protestantism. Thirdly, the most important figures of the movement will be presented, arguing that a distinct inner circle of activists assumes the lion's share of organizing and executing anti-LGBT activities. Finally, I examine the particularly political involvedness of Protestant Right actors, with a special focus on attempts at establishing Christian political parties, their anti-LGBT political program, and on politicians from established political parties who have links to the movement and adopt anti-LGBT stances themselves. The ambivalent roles of being both political challengers and traditional allies of conservative political actors in Korea will also be treated in this section. The chapter concludes with considerations on the distinct actor-level features of conservative religious social movements.

10.1 Norm brokers, organic intellectuals, and the networks they create

A social movement is made up of actors who promote certain socio-political issues through engaging in diverse action forms and framing efforts, which generally go beyond institutionalized opportunities for political participation. These actors are, in turn, diverse and can include individual activists and less active adherents that form a collective mass, as well as organized forms of collective action. This chapter focuses on two types of movement actors: *social movement organizations* (SMOs) and *movement leaders*, arguing that these (or a portion of these) occupy crucial positions within the Korean anti-LGBT movement. McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1218f.) have defined an SMO as a “complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or countermovement and attempts to implement those goals.” SMOs can have different shapes and origins. Preexisting organizations may either assist in the formation of a social movement, or they are appropriated by other social movement actors. In the case of institutionalized preexisting structures, such organizations serve as the *social movement bases* of collective action – not only as a cultural and social background but also, and importantly, as organizational resources (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2015, 11). New SMOs may also be established, as well as alliances among established and newly formed actors. These developments of institutionalization and formalization are often accompanied by differentiation and professionalization in order to achieve higher effectiveness (McCarthy & Zald 1973).

Social movement organizations can of course not be created or upheld out of nothing. They are constituted by and of people, or more specifically: movement activists. It is to be expected that many if not most of the leading figures of a movement are members of SMOs. In fact, perhaps even more so than SMOs themselves, it is these leading activists that are crucial to the progress and success of a given social movement. From the perspective of social movement studies and particularly resource mobilization, leaders are defined as “strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements” (Morris & Staggenborg 2004, 171). In their leading capacity, they act as what has been termed *movement entrepreneurs*, that is, “leaders who initiate movements, organizations, and tactics” (Staggenborg 1988, 587) and who call attention to certain issues to broaden the base for recruiting people for social movements (cf. Staggenborg 2013, 1). In this respect, an eminent task of movement leaders is disseminating certain worldviews and framing them in ways to serve the movement’s purposes.

In the Gramscian sense, movement leaders represent *organic intellectuals*, the organizers and “permanent persuader[s]” (Gramsci 1971, 10) of any counter-hegemonic socio-political endeavor. Organic intellectuals commonly emerge with a new socio-political force (Hoare & Sperber 2016, 34), to which they give a sense of “homogeneity and an awareness of its function, not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields” (Gramsci 2000, 301, ref. 20). It is them who, according to Gramsci, put in place an “intellectual and moral reform” (Gramsci 1995, 24–27; 1971, 132f.) through creating a new or modified worldview, using bits and pieces of existing common sense to construct a new common sense (cf. Olsaretti 2014, 375).

The contents and strategies behind the anti-LGBT movement’s ‘intellectual’ framing efforts have been analyzed in the previous chapters. The question of who is behind all this

– and by extension, how they exactly spread their worldviews remains an open one. In line with the *Dynamics of Contention* approach (McAdam et al. 2001), I argue that we need to investigate the relations of actors in order to explain the expansion of both the movement itself and its messages. Such a relational perspective can be grasped using the concept of *brokerage*. Brokerage is “the linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site” (McAdam et al. 2001, 142). The actors creating such links are called brokers. “The crucial characteristics of brokers are that (a) they bridge a gap in social structure and (b) they help goods, information, opportunities, or knowledge flow across that gap” (Stovel & Shaw 2012, 141). Phillip Ayoub (2016) has expanded this concept claiming that brokerage also entails mediation between actors and ideas, with *norm brokers* serving as intermediaries. Herring’s (2010) concept of epistemic brokers relates to both Ayoub’s approach and Gramsci’s take on intellectuals. Epistemic brokers are endowed with legitimacy through their (attributed) expert status, which they use to convey knowledge claims on contentious issues. Both brokerage and norm brokerage can be expected to be successful when there is a high degree of miscibility between actors. This can either be the case if there are already connections between actors or if they share similar ideologies (Vasi 2011, 12).

Network analysis as a methodological tool for investigating brokerage

Brokerage is a process that contributes to building networks. Vice-versa, network analysis can help to systematically detect brokers within a web of interactions. Network analysis has been widely applied in the analysis of social movements. Mario Diani even argued that “network forms of organization represent the distinctive trait of social movements” (Diani 2002, 173; cf. also Diani 1992). *Social Network Analysis* regards ties between actors as “channels for the flow of both material and non-material resources” (Caiani 2014, 368). Networks are thus “vehicles of meaning, crucial for the sharing of values, frames, and identities” (Cinalli 2006, indirectly quoted in Caiani 2014, 370), which fits in well with the norm brokerage perspective. Network analysis has the potential of answering the questions posed in this study also beyond the analysis of brokerage. It can help to “analyze how collective action is affected by the actors’ embeddedness in preexisting networks” (Diani 2002, 173) and how these and further linkages provide opportunities but also constraints for the development and workings of a social movement (Caiani 2014, 368; Diani 2002, 174).

Network analysis commonly examines two main properties: nodes and edges. Nodes are the actors within a network, while edges constitute the connections among these actors. The sampling of a network, or in other words, the pinpointing of its boundaries is an intricate matter. One approach is to detect the most important movement actors first and ask them about their subjective perceptions as to whom or which groups they cooperate with and then continue with snowball sampling – the realist approach. In the nominalist approach, it is the researcher who determines the criteria of network membership and uses other data sources to identify nodes and edges (Diani 2002, 176f.). This study opts for the second approach, using PEA data on groups which jointly participated at protest events. In fact, social network analysis is often combined with protest event analysis in studies on collective action (Caiani 2014, 371). In the PEA dataset, I have identified up

to five SMOs per protest event, as mentioned in the underlying Kukmin Daily reports.² Whenever there were more than five groups mentioned, I listed those groups mentioned first, supposing that these are the most important ones. If, however, the article referred to SMOs that have been inductively identified as important anti-LGBT groups during the previous coding process, I rather included these in the dataset, assuming that the frequency of participation is an indicator for significance.

Exchanges can of course also take place between SMOs and individual participants. The focus of the network analysis of this study is, however, on groups only, since prominent activists are in most cases members or even leaders of SMOs anyways. Political parties are also left out of the sample. This is because it is often individual politicians that participate in anti-LGBT protest events, as shall be demonstrated later in this chapter. It is not advisable to coopt whole political parties for individual politicians' actions and attitudes.³

I claim that groups partaking in one protest event can be expected to have relations with each other. For the purpose of mapping the network of the anti-LGBT movement, I therefore record a link between each of the groups participating in the same protest event.⁴ While we cannot be sure about the exact nature of the respective relations, there is no doubt that these groups – or rather, their representatives – cooperated in the context of this event. Perhaps, these groups co-organized the event, or one of the groups invited the others. The latter case would be a *directed* relation, for the initiative originates from one actor (e.g., group *a* inviting group *b*; $a \rightarrow b$). The PEA dataset does not provide such data for all protest events, which is why the social network analysis as implemented in this study will assume that relations between actors are *symmetrical*, that is, without nodes dominant in themselves. Actors can be dominant also in this model, however, rather in terms of the number of links a specific group has. This relational property indicates the strength or value of the ties. In our case, the strength of a relation is assumed to be higher when two groups jointly participate in several protest events. The overall number of ties of actors points towards their *centrality*, that is, “the extent to which

2 According to Diani (2002, 182), newspaper reports as a source for network analysis have the benefit of allowing comparisons of network constellations over time, but one needs to be cautious since journalists tend to mention only the best-known groups, thus creating a bias. Diani therefore recommends using triangulation, i.e., combining information from as many different sources as possible. In my qualitative research interviews with anti-LGBT activists, I included an item asking about their most important cooperation partners. The interviewees were, however, rather reluctant to provide this information, which is why using PEA data seems to be a robust alternative.

3 It is, arguably, equally problematic to suppose that other individual participants (without distinct political allegiances) can represent the entirety of their SMOs or, in the case of church leaders, whole congregations and denominations. I nevertheless proceeded in this way since there is a difference between the internal workings of a movement on the hand and traditional politics on the other. The actors of the latter arena occupy distinct and potentially powerful political positions. Movement activists, in contrast, often lack access to such positions, which leads them to try to win over politicians for their purposes. These explicitly *political* aspects of anti-LGBT collective action will be treated in-depth in chapter 10.5.

4 If there is, for example, a protest event with four participating groups, groups *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, the edges between these groups would be registered as follows: $a-b$; $a-c$; $a-d$; $b-c$; $b-d$; and $c-d$. I assume that all possible links between these groups actually materialize.

they are located at core positions in a web of exchanges” (Diani 2002, 186). Investigating the network position of a group in this way allows us to interpret its role within the movement and estimate its influence.

Another measure serving this analytical purpose is betweenness. “The concept of *betweenness*, which measures the extent to which a node is located in an intermediate position on the paths connecting other actors, may be regarded as an indicator of social brokerage” (Diani 2002, 188). Network analysis is thus a helpful tool when investigating brokerage. Actors with high betweenness scores function as brokers and gatekeepers, and as such, represent “important communication channels through which information, goods, and other resources can be transmitted and exchanged” (Caiani 2014, 385; cf. also Wasserman & Faust 1994). Brokers occupy crucial positions in a network since they connect different sectors of movements. In this sense, Diani, referring to Melucci (1996), notes that “[s]ocial movements are highly differentiated phenomena, whose cohesion and unity cannot be taken for granted, and are constantly redefined and renegotiated” (Diani 2002, 187). Social network analysis has the potential to also carve out competitive or conflictual relations, as well as subgroups within a movement (Diani 2002, 180; Caiani 2014, 387–390). Two related measures look at the whole network and its levels of cohesion and collaboration. *Average distance* “refers to the distance, on average, of the shortest way to connect any two actors in the network. The smaller the average distance, the more cohesive a network” (Caiani 2014, 382). *Average degree* shows each actor’s average number of contacts, assuming that the higher the number of average linkages, the more likely groups are to cooperate (Caiani 2014, 382).

The following subchapter sets out to map the networks of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, taking into consideration dynamics and changes – but also continuities – over time. The concepts, mechanisms, and measures presented above will help to better understand the patterns of interaction, the logic of alliance building, and the overall identity of this particular movement (cf. Diani 2002, 175).

The networks of anti-LGBT actors and their embeddedness in the Protestant Right

The following analysis focuses on three main actor-related aspects of the working of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. I provide (1) a typology of the most active SMOs with the goal of then (2) mapping the actor networks during three main periods: the initial phase of the movement (2000–2012), the growth and dynamization period (2013–2015), and the consolidated phase of high-level activity (2016–2020). Underlying all this is (3) an examination of the importance of respective SMOs, which is measured through quantifying the frequencies of participation in (and/or organization of) protest events, the number of connections individual SMOs have other organization, and the centrality of individual SMOs in this network. The typology of actors shall be the first part of this detailed actor-level analysis.

10.2 Typology of the most active anti-LGBT actors

Table 10 offers a categorized overview of 34 SMOs that have most frequently participated in protest events from January 2000 until April 2020. The table discerns types as well as subtypes of SMOs, covering the organizations that have prominently appeared in anti-LGBT protest events during this period. The SMOs' names given in the table are either the official English renderings commonly used by the groups themselves or my own translations. The year of the first appearance of an organization at an anti-LGBT protest is also provided.

Among the SMOs most actively showing presence at anti-LGBT protest events are two church associations, the *Christian Council of Korean* (CCK) and the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK), with respectively 53 and 43 participations out of the total of 513 protest events. Other SMOs also exhibit outstanding zeal, having joined more than 30 times. These include the explicitly anti-LGBT groups *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* (42 times) and *Holy Life* (35 times) and the anti-LGBT alliances *Tongbanyŏn* (46 times), the *Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality* (37 times), and the *Korean Churches' Countermeasures Committee against Homosexuality* (34 times). Two further very assiduous groups are the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (34 times) and the *Esther Prayer Movement* (33 times) – to name only the most ambitious anti-LGBT SMOs for a start.⁵

Table 10: Typology of most active anti-LGBT actors^a

Types and subtypes		Name of social movement organization (SMO)	Year of first appearance at protest events	Number of participations in protest events ^b
Ex- plicit anti- LGBT focus	General	Coalition for Moral Sexuality	2010	42
	'Ex-gay'	Holy Life	2010	35
		Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum	2015	11
	Alliances and task forces	National Alliance against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage (<i>Tongbanyŏn</i>)	2017	46
		Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality	2013	37
		Korean Churches' Countermeasures Committee against Homosexuality	2015	34
		National Alliance of Professors against Homosexuality, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Constitutional Amendment	2017	15

5 Table 10 and this section in general only focus on the most active anti-LGBT social movement organizations. An extensive list of all 296 groups has been produced in the course of the protest event analysis, yet it is left out here for the sake of brevity.

Types and subtypes		Name of social movement organization (SMO)	Year of first appearance at protest events	Number of participations in protest events ^b
Religious	Overarching Protestant/evangelical associations	Christian Council of Korea (CCK)	2003	53
		The Communion of Churches in Korea (CCIK)	2013	43
		Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea (<i>Hanjangch'ong</i>)	2011	22
		The United Christian Churches of Korea (UCCK)	2016	10
	Protestant denominations	The Presbyterian Church in Korea <i>Hapdong</i>	2013	20
		The Presbyterian Church of Korea <i>Tonghap</i> (PCK)	2001	10
		The Korean Presbyterian Church <i>Hapsin</i>	2016	9
	Protestant-based SMOs	Esther Prayer Movement	2010	33
		Network of the Chosen	2011	28
		Holy City Movement	2013	17
		Future Pastoral Forum	2011	14
		Christian Social Responsibility	2011	9
	Regional	Taegu Christian Federation	2014	10
	Non-Protestant religions	Patriotic Catholics for Korea	2014	17
		National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea	2014	13
Thematic foci	'Health' ^c	People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society	2013	34
		Korean Association of Family and Health (KAFAH)	2016	7
	Family	Parents' Alliance for Building the Next Generation	2014	27
	Military	Just Military Human Right Institute	2016	15
	'Education'	School Parent's Union for Health and Family	2015	11
	Internet	Movement for the Establishment of a Bright Internet World	2011	10
	'Research' ^c	Research Center for Freedom and Human Rights	2017	10
		Christian Think Tank	2014	9
	Media		Korean Association of Church Communication (KACC)	2011

Types and subtypes	Name of social movement organization (SMO)	Year of first appearance at protest events	Number of participations in protest events ^b
Politics	Korea Christian Public Policy Council	2013	9
	National Prayer Breakfast	2007	8
	Parliamentary Mission Alliance	2007	8

^a Out of a total of 513 protest events, SMOs were mentioned in 484 cases. ^b SMOs with appearances ≥ 7 were included in this table. The total number of SMOs appearing in the PEA dataset is 296. Overview of further frequencies: SMOs appearing once: 161 groups; twice: 44 groups; three times: 21; four times: 8; five times: 14; six times: 5; seven times: 5. ^c The categories 'health', 'education', and 'research' are put in quotation marks due to the biased ways these action areas are used by anti-LGBT actors.

Only a small number of these most active SMOs got active against LGBT rights in the early 2000s. The Presbyterian *T'onghap* denomination first participated in a protest event in 2001, followed by the CCK which joined for the first time in 2003.⁶ The *National Prayer Breakfast* and *Parliamentary Mission Alliance*, two organizations with links to the political arena, appeared at protest events in the course of the contentious episode on the first attempt at introducing a comprehensive anti-discrimination law in 2007. A large number of groups entered the stage of collective anti-LGBT activism in 2010 and 2011 respectively. During this time, the anti-discrimination law was proposed for the second time in the National Assembly, and there were controversies on the Military Criminal Code and the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance. Both preexisting organizations such as the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea* (*Hanjangch'ong*) and the *Korean Association of Church Communication* (KACC), as well as relatively new actors such as the *Esther Prayer Movement* and the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* joined at that time. As I will demonstrate, these latter two organizations in particular centrally shaped the formative years of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Judging from the rising number protest events and actors continuously involved in collective action against LGBT rights by this time, one definitely can speak of a social movement. The increase and dynamization of actors participating in this fight continued especially from 2013 onwards when the number of protest events started rising significantly to reach peaks in 2015–2017. It is in this period that further SMOs, which would prove highly industrious, appeared for the first time. Among these are, for example, the church association CCIK, the Presbyterian *Hapdong* denomination, the newly established *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* and the *Parents' Alliance*

6 The data on the years of first participation in anti-LGBT protest events need to be analyzed with caution, since the PEA dataset relies on Kukmin Daily reports. There may be a journalistic bias in the sense that Kukmin Daily did not report on all anti-LGBT protest events, especially in the early years of anti-LGBT activism where attention (from both the media and would-be anti-LGBT actors) had not been that great (cf. chapter 5). I nevertheless argue that the available PEA data can give a good overview of newly emerging and newly joining anti-LGBT SMOs.

for *Building the Next Generation*, as well as the *Holy City Movement*, an evangelization initiative following a model of “spiritual warfare evangelism” (Han 2015, 135).⁷

I have discerned five main types of anti-LGBT organizations: (1) groups or alliances with an explicit anti-LGBT focus, (2) SMOs with a clear religious focus, (3) groups superficially exhibiting secular thematic foci while in fact having a religious connection or foundation as well, (4) media actors, and (5) actors with a political orientation in the strict sense. In the following, I will shortly give an overview of the SMOs that are part of the first three categories, focusing in each case on one or two examples in greater detail. Media actors will be treated in chapter 11 and a thorough analysis of political actors ensues in section 10.5 of this chapter.

SMOs with an explicit anti-LGBT focus

The first category includes SMOs that centrally focus on LGBT issues, which can be discerned from the organizations’ names and actions. Actors in this category can be divided into three subtypes: single groups that generally concentrate on anti-LGBT activities, so-called ‘ex-gay’ groups, and alliances of anti-LGBT SMOs that have either been created on a long-term basis or – more commonly – emerge on an ad-hoc basis in reaction to a specific contentious LGBT issue. I have already analyzed the particularities of Korean ex-gay groups in chapter 8.1, which is why they shall not be treated again at this point.

The most active single SMO with a general focus on LGBT issues is the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* (CFMS), led by the former Busan University physics professor Kil Wŏn-pyŏng. While being present at many protest events and appearing in numerous news reports on anti-LGBT activities, the actual structure of CFMS remains obscure. The SMO features a website which, however, does not contain much content, including only one text, on the purpose of the organization, articles of the association, and a link to a site where you can become a member and/or donate. According to this online presence, CFMS became a corporation in November 2021,⁸ but the organization has existed since at least 2010 when it first appeared at an anti-LGBT protest event. The website enumerates some concrete cooperations of CFMS, showing its diverse links into the conservative and Protestant circles. The anti-LGBT SMOs works together with other groups such as the *Young Koreans’ Alliance ‘Stand up Straight’* (*chŏn’guk chŏngnyŏn yŏnhap ‘paro sŏda’*), the *Korean Conservative School* (*han’guk posujuŭi hakkyo*), and *Heavenly Wedding* (*hebŭnli weding*), an organization preparing young people for matrimony. Interestingly,

7 ‘Strategic level spiritual warfare’ is an evangelization model proposed by C. Peter Wagner (1986), through which he aimed to contribute to the evangelical church growth movement. This missionary model has been criticized for its inaccurate rendering of biblical contents, for its nationalist and political bias, and its overall approach, which relies heavily on othering and creating fears of issues such as demons and witchcraft (Van der Meer 2008).

8 While there is no information on this anti-LGBT SMO’s process of obtaining legal recognition, one should note that pro-LGBT groups have faced difficulties in gaining such a status in the past. For example, the *Beyond the Rainbow Foundation* (*piondwi mujigae chaedan*), a foundation raising funds to support the LGBT movement, underwent three years of legal battles to officially register as a charity until the Korean Supreme Court ruled the rejection by governmental agencies illegal in August 2017 (Human Rights Watch 2017, August 4).

the CFMS website does not explicitly mention that the organization has a Christian foundation and that it predominantly fights against homosexuality. Article 3 of the SMO's regulations just vaguely states the following as goals:

The goal of this association is to contribute to the creation of a society without sexual harassment and sexual violence through improving the right sense of sex culture, and in order for such a right sex culture to take roots, to conduct research and back this up with related knowledge and information so that sound and healthy individuals, and a sound and healthy society can be formed. (CFMS 2022a)

When looking into the PEA data, however, it turns out that the prevention of sexual violence was not part of the activities at protest events in which the CFMS participated. Rather, the emphasis lays on sex culture, as Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng outlines in a slightly more extensive text on the group's purposes: "As obscene culture spreads around the world and the right sex culture collapses, this culture causes damages such as family destruction, youth derailment, and increased suicide rates" (Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, in CFMS 2022b). Raising such an unspecific threat fits into the narratives discerned in chapter 7.5, where I have analyzed that anti-LGBT activists frame their activism as a fight against unwelcome and allegedly un-Korean foreign influences. Kil continues writing: "Fortunately, there are still a few pious people in Korean society from all walks of life, so I think we can prevent sexual collapse if we work together." According to Kil, it is these special people that can safeguard Korea and guarantee a sublime position to their home country. "Korea is striving to become a civic group that takes the lead in becoming a morally advanced country" (Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, in CFMS 2022b).

The example of the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* reveals several aspects that have already been discerned in previous parts of this study and that will, as this chapter shall demonstrate, continue surfacing in the analysis of anti-LGBT SMOs. The online presence of CFMS creates rather diffuse threats while at the same time claiming scientificity. Moreover, the SMO keeps its ideological and religious background somewhat vague, which could be seen as a strategic move to increase one's compatibility with as many parts of the general public as possible. The website also, however, puts forward framing elements that may speak to politically and religiously conservative Christians, fueling nationalist attitudes that become merged with Christian self-adulation.

From an organizational perspective, CFMS remains a rather opaque group. As is the case with many anti-LGBT SMOs, concrete information on membership and the financial situation are hard to get by. When I asked representatives of anti-LGBT SMOs for precise numbers of members during my qualitative research interviews they would answer evasively or just state vaguely that they have a broad number of supporters. While CFMS along with some other anti-LGBT SMOs feature official group regulations and organizational charts, the substance of all this remains dubious. The CFMS's organigram, for instance, depicts manifold functions but fails to name actual persons occupying these positions. In the case of CFMS, the person that is associated with the group in most cases is Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng – one if not the central figure of the overall anti-LGBT movement in Korea. It seems that it is not so much the SMO, its inner workings and outward semblance that count, but rather the very fact that an organization exists – alongside many others

which, in unison, create the outside image of abundance and plurality. While this study cannot make conclusive inferences on the actual organizational nature and substance of anti-LGBT SMOs, it is fair to claim that the individuals behind these organizations like Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng play important roles for the movement as will be elaborated in chapter 10.4.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, this outward multiplicity manifests itself particularly in the alliances that are formed as part of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Judging from the alliances' names and actions, they also have a special focus on LGBT issues – as distinguished from (mostly pre-existing) SMOs that deal with this topic only as a part of their overall actions or groups that pretend to have another thematic focus while actually predominantly fighting against LGBT rights, as I shall expound after the now following closer look at anti-LGBT alliances.

By far the most active alliance within the anti-LGBT movement is the already mentioned *Tongbanyŏn* with 46 protest participations since 2017 and self-proclaimed 250 to just above 300 member organizations. Like *Tongbanyŏn*, the largest part of anti-LGBT alliances is made up of organizations, that is, actors that (claim to) represent collectives in a formalized way. There are also, however, alliances consisting of individuals such as the *National Alliance of Professors against Homosexuality, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Constitutional Amendment*, which has taken part in anti-LGBT events on 15 occasions since 2017, the comparatively inactive *Teachers' Alliance against Homosexuality* with only one participation in 2018, and the *Sinch'ŏn Youth Solidarity against Homosexuality*, which got active two times against the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival (SQCF)* in 2014. The majority of alliances emerged on an ad-hoc basis, in reaction to pro-LGBT events or pro-LGBT law proposals. The SQCF in particular has caused the establishment of alliances such as the *Solidarity Movement to Stop the Homosexual Queer Frenzy Festival* (2015 only), the *Citizens' Alliance against the Usage of Seoul Plaza by the Homosexuality Festival* (2016 only), and the *Preparatory Committee for the Citizens' Convention against the Seoul Plaza Homosexuality Queer Festival*, which convened 7 times ahead of the SQCF in 2016–2019 and consisted of prominent figures of the anti-LGBT movement. These coordinative efforts are noteworthy in themselves, showcasing the significance granted to the fight against this form of queer visibility (cf. also chapter 5.3). The very names of the alliances are telling. They engage in debasing and othering when using terms such as 'frenzy', they attempt to especially problematize the usage of Seoul Plaza, a central and symbolic square in the capital city, and they highlight the fact that they fight against homosexuality when peculiarly prepending this term to the perhaps not so well-known concept of 'queer' (referring to a "homosexuality queer festival"). Further alliances emerged on a short-term basis around concerted campaigns against specific topics like the media representation of transsexuality in 2012, the inclusion of homosexuality in school textbooks in 2013, gay men in the army in 2016, and a large collective effort to reform the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea Law* in a way to scrap its anti-discrimination provision for non-heterosexual people in 2016.⁹

9 The corresponding alliances are the following: *National Alliance against KBS which Instigates Transgender and Transsexuals*, *Task Force on the Problem of Promoting Homosexuality in School Textbooks*, *National Alliance against the Legalization of Homosexuality in the Military*, and the *1 Million People Signa-*

Alongside the diversification regarding the topics treated by collective actors with an anti-LGBT focus, two further trends exist: local alliance-building beyond Seoul and the creation of specialized subgroups within existing larger organizations. Local initiatives include the *Busan Citizen Alliance against Homosexuality*, the *Ansan City Homosexuality Countermeasure Citizens' Alliance*, and the *Alliance of South Kyöngsang Province Citizens against the Bad Student Human Rights Ordinance*, which all appeared just once or twice at protest events. The *Homosexuality Countermeasure Task Force of the Taegu Christian Federation* is both a local actor and a subgroup of an overarching Protestant association. Other Christian institutions also created such subdivisions. The *CCK Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality*¹⁰ was active on 5 occasions in the years 2010 and 2011, while the *Task Force to Stop Homosexuality of the Presbyterian Hapshin Denomination* only appeared once in 2017.

All these alliances and subgroups bespeak the dynamism of the Protestant Right. If need be, there is the capability to mobilize many groups in a comparatively short period of time. Anti-LGBT issues seem to have diffused extensively and gained greater awareness with local actors as well. At the same time, most of these initiatives appear to have a low durability. Short-term and ad-hoc organizational structures make sense in campaigns revolving around a specific policy. Yet in other cases, alliance building seems to have quickly lost its appeal considering the very low numbers of participations in protest events. In the case of such alliances, one can again question the substance of these cooperative efforts, also in terms of the often-claimed high numbers of participating groups. After all, putting one's organization's name on a list is a low-cost but potentially effective action form, since it creates the outward image of a large and well-organized support base. The *International Countermeasure Committee for Homosexuality Problems* extends this image even into the transnational arena, claiming that many actors worldwide are active in this field. When investigating the background of this SMO in detail, however, it turns out that it is rather inactive as well (appearing only twice in the PEA data, in 2018 & 2019), that it does not provide information on its concrete international connections, and that it is, judging from the contents treated and persons present at events, a subsidiary of the Korean 'ex-gay' movement.

Tongbanyön, the *National Alliance against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage*, in contrast, has been consistently active since its establishment. The website of this alliance testifies bustling activities, claiming support from 22 Protestant denominations and a total of 298 groups (as of May 2023). There is an FAQ section, a list enumerating concrete activities, photos, and reports from events. Press releases and advertisements can be found, as well as plenty materials that can be used for manifold anti-LGBT purposes. *Tongbanyön* has an office located in Seoul's Söch'o district as well as a special fund for financing anti-LGBT activities – evidence of its relatively high degree of professionalization. The internet presence even provides a breakdown of how the financial resources of a *Guarding Ethics and Truth for Freedom Fund* (*chayu chilli suho kigüm*) were used, claiming a total amount of 149.4 million Korean Won ($\approx$ 108.000 EUR / 115.000 USD). Despite its

ture Movement for the Reform of the National Human Rights Commission Law which Promotes Homosexuality.

10 This subgroup also appears with a slightly extended name: *CCK Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality and the NHRCK*.

flawed transparency, lacking clear sources and timeframes, this financial breakdown is noteworthy as a rare example showing how available funds are (claimed to be) actually used. In the case of *Tongbanyŏn*, money is mainly spent on lawsuits, communication, and research.¹¹ Various eminent activists of the anti-LGBT movement participate at events organized by this alliance. It is, however, one prominent figure who is mentioned most often in relation to *Tongbanyŏn*: again, Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng.¹² Interestingly, the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality*, where Kil also occupies a leading position, has a very similar website design and logo. This linkage shows that Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng plays an important role, occupying different functions within the anti-LGBT movement, as do other central figures. Chapter 10.4 will elaborate on this insight.

SMOs with an explicit religious background: the unifying potential of anti-LGBT activism

The main activity of the SMOs just presented is the fight against homosexuality and related topics. Besides this explicit anti-LGBT focus, these organizations all also feature an implicit Christian background. The case of CFMS reveals that some SMOs are reticent to openly declare such an embeddedness in conservative Protestantism. Another important portion of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, however, does not conceal this aspect of their identity – quite to the contrary. Religion is at the core of these organizations, many of which have existed long before anti-LGBT activism has begun in Korea. These religious actors include whole Protestant or evangelical denominations, associations in which these denominations cooperate, Christian-based NGOs, local church branches, and non-Protestant religious actors from Buddhism and Catholicism.

Of the 296 SMOs discerned through protest event analysis in the period 2000–2020, 152 (52.7%) have, judging from their names, an apparent religious focus. This does not mean that others do not have a similarly religious orientation, but it is hard to tell just from their labels. The vast majority of these 152 clearly religious SMOs have a Protestant background. There are only a few Buddhist and Catholic groups in the anti-LGBT movement like the quite active *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* (17 protest participations since 2014) and the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* (13 participations). The mere cooperation of Protestant actors with Catholic and Buddhist ones is surprising, since Protestants have, historically and recently, fostered highly conflictive relations with other religions in South Korea (cf. Kim, Sŏng-ho 2014; O, Kang-nam 2008; Kim, Chongsuh

11 The alliance states that this fund was started on 7 December 2018. Without providing any time-frame, they claim having collected in total 149.422.434 KRW through membership fees and donations. Of this amount, roughly 44.8 million KRW have been used for “educational advertisements”, 40.8 million KRW for supporting lawsuits of “victims”, 28.8 million KRW for supporting laws, 21.3 million KRW for supporting “research on the legalization of homosexuality and countermeasures against this”, 10 million KRW for supporting a lawsuit for abolishing an unspecified student human rights ordinance, and 3.8 million KRW for office work and administration (*Tongbanyŏn*, n.d.).

12 The PEA dataset evinces this fact as well as a rough google search. When entering the search terms ‘*Tongbanyŏn*’ and ‘representative’ (*taep'yo*, a term commonly used in news reports for leading activists from a specific group) or ‘chairman’ (*hoejang*), Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng is by far the person that comes up most.

2007; No, Ch'i-jun 1998). These conflicts come to the fore even in the context of anti-LGBT protest events. The PEA data shows that in 2014, in the course of Pope Francis' visit to Korea, the *Movement to Inform about the Character of the Catholic Church* was established – a group which combined anti-Catholic attitudes with anti-LGBT stances (cf. Yu, Yong-dae 2014, August 31). Buddhism has also come under fire from anti-LGBT activists. In 2015, for example, former Seoul mayor Park Won-soon was accused of pro-Buddhist and pro-LGBT attitudes when the city government allowed Seoul Queer Culture Festival to take place. At a protest event, the CCIK leader held up a poster reading “Homosexuality mayor [sic!] and Buddhist mayor OUT” (cited in Yu & Paek 2015, May 26).

Despite these partially conflictive relations, the fight against LGBT rights seems to unify these actors irrespective of their religious – and also: denominational – differences. The Protestant churches in Korea are themselves notoriously split and antagonistic to each other. Korean Presbyterianism alone counts more than 100 denominations. There have been efforts to overcome dissent and join forces, especially in order to exert greater influence in socio-political matters. The *Christian Council of Korea* (CCK) was founded with this purpose in the late 1980s (Cho, Kyuhoon 2014), but split up in 2012 owing to internal conflicts, creating another interdenominational association, the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK). These internal rifts notwithstanding, CCK and CCIK have continued to cooperate in the fight against LGBT rights, as have the leading circles of different Korean denominations, for instance, in collaborative bodies such as the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea* (*Hanjangch'ong*, 22 protest participations since 2011) and the *Council of Christian Church Leaders in Korea* (2 participations, in 2016 & 2017). In short, LGBT issues have the potential of conciliating and unifying traditionally adversarial religious actors.

Conservative doctrines and fundamentalist interpretations of Biblical texts may create common ground on the Christian side of religious presence in Korea – even in cases where other doctrinal conflicts continue to play a role in internal disputes. For non-Christian actors, that is, Buddhist and Confucian groups within the anti-LGBT movement, however, this explanation for cooperation is not convincing.¹³ I argue that it is, rather than similar religious orientations, the matching political and ideological attitudes that bring together actors from diverse religious backgrounds. As for the *Patriotic Catholics for Korea*, for example, Schattle and Lee (2019, 213) convincingly demonstrate that this SMO has a clear inclination to the political right, promoting anti-communism, neo-liberalism, and partially also extreme right-wing ideology.¹⁴ This group is not formally affiliated with the Catholic Church in Korea, making it a special-interest group within its religious community. The same seems to be true for the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* (Nabuco), a group established in 2006 by former high-

13 Further non-Christian religious actors in the PEA dataset beyond the already mentioned ones include the *Busan Buddhist Association* (2 appearances at protest events in 2017 and 2019) and the *National Confucian Alliance* (in total 3 participations, in 2016 and 2017).

14 Schattle and Lee (2019) studied two groups within Korean Catholicism featuring diverging political orientations. The *Catholic Priests' Association for Justice* (CPA), *ch'ŏnjugyo ch'ŏngŭi kuhyŏn ch'ŏnguk sajedan*) represents, in a way, a counter program to the actions and ideology of the *Patriotic Catholics for Korea*. CPA) promotes liberal democracy, human rights, and social welfare. They occupied a critical position against the Park Geun-hye presidency – in stark contrast to the *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* who fiercely defended Park also and especially after her ouster in 2017.

ranking army members in opposition to the Roh Moo-hyun government, championing anti-North Korea and pro-US American stances (Nabuco 2006, October 30). This ideological congruence appears to enable cooperation despite the hostilities geared towards Buddhism and Catholic Church by parts of the Protestant Right.

As chapter 9 has shown, opposition against homosexuality and related topics have become pervasive elements of common sense within large parts of conservative Protestantism in Korea. As the interreligious cooperation on the actor level reveals, this modified *senso comune* does not only appeal to theologically conservative individuals and groups in the religious realm, but also – and importantly so – in the arena of socio-political convictions. The social mechanism of identity shift is observable in this context, too. When a religious (or any type of) organization joins the anti-LGBT movement and remains active over a longer period of time, one can assume that at some point, this new SMO has been convinced of the need to fight against LGBT rights, and as a consequence, implements this newly adopted identity through its actions. However, entering collective action around a certain topic does not happen out of nothing. Groups and individuals have to be motivated to join the ranks. I argue that these processes function through the mechanisms of brokerage and appropriation. The way brokerage exactly works shall be treated in the following subchapter on the movement's networks. Suffice it to say for now that central actors emerge who successfully convince others to join and thus appropriate them for the movement's purposes.

Taking the example of denominations and interdenominational associations of Korean Protestantism, we can broadly differentiate between two types of activation for anti-LGBT purposes. On the one hand, there are some actors that joined anti-LGBT collective action at an early stage. Among these vanguard actors are, most prominently, the CCK and the *Presbyterian Church of Korea Tonghap* (PCK). The CCK was first involved in an anti-LGBT protest event in 2003 and has remained an active part of the movement ever since. The PCK, in contrast, displays a single participation as early as 2001, but after that, only resurfaces in 2014. In the 2000s and early 2010s, before the split-off of the CCIK, the CCK represented the majority of theologically conservative Protestant and evangelical denominations in Korea.¹⁵ One can therefore assume that the anti-LGBT actions of CCK were met with approval from the denominational leaderships. The CCK, along with some other early acting SMOs like the *Esther Prayer Movement* and the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality*, thus occupied a crucial function in the formation of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. They acted as trailblazers, as agenda setters and early disseminators of frames directed against equal rights for LGBT people in Korea. They set the stage for what would become a growing, dynamic, and indeed successful anti-emancipatory movement embedded in the Protestant Right.

Other parts of the Protestant Right, however, only joined the movement at later stages. I argue that this second group became involved in anti-LGBT activism not so

15 In contrast to the CCK, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), the oldest Protestant church association in Korea founded in 1924, is considered rather progressive these days. Besides relatively liberal denominations such as the Anglican Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Kijang denomination, however, NCCCK also includes conservative churches such as the Presbyterian *Tonghap* denomination and the evangelical *Assemblies of God of Korea* as of December 2022 (NCCCK n.d.).

much out of pre-existing intrinsic volition to deal with the issue in the first place, but rather through the influence of already existing anti-LGBT actors. The early actors paved the way for subsequent ones, preparing and propagating a certain way of thinking, which, by and by, gained acceptance and soon prevailed within the Protestant Right. Organizations like the CCK played an important role in attracting more groups into the movement. While the CCK had already occupied a powerful position and could thus make use of its connections into the Protestant Right, the movement as a whole was, arguably, not in such a position – at least in its early stages. A common social movement strategy in such circumstances is attempting to win over potent actors for one's goals. Such an *appropriation* can be expected to be most successful with actors to whom links already exist and who hold similar ideological views (Vasi 2011). In the case of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, this process is best observable in the way denominational leaders and general assemblies of Protestant churches increasingly joined the ranks, contributing to the maturing process of anti-LGBT collective action (cf. the network analysis in the next section).

Table 11 summarizes all Protestant and evangelical denominations as well as subgroups that have participated in protest events according to the PEA data. The increasing involvedness of denominations is reflected in their leaders and representatives participating in protest events, especially after 2010, but also in the way these Protestant churches formally positioned themselves against homosexuality and related subjects. Such official declarations made by general assemblies have become commonplace since 2015. The Presbyterian *Tonghap* general assembly, for example, expressed its rejection of homosexuality on three occasions in 2015, 2017, and 2019. The 2017 declaration of *Tonghap* included an explicit prohibition for homosexuals and supporters of homosexuals to enter the denomination's theological universities, and announced disciplinary measures for professors should they express pro-LGBT opinions. The general assembly opposed the anti-discrimination law and demanded that the criminalization of gay soldiers in the Military Criminal Code remain unchanged (Yi & Ch'oe 2017, September 20). In 2017, the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church *Hapsin* decided to expel pastors and elders in case they support or promote homosexuality. Grounds for this punishment were also stipulated. Among them are the baptism of an unrepenting homosexual, officiating a same-sex marriage, engaging in homosexual acts, and preaching positively about homosexuality. The chairman of the *Committee on the Prevention of Homosexuality of Hapsin*, Pastor Sim Hun-jin, chose strong words for justifying such grave disciplinary measures: "If we do not deal with the issue of homosexuality quickly, all Korean churches will die" (quoted in Yi, Hyön-u 2017, September 20). A year later, the general assembly of the *Presbyterian Church in Korean Paeksök & Daesin* put into action such a punitive measure by declaring the pro-LGBT pastor Lim Borah (*Yim Po-ra*) heretical (Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, September 12; cf. also chapter 12 for the case of Pastor Lim Borah).

Table 11: Protestant and evangelical denominations active in the anti-LGBT movement

Denominations and subgroups	Members (in million)	Year of first participation	Number of participations	Official anti-LGBT declarations and statements (selection)
Presbyterian Church of Korea T'onghap - Presbyterian Church of Korea T'onghap Emergency Task Force - Theological Educational Department of the General Assembly of Presbyterian T'onghap Denomination - T'onghap Cheju Branch	2.3 (as of 2021)	2001 2016 2016 2018	10 1 1 1	General assembly declarations in 2015, 2017 (e.g., prohibiting homosexuals from entering seminaries), 2019
Lutheran Church in Korea - International Lutheran Council	0.002 (2019)	2009 2009	1 2	
Presbyterian Church in Korea Paeksökh	1.5 (2021)	2010	6	General assembly declaration in 2015; Joint statement with Hapdong in 2015
Presbyterian Church in Korea Hapdong - Hapdong Theological Seminary - Gwangju South Chölla Province Council of Hapdong - North Chölla Province Council of Hapdong	2.3 (2021)	2013 2010 2014 2014	20 1 1 1	General assembly declarations in 2018, 2019; Joint statement with Paeksökh in 2015
Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea	0.38 (2022)	2015	6	General assembly declarations in 2019
Korean Methodist Church - Homosexuality Task Force of the Korean Methodist Church	1.2 (2022)	2015 2017	5 1	General assembly declaration in 2015

Denominations and subgroups	Members (in million)	Year of first participation	Number of participations	Official anti-LGBT declarations and statements (selection)
Korea Baptist Convention - Taejŏn Baptist Theological College - Future Forum of the Korean Baptist Church	0.52 (2020)	2015 2001 2018	5 2 1	Discussion at general assembly on whether to issue an official anti-LGBT declaration in 2016
Presbyterian Church in Korea <i>Daesin</i>	0.06 (2018)	2016	7	
Korean Presbyterian Church <i>Hapsin</i> - Committee on the Prevention of Homosexuality of <i>Hapsin</i>	0.13 (2021)	2016 2017	9 2	General assembly declaration in 2012 (punishing support for homosexuality)
Korea Evangelical Holiness Church Association	0.4 (2020)	2017	1	2017 declaration
Presbyterian Church in Korean <i>Paeksŏk</i> & <i>Daesin</i> (merger of <i>Paeksŏk</i> and <i>Daesin</i> denominations)	n/a	2018	1	Declaring pro-LGBT pastor Lim Borah heretical in 2018
Presbyterian Church of Korea <i>Hapdong Hansŏng</i>	n/a	2019	1	

Note: Data on membership stems from the denominations' websites; the remaining information was taken from the PEA database, thus covering the years 2000–2020 (April). The spelling of the denomination's names (e.g., *Tonghap*) follows the McCune-Reischauer romanization system. The romanized spellings used by denominations themselves may differ.

These examples demonstrate that anti-LGBT positions have made their way into the institutional fabric of Protestant churches in Korea. Previously immanent anti-LGBT attitudes based on conservative Bible interpretations have been translated into concrete rules of Protestant denominations. Contravening these regulations results in sanctions for church members. The newly formalized denominational anti-LGBT rules do not only have potential consequences for individuals, though. They also serve to strengthen the power basis of the anti-LGBT movement as a whole. Besides the actual exercise of punitive power, denominational anti-LGBT declarations and regulations also have symbolic importance for the movement, for they lend credence and legitimacy to anti-LGBT attitudes and actions. This concrete endorsement by high-ranking religious bodies raises these issues to another level of importance within religious communities. For example, the fact that anti-LGBT SMOs like *Tongbanyŏn* claim denominational support on their website is evidence of the symbolic value of church backing. Of course, easier access to

material support can also be a side-effect, as well as a greater willingness of church members to take action.

Within Korean Protestantism, however, it is not only denominations and interdenominational organizations that become drawn into the anti-LGBT movement. Other lower-level religious-based groups have also joined the fight. Among these are regional church branches such as the *Taegu Christian Federation* (10 protest participations since 2014) and groups with diverse thematic foci. This latter category includes groups like the proselytizing *Holy City Movement* and its local branches and two organizations led by Pastor Kim Kyu-ho, which claim having no denominational affiliations: the group *Christian Social Responsibility* was established in the course of the emergence of the New Right, claiming as goals to save both Korean churches and Korea as a whole from crises (Christian Social Responsibility 2004, November 22) and the *Network of the Chosen*, a group founded in 2010 by centrist pastors to instill pride in people and thus advance churches and the nation (Cho, Chun-yŏng 2010, November 2).

Another organization, which started off with a different focus but soon jumped on the anti-LGBT bandwagon is the *Esther Prayer Movement*. The latter group was established in 2007 with the initial goals of creating a holy country, achieving unification and the salvation of North Korea, and conducting missionary work with North Korean refugees as well as Muslims in Islamic countries and Jews in Israel. According to its website, the group also engages in incessant prayers to overcome sins like prostitution, abortion, and homosexuality. Esther Prayer Movement claims to be particularly active in the domains of media and culture to reach its goals, but it also strives to create a 'Jesus Army' (Esther Prayer Movement, n.d.). The progressive newspaper *Hankyoreh* accused Esther Prayer Movement of spreading fake news and thus fueling hatred against refugees and homosexuals (Pak, Chun-yong 2018, September 27). In fact, the organization can be called radical, considering what it writes about its activities on its website: a subgroup prays every Thursday "to break Islam, which spreads quickly in Korea and all over the world, and for the salvation and recovery of 1.7 billion Muslims" (ibid.). Esther Prayer Movement may be more radical than the self-proclaimed 'centrist' Network of the Chosen. What they definitely agree on, however, is the rejection of homosexuality. Therefore, also on the level of subgroups of Korean Protestantism, hostility against LGBTs becomes a common denominator despite possible dissent in other areas. Yet, these SMOs are not all alike in the way they approach LGBT issues. To a certain extent, we can observe a 'division of labor' and specialization among these groups. While the Esther Prayer Movement has a broader focus, also and particularly in terms of anti-LGBT topics treated, the Network of the Chosen is mostly concerned with 'ex-gay' activities. The next section will shortly present further anti-LGBT SMOs which cultivate specialized thematic foci.

Anti-LGBT social movement organizations with thematic foci: anti-LGBT hostility in disguise

The anti-LGBT SMOs just presented have a clearly religious basis. Other organizations, as I am going to reveal, also feature a Protestant background – at least when considering the members and their religious actions during protest events such as praying or referring to the Bible and God. However, the type of SMOs that I present now does not have religion

as a significant characteristic. One could go as far as to claim that these groups wish to hide their religious background by foregrounding other aspects. Chapter 8.3 established that religious framing strategies go hand in hand with secular ones in order to convince as many people as possible to adopt an anti-LGBT orientation. I argue that the SMOs to be introduced in the following have similar goals and, in fact, are important actors for the implementation of the 'secular' framing approach promoted by the anti-LGBT movement.

Among the SMOs with the highest number of participations in protest events, six thematic foci could be discerned (cf. Table 10). These foci mirror, unsurprisingly, many of the frames prominently used by anti-LGBT actors: family, health, military, research, education, and the Internet. In the cases of the *Parents' Alliance for Building the Next Generation* and the *School Parent's Union for Health and Family*, for example, the representation of the specific interests, that is, of (school) parents, families, children, and young people lies at the heart of the activities – at least when judging from the names of the organizations. For the remaining SMOs in this category, such a distinct special interest representation is not evident. Rather, they promote specific issues such as keeping the Internet free from allegedly harmful contents (*Movement for the Establishment of a Bright Internet World*), keeping homosexuality out of the Korean army (*Just Military Human Right Institute [sic!]*), cultivating health (*People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* and *Korean Association of Family and Health*), and promoting research (*Research Center for Freedom and Human Rights* and *Christian Think Tank*). Thematic overlaps exist between these groups, but the main focus is evident in each case. I will not delve into the organizational structures and concrete framing activities of each of these groups, since I extensively treat these aspects elsewhere in this study.¹⁶ Rather, I would like to briefly elaborate on one of the most active anti-LGBT SMOs, the already mentioned *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (PSHS).

Judging from the group's name, one would expect activities in the areas of health-care and health-related policies. In fact, however, the group was founded in April 2013 in reaction to the LGBT-related provisions of the anti-discrimination law which was under discussion during that period (PSHS 2014, August 4). This means that right from the time of its establishment, PSHS featured an explicit focus on homosexuality. This is also reflected in the official regulations of PSHS. Article 2 of these regulations stipulates four purposes:

- (1) Prevention of the spread of distorted sexual ethics such as homosexuality and bisexuality and establishment of sound sexual ethics. (2) Helping sexual minorities to improve their sexual awareness. (3) The protection of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion for the mental and spiritual health of the people [*kungmindŭl*]. (4) Stopping legislation that destroys sound sexual ethics and infringes on the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion. (PSHS, n.d.)

16 The way the Korean anti-LGBT movement deals with the topics of family, health, and military is covered in chapter 7.2, and research is part of chapter 8.3. Education and the role of the Internet and social media will be treated in chapter 11. For the topic of research, refer also to Baek Jo-yeon's (2018) Master's thesis on the 'scientific' anti-LGBT discourse created by the Protestant-based *Korean Sexology Research Association*.

It is noteworthy that PSHS does refer to health in its regulations when indirectly claiming in clause (3) that an infringement of the freedoms of conscience and religion could lead to mental and spiritual health problems. The sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBT people are also regarded as health issues. In article 14, PSHS elaborates on the organization's projected activities in the area of "helping sexual minorities to improve their sexual awareness" (see clause 2 above), writing that "the organization's door is always open to sexual minorities who want receive help to improve their sexual awareness and we fully support them until they recover their physical, mental, and spiritual health" (PSHS, n.d.). The terms 'improvement' and 'recovery' are euphemistic paraphrases for 'conversion therapy' or similar potentially harmful attempts to change people's sexual orientation and gender identity. As the network analysis will demonstrate, PSHS indeed fosters rather close relations with 'ex-gay' groups.

Interestingly, PSHS claims in article 4 that it has "no political intention whatsoever". The group maintains that "protecting and promoting the physical, mental, and spiritual health of Korean society is the only purpose of its existence" and even promises that "if it deviates from this principle, it will be dissolved immediately" (PSHS, n.d.). The SMO contradicts itself when claiming to be unpolitical, while at the same time specifying that it is going to intervene against pro-LGBT and related policy proposals. The chairman of PSHS, Han Hyo-gwan, ran as a candidate for the minor *Christian Liberal Unification Party* in the general elections in 2020 – further casting doubt on the assertion of being unpolitical.¹⁷ Be that as it may, PSHS has soon developed into one of the most active anti-LGBT SMOs. The group has participated in 34 protest events since 2013. They operate a website and a blog, on which they often provide translated information on foreign affairs related to LGBT issues, and which already counted 1 million visitors one year after its establishment (PSHS 2014, August 4). PSHS featured a column in the online newspaper *Christian Daily*, and they are present on Facebook and run a channel on the Korean chatting app *KakaoTalk* (comparable to the *Telegram* app). The group's chairman frequently serves as a presenter and speaker at anti-LGBT events.¹⁸

It is smart of the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* to use 'health' as its central earmark. This topic can be expected to appeal to a large public since everybody is interested in not falling ill. Of course, PSHS applies a rather broad interpretation of 'health', and a rather normative one at that. While they promote the view that homosexuality is a health problem, others, like the pro-LGBT movement, would argue that it is rather the practices of groups like PSHS that constitute a health hazard for LGBT people. Equally cunning is the usage of terms like 'people' and 'solidarity' in the group's name. In Korean, the word

17 The details of the political involvement of anti-LGBT activists will be treated later in this chapter in section 10.5.

18 The exact structure, finances, and membership numbers of PSHS remain rather vague, though. The regulations only specify that the association has one chairperson and 10 advisors, and that there should be a "media response team" consisting of approximately 10 people (art. 10). The organization is headquartered in the city of Ch'unchŏn in Kangwŏn Province and branches of PSHS are claimed to be located in about 20 other cities and regions in South Korea, as well as in about 10 foreign countries (art. 9). Everyone who agrees with the purposes of PSHS can join (art. 5), but members are not required to pay membership fees. "[...] the necessary finances are covered solely by voluntary donations from members" (art. 12) (PSHS, n.d.).

for 'people', *kungmin*, carries the connotation of all people living in a country or nation, thus suggesting that the group represents a great many people and acts for the good of the nation. Additionally, the term 'solidarity' implies that these are collective efforts. Invoking solidarity is a call for compassion and support for those who are alleged to be endangered by LGBT rights and those who fight against them. A reframing akin to the term 'health' in the name of PSHS is done by other anti-LGBT SMOs as well. The name of the *Just Military Human Right Institute*, for instance, suggests that it is this group which promotes 'just' (read: correct, actual, real) human rights in the Korean army – as against established actors who follow the general concept of human rights, which is presented as potentially harmful due to the inclusion of LGBT rights. Chapter 8.1 offers a detailed analysis of the counterframing strategy used by anti-LGBT actors in the area of human rights.

The first impression of PSHS and other SMOs suggests that they specialize on general issues that are of concern to many people and that they act in the best interest of these people, granting these groups a secular and neutral outward appearance. A closer look, however, reveals a close alignment with conservative Protestantism and conservative socio-political attitudes. PSHS, for example, often reports about occurrences relevant to church interests in its blog and centrally fights against an alleged threat against religious freedom – which the group relates to the more broadly relatable concept of freedom of conscience. What is more, PSHS has close contacts to explicitly religious actors as the now following network analysis will demonstrate. As I have shown, the thematic focus of SMOs turns out to be vague, if not wholly empty, or merely interest-driven in many cases. For example, Baek (2018) showed for the *Korean Sexology Research Association* that they intend to create an image of objectivity and scientificity, but in fact, the group's efforts turn out to be unscientific in essence, and oriented towards the protection of special interests. After all, it becomes apparent that most SMOs that I have classified as having a thematic, non-religious focus are firmly embedded in conservative Protestantism. They pursue a certain socio-religio-political agenda, of which a central aspect consists of anti-LGBT politics, as in the case of the People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society. In fact, this latter SMO concentrates on anti-LGBT politics to an extent that one could also categorize it as a group with an explicit anti-LGBT focus like CFMS and *Tongbanyŏn*.

10.3 Analyzing the networks of Korean anti-LGBT SMOs: a crucial core within a growing multitude of actors

The previous subchapter presented a typology of organizational actors within the Korean anti-LGBT movement, including slightly more detailed descriptions of selected SMOs. I will now complement his typology by investigating the links among the roughly 300 SMOs that have joined anti-LGBT protest events from the year 2000 until April 2020. This network analysis will consist of three parts, which reflect the development of the movement as described in chapter 5. These three phases include (1) the emerging anti-LGBT network 2000–2012, (2) the years of dynamization 2013–2015, and (3) the consolidated actor network 2016–2020. The first and third parts cover the whole time period, the second focuses on each year separately in order to better understand the relational

dynamics during the growth period of the anti-LGBT movement. While the networks do show significant changes over time, a core of actors with high scores of centrality and degree (number of linkages) can be discerned. I argue that these latter SMOs serve as brokers, that is, actors who disseminate anti-LGBT values and who create new relations and thus amplify the movement both in terms of size and plurality of actor types. As a reminder: the ties this specific network analysis looks at hail from the PEA dataset, assuming that joint participation at, and/or organization of a protest event constitutes, or is indicative of a closer relation between the respective SMOs. A final remark on the concrete rendering of the networks before delving into the analysis. I decided to not depict the networks using the same design every time, but rather use different sizes of font, edges, and nodes, as well as colorings for the purpose of clarity and according to analytical needs. Proceeding in this way also reflects the fact that the layout of networks will vary even if using the exact same datasets. This is because the algorithms that configure the network layout all include a certain degree of randomness.¹⁹ As a rule of thumb, one can say that the thicker and shorter the edges, the more interaction exists between the nodes. The bigger the nodes (and in some designs: the bigger the font), the more linkages this node has. Colorings (e.g., the shades of nodes and edges) are used to highlight different aspects in each design.

The network of anti-LGBT SMOs 2000–2012: a mixture of established actors and newly emerging anti-LGBT forces

The years 2000–2012 mark the initial phase and emergence of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. During this period, the overall number of protest events was still relatively low and activity was mainly centered around specific contentious occurrences. These include, for example, the removal of the classification of homosexuality as “harmful and obscene” in the *Youth Protection Act* in 2003, the first legislative attempts at introducing an anti-discrimination law in 2007 and 2010, the contention about the *Military Criminal Code* in 2010–2011 and the *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2011–2012.

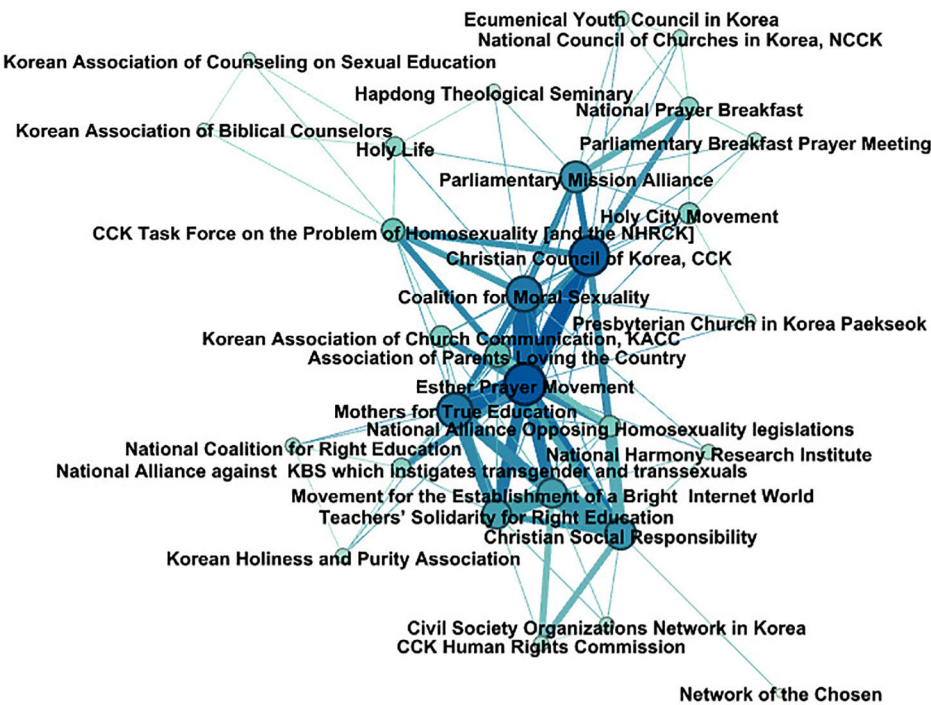
The relations within the emerging anti-LGBT movement for the accumulated years 2000–2012 are shown in Figure 6. The network includes 36 actors (nodes) with a total of 161 connections (edges). Among the networks during the different time periods, this one depicts the highest density with an average distance of 1.99. This is also reflected in the visual appearance of the network in Figure 6. The actors are located in or around a single center where they lie relatively close to each other. Less important actors, that is, those with only a few connections, are situated farther away from the center. Yet, the overall structure of the network is quite compact, suggesting that the core cooperates relatively closely with most actors who are part of the web.

The two most important actors with the highest number of connections are the CCK and the *Esther Prayer Movement*. These two also feature the highest value of betweenness centrality, followed by the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* (CFMS) and the *Christian Social*

19 For all network renderings, I used the Yifan Hu algorithm provided by the network analysis software Gephi. I only slightly adjusted the positions of nodes in order to avoid overlaps and guarantee legibility.

Responsibility.²⁰ This means that these SMOs connect the greatest number of other actors through the shortest paths with each other. In other words, these actors can be assumed to function as brokers of the early anti-LGBT movement, which is also reflected by their central positions in this particular network. Of course, other SMOs also link actors around them, but not to the extent as the four groups mentioned.

Figure 6: Network of anti-LGBT actors 2000–2012



The most active and most central actors during the initial phase of the anti-LGBT movement thus include both established, pre-existing actors of conservative Korean Protestantism with a broader thematic focus like the CCK, as well as newly formed organizations which predominantly concentrate on anti-LGBT activities like CFMS and the Esther Prayer Movement. As the previous section demonstrated, these SMOs

20 An exact overview of the values for betweenness centrality per SMO and network is left out here for the sake of brevity. Unfortunately, the network analysis software Gephi does only provide the non-standardized values for betweenness centrality. This means that the values are not given as a value within a set range (0–1). The calculations show that the highest values of betweenness centrality range between 71.4 for the network 2000–2012 and 2880.4 for the years 2016–2020 (see Table 12). The values differ this strongly due to the different numbers of nodes and edges in the respective networks. An inter-network comparison of these values would not make sense. They can only be meaningfully interpreted in relation to the values of betweenness centrality of SMOs within the same network.

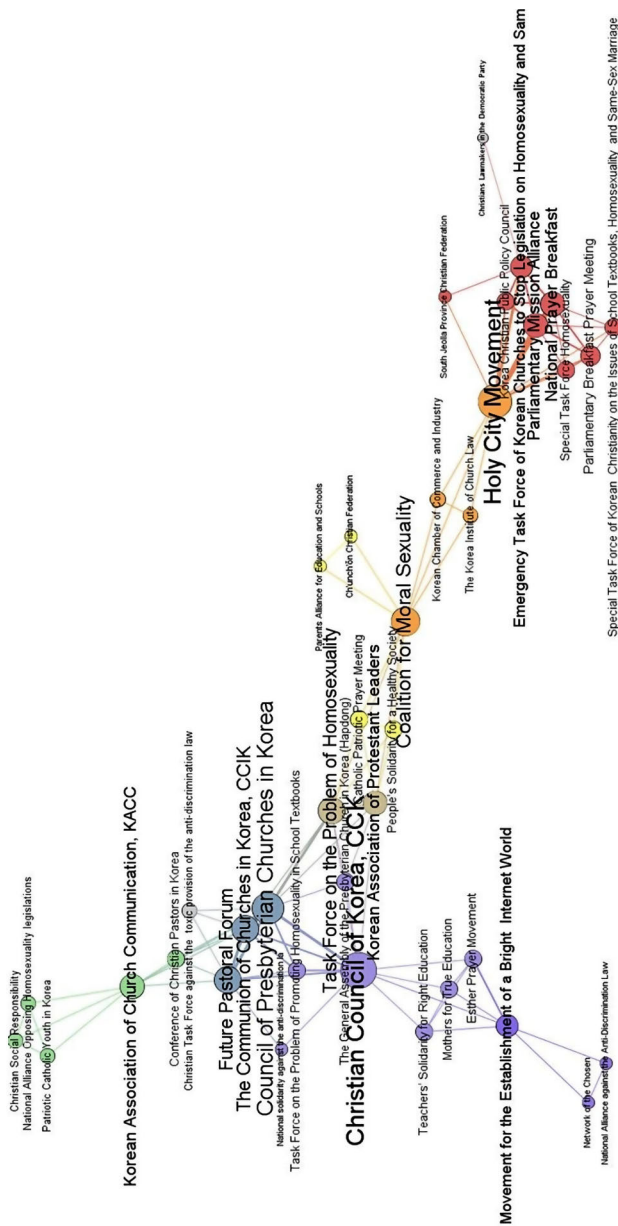
entered the fight against LGBT rights at different points in time. Esther Prayer Movement and CFMS, for example, only started getting active in 2010 according to PEA data, but apparently soon developed momentum as important brokers within the emerging movement.

A plethora of other actors are also part of the network. Among them is *Holy Life*, an ‘ex-gay’ organization, which occupies a relatively marginal position in this network, but will become more central in later years. Other SMOs such as the *Holy City Movement* and the *Network of the Chosen*, which would develop into central actors of the movement but only played minor roles until 2012, are also already present. Furthermore, there are subdivisions of overarching actors of the Protestant Right such as the *CCK Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality* and the *CCK Human Rights Commission*. Other specialized anti-LGBT organizations are part of the early web of interactions as well: the *National Alliance Opposing Homosexuality Legislations* and the *National Alliance against KSB Which Instigates Transgender and Transsexuals* (KBS is a major Korean TV station). However, these early explicitly anti-LGBT SMOs were only short-lived, campaign-driven phenomena. Topic-oriented SMOs in the area of family and education are also part of early activism: the *Mothers for True Education*, the *Teachers’ Solidarity for Right Education*, and the *Association of Parents Loving the Country* all depict relatively high numbers of edges. Of note are the political actors in the network. The *Parliamentary Mission Alliance*, the *National Prayer Breakfast*, and the *Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast Meeting* in the top right corner are most closely linked to the CCK, suggesting that at least in the period until 2012, the CCK had the best contacts with the political sphere.

Anti-LGBT networking in 2013, 2014, and 2015: stretched, dense, and dicephalic networks

Activism against LGBT rights only reached low levels of activity and participation in the whole period of 2000–2012. This changed from 2013 onwards when more and more actors joined the movement, thereby also extending the anti-LGBT network. The year 2013 alone records more nodes than the whole period before (38 vs. 36), and these numbers climb up quickly in the years to follow (47 in 2014, 74 in 2015). The years 2013–2015 are characterized by significant quantitative and qualitative changes within the anti-LGBT movement. In order to fully grasp the extent and features of this change also in terms of altering network structures, I analyze these years separately and not in an accumulated fashion as in the previous and following sections. As outlined in chapter 5.3, the dynamization of the movement is mainly attributable to some prominent phenomena in this phase like the third attempt at introducing a comprehensive anti-LGBT law and the opposition against the *World Council of Churches’* assembly in Busan in 2013, as well as the controversy around the *Seoul Human Rights Charter* in 2014 and the massive protests against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival in 2014 and in the following year.

Figure 7: Network of anti-LGBT actors 2013



The configuration of the internal movement connections of the year 2013 is given in Figure 7. In this design, the size of the font and nodes increase according to the number of connections of an actor. The coloring is made in a way to highlight the different clusters of the network. The network of the year 2013 appears far less compact than the one of the previous period. The web is stretched out, which is reflected in the relatively high average distance (3.24). This means that altogether, there are, on average, fewer connections and

less intense exchanges per node than in the previous time period. The network shows two main clusters, one around the CCK and the other surrounding the Holy City Movement. These two SMOs also have the greatest number of links to other actors. By and large, however, they do not stand out much in terms of degree, that is, concerning their number of connections.

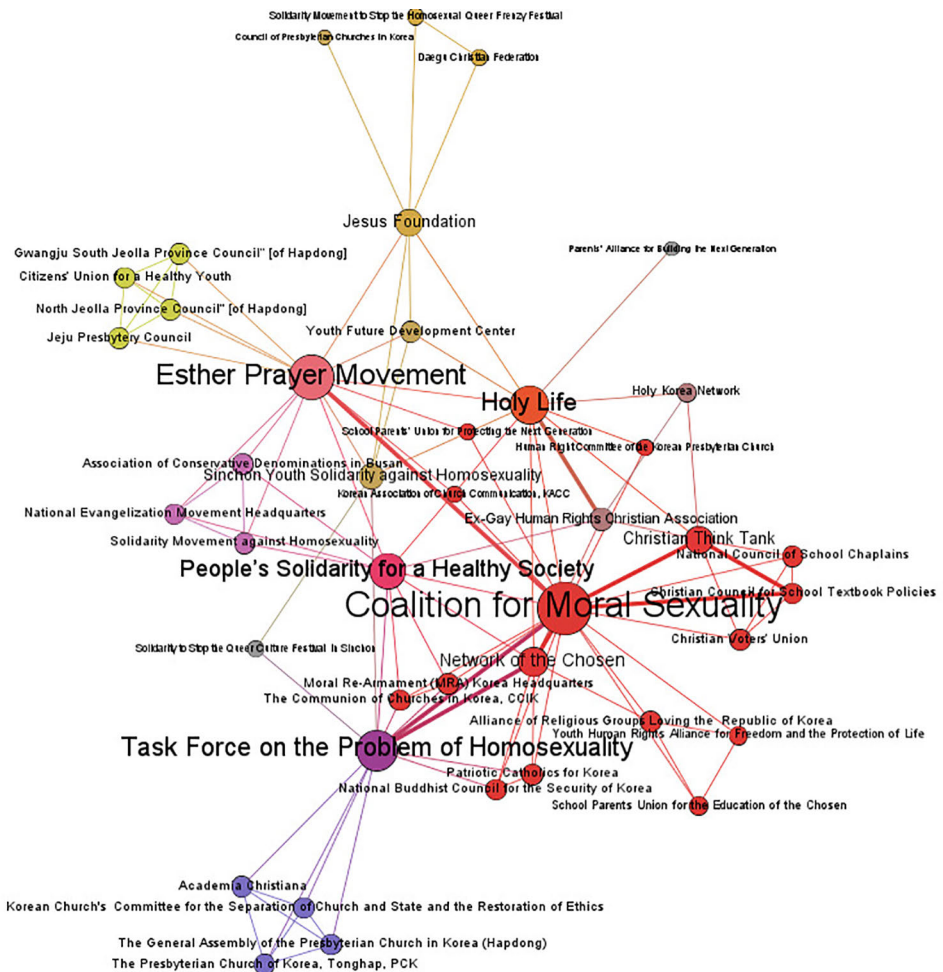
An aspect that does catch attention, though, is that there are several SMOs that function as sole connectors between different clusters of the movement. The *Coalition for Moral Sexuality*, located right in the middle of the two main clusters, is of particular interest. While CFMS features a lower degree than CCK or the Holy City Movement, it records by far the highest value of betweenness centrality. This means that CFMS operated as an important broker in 2013 and that this group is likely to have played a crucial role in broadening the movement in terms of alliance building, but also concerning the flow of information and diffusion of frames. Figure 7 captures well this special position of CFMS, without which there would be no connection between the two main clusters at all. This network thus also demonstrates that the Korean anti-LGBT movement of 2013 was still in the making. This year does not provide a clear-cut core of most important actors. 2013 was indeed the starting point for the massive increase of collective action against LGBT rights. But the concrete network formation of this year reveals that coordination was still lacking or ongoing. For example, it is surprising that CFMS and CCK, two major anti-LGBT actors, did not jointly participate in protest events. They are only linked through paths that count at least two intermediaries.

One could of course question the significance of this network, which just covers a limited number of actors in a relatively short period of time. I argue, however, that this network does have analytical value as a snapshot of a movement in the making. The two rather dense main clusters support this assumption. There are some remarkable aspects within these clusters to be mentioned. First, it is noteworthy that the 'political' actors like the *National Prayer Breakfast* and the *Parliamentary Mission Alliance* rally around the *Holy City Movement*, while the religious actors from the Protestant Right like the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK), the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, and the *Future Pastoral Forum* gather around CCK. Second, CCIK, a split-off of CCK, appears for the first time in 2013. The two interdenominational church associations are normally only united in mutual disdain. But the fight against LGBT rights seems to enable them to overcome their conflict. They jointly took part in protest events and would also continue to do so in the following years. Third, some SMOs which would turn out to be very important anti-LGBT actors occupy rather insignificant positions or only count relatively few connections like the *Esther Prayer Movement* and *PSHS*. The 'ex-gay' group *Holy Life* is entirely absent. Fourth, besides the CFMS, there are further brokers in the 2013 network. The CCK, the KACC, and the Holy City Movement all have relatively high values of betweenness centrality, and this is also visible in the network since they all function as single connectors to subclusters. The CCK, for example, creates a link to the *Esther Prayer Movement* and two education-focus groups, which, in turn, are connected to another broker, the *Movement for the Establishment of a Bright Internet World*, integrating two more otherwise unconnected groups.

The network of the following year, 2014, is denser than that of 2013, displaying an average distance of 2.4 (2013: 3.24). Figure 8 depicts a core web of more than twenty anti-

LGBT organizations which are situated quite close to each other. Additionally, there are some minor clusters with a more marginal position. While one cannot discern one clear center of the network, the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* is the SMO with both the most connections and the highest value of betweenness centrality. This is easily observable in Figure 8, where 19 edges connect CFMS with other groups. Some other SMOs with an explicit anti-LGBT focus also emerge as central actors in the network of the year 2014 such as the *Esther Prayer Movement*, *Holy Life*, PSHS, and the *Taskforce on the Problem of Homosexuality*. Strangely enough, CCK, CCIK and other important actors of the Protestant Right are absent in this year. This could hint at a progressing professionalization of the movement. To some extent, established Protestant associations may have relied on, or assigned specialized SMOs with the lion's share of activism against LGBT rights. As the following networks will reveal, however, powerful actors within the Protestant Right remain active in the movement. Looking at the general configuration of the network in 2014, one sees many well-connected actors. Yet, it is noteworthy that there are not so many valued edges, that is, *multiple* contacts between actors, as displayed by some slightly thicker links in Figure 8. This means that while several anti-LGBT groups cooperate with many different partners in protest events, these relationships have not yet solidified. The consolidation of the movement does progress over time, however, as the next two networks will demonstrate.

Figure 8: Network of anti-LGBT actors 2014

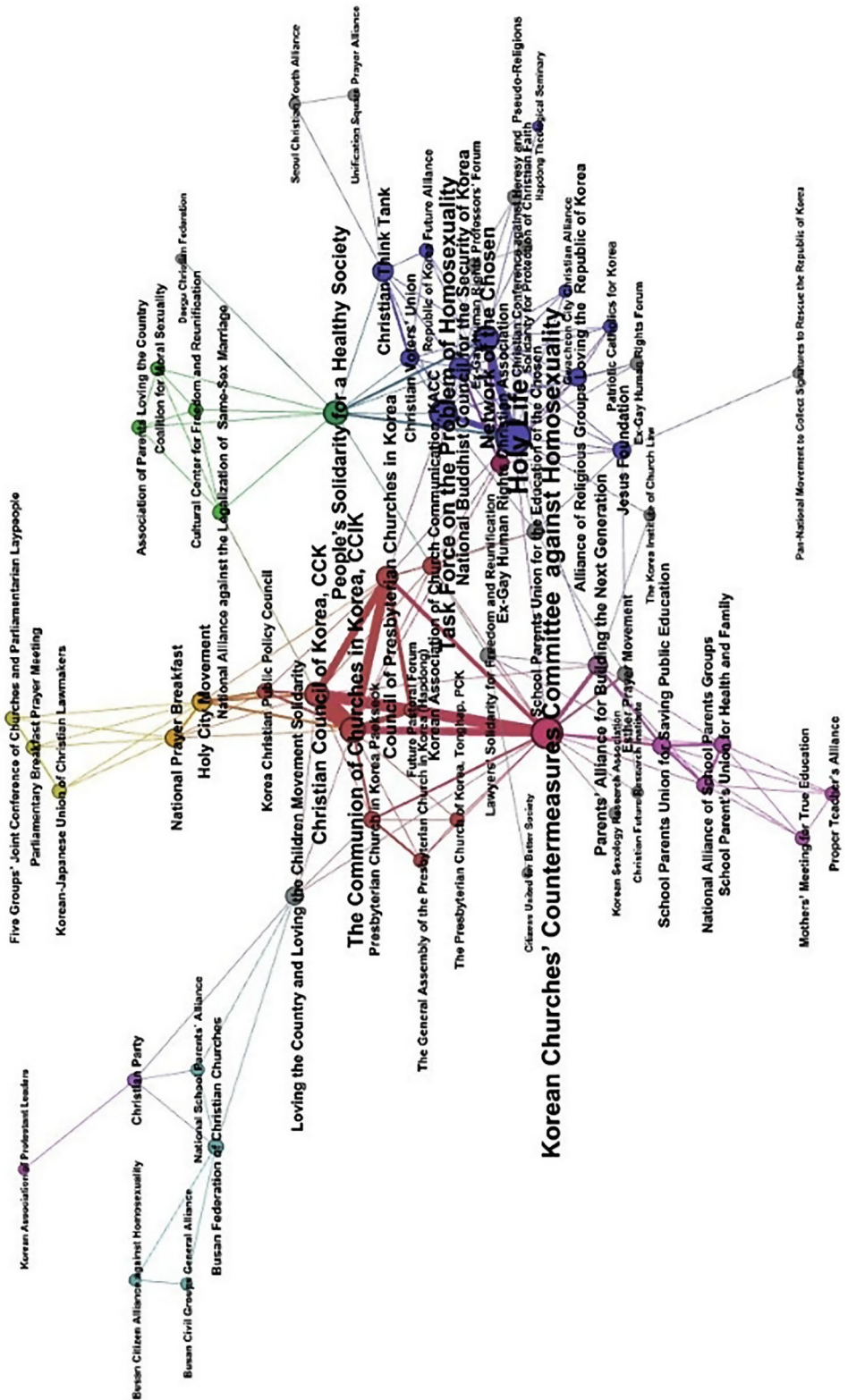


The anti-LGBT network of the year 2015 sees significant growth (cf. Figure 9). There are now 74 nodes and 255 edges in total. The average distance increases again a bit in comparison to the previous year (2.9), which may be due to outliers and an interesting phenomenon: the network displays a dicephalic (two-headed) structure. There are two main clusters, one around *Holy Life* and the other around church associations like CCK, CCIK, the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, and the *Korean Churches' Countermeasure Committee against Homosexuality*. The latter SMO and *Holy Life* show by far the highest numbers in betweenness centrality and degree, making them the most important brokers of the year 2015. They connected the greatest number of other actors with each other, as is also apparent by valued edges originating from them. While there are some connections between these two main clusters, the lion's share of protest events is held *within* the respective clusters. This reflects a certain rift that runs through the Korean anti-LGBT movement. 'Ex-gay' groups and allies around *Holy Life* on the one side accuse the mainstream anti-LGBT movement of exploiting the issue politically, while established Protes-

tant actors criticize the other side for holding separate events and thus weakening the fight against LGBT rights (cf. chapter 8.1). As the final network for the years 2016–2020 shall demonstrate, however, both sides continue to cooperate in this period of peaking activities.

The network of 2015 has some further notable properties. First, the *Esther Prayer Movement*, which had been an important actor in the early years of the movement, is relatively inactive in terms of networking activities in 2015 and cannot be clearly associated with one or the other side. The same is true for CFMS. It seems that these groups either have experienced a low tide of activism, at least concerning joint activities with other SMOs. Or other SMOs have simply become more important than these early actors. Second, concrete Protestant denominations like the Presbyterian churches *Tonghap*, *Hapdong*, and *Paeksök* increasingly take part of the anti-LGBT network – unsurprisingly, in close connection to the cluster of church associations. Churches appear to grant greater importance to the issue now. Third, also non-Protestant religious actors increase their connective activities. The *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* and the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* had already appeared the year before. The latter SMO in particular, however, is now located at a more central position in the right-hand side cluster. Finally, the 2015 network displays several subclusters with special-focus groups. In the lower part of Figure 9, there is a subcluster of SMOs that focusses on educational topics. On the top, we can see a subcluster including groups pertaining to the political, more concretely: the parliamentary arena. On the top left-hand side, finally, there is a smaller subcluster with groups based in the city of Busan. This means that groups with similar regional or thematic backgrounds tend to cooperate with each other. As the final network for the remaining time period will show, such patterns also stabilize when looking at more central anti-LGBT actors.

Figure 9: Network of anti-LGBT actors 2015



in this study. This increase is of course due to the longer observation period (4 years and 4 months), but it can also be attributed, crucially, to the overall higher level of activity during this time (in total 415 anti-LGBT protest events, cf. chapter 5.2). In Figure 10, colors are assigned according to the type of the most important actors: core organizations of Protestant churches appear in purple, non-Protestant religious groups in green, anti-LGBT alliances or task forces are blue, explicitly anti-LGBT SMOs red, and yellow is the color of ‘ex-gay’ groups in this network. The coloring aims at allowing a quick overview of the position of crucial actors in the web as a whole, but also in relation to each other. The larger the nodes and the font, the more connections a group has. The thicker an edge, the more actively the respective two groups cooperate in protest events.

The rendering of the network in Figure 10 could not be covered in its totality owing to the high number of actors connected to it. These technical limitations of the Gephi software notwithstanding, the most central SMOs of the movement’s consolidation phase immediately catch the eye. The *National Alliance against Homosexuality, Same-Sex Marriage, and Constitutional Amendment (Tongbanyŏn)* displays the greatest number of edges (43) and by far the highest value in betweenness centrality (cf. Table 12). *Tongbanyŏn* has thus developed into the primary broker of the anti-LGBT movement until 2020. This particular alliance is, however, not the only relevant player in the field. Several other actors emerge as consistently important anti-LGBT groups as well. Two further significant joint projects are located at the center of the tightly knit network of 2016–2020. While the *Taskforce on the Problem of Homosexuality* fosters close relations with groups belonging to the ‘ex-gay’ spectrum, the *Korean Churches’ Countermeasures Committee against Homosexuality* occupies a middle position among different segments of the movement. The latter joint-effort organization is linked to both Protestant actors in the narrow sense, and to single SMOs whose bulk of activism is concerned with the fight against LGBT rights like CFMS, PSHS, and *Esther Prayer Movement*. This makes sense when taking into consideration that the chairman of Esther Prayer Movement, Yi Yong-hŭi, is also a major representative of this committee. A newly emerging associational project in this period is the *National Alliance of Professors against Homosexuality, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Constitutional Amendment*, which fosters close relations to *Tongbanyŏn*.

Table 12: Most important SMOs 2016–2020: network measures

Network January 2016 – April 2020	Overall measures:		Nodes: 165; edges: 722	
	Average degree: 6.0		Average distance: 3.0	
Social movement organization		Degree	Betweenness centrality	
National Alliance against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage (<i>Tongbanyŏn</i>)		43	2880.4	
Coalition for Moral Sexuality (CFMS)		33	1212.3	
People’s Solidarity for a Healthy Society (PSHS)		32	1802.4	
Korean Churches’ Countermeasures Committee ag. Homosexuality		30	1097.7	

Network January 2016 – April 2020	Overall measures: Average degree: 6.0	Nodes: 165; edges: 722 Average distance: 3.0	
Social movement organization		Degree	Between-ness centrality
The Communion of Churches in Korea (CCIK)		27	1031.7
Patriotic Catholics for Korea		26	778.0
Just Military Human Right Institute		24	975.2
Network of the Chosen		23	578.4
Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality		23	550.1
Holy Life		22	699.8
Christian Council of Korea (CCK)		21	325.2
Parents' Alliance for Building the Next Generation		21	701.6
Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum		19	755.2
The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong)		19	364.1
Esther Prayer Movement		18	603.3
Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea		16	637.3
School Parent's Union for Health and Family		16	351.9
Busan Federation of Christian Churches		11	760.5
The United Christian Churches of Korea (UCCK)		9	437.9
Christian Council of Inchi'ŏn		8	607.5

Notes: The exact time periods covered is 1 January 2016 until 30 April 2020. The SMOs are ordered by degree. The bottom three SMOs were included in the table due to their relatively high values of betweenness centrality despite lower values in degree.

The rest of the SMOs are all located in relative vicinity of groups that belong to the same category as themselves. In the case of organizations that feature a special anti-LGBT focus as outlined before, CFMS, PSHS and the *Just Military Human Right Institute* foster particularly close relations. This means that they frequently cooperate in protest events. *Esther Prayer Movement*, while also being situated at the core of the overall network, can be found a bit farther away from these groups. This latter group also shows less connections than the other explicitly anti-LGBT groups – confirming the trend of a declining importance of Esther Prayer Movement, at least within the structures of the anti-LGBT movement. CFMS and PSHS, in contrast, both exhibit high values in betweenness centrality and connections, coming in second and third places concerning activity levels and brokerage, right after *Tongbanyŏn*. In fact, the edge between these two SMOs is among the strongest in this network. Only CCIK and CCK cooperate more often.

CCIK, CCK and other prominent Protestant organizations like numerous denominations and their joint bodies can all be found on the left-hand side of the 2016–2020 network. Like in previous periods, the two interdenominational church associations CCIK and CCK continue to work together closely despite their animosities. However, it becomes evident that the newer CCIK has outpaced CCK by now, showing higher centrality measures throughout. Yet another church coalition comes to the fore during this pe-

riod: the *United Christian Churches of Korea* (UCCK), which was founded in 2017.²¹ However, in comparison to the other two major church associations, UCCK only plays a minor role in the anti-LGBT network. It is noteworthy that major Protestant denominations like the Presbyterian churches *Hapdong*, *Hapsin*, *Taesin*, *Tonghap*, and *Kosin*, as well as the *Korean Methodist Church*, the *Korea Baptist Convention*, and the *Korea Evangelical Holiness Church Association* are clustered close to each other and not so much in vicinity to the church associations just mentioned. This means that denominations tend to cooperate mostly among themselves. Only the Presbyterian *Hapdong* denomination has slightly stronger ties with CCK and especially CCIK. In general, these latter two interdenominational church associations seem to be closer to the movement's core in terms of more diverse and stronger relations with central actors. The strictly denominational Protestant organization apart from the more politically oriented CCIK and CCK, the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, only comes in sixteenth place in the list of the most connective SMOs in terms of degree (cf. Table 12). Overall, however, the network data confirms that denominational organizations of Protestantism get increasingly and directly involved in the struggles against LGBT rights. The joint participations of Protestant denominations at protest events also further support the assumption that the opposition against LGBT issues has the potential of overcoming rifts internal to Korean Protestantism.

Actors from other religious backgrounds have proven to be consistently central to the anti-LGBT movement as well. The *Patriotic Catholics for Korea* and the *National Buddhist Council for the Security of Korea* both occupy central positions in the network, with dense relations with several other segments of the movement. Interestingly, the edge between these two actors is particularly strong. They thus often participate side by side in anti-LGBT events, begging the question why this is the case. One could assume, as already outlined before, that these two SMOs have been close partners from the outset, mainly due to their rightist or far-right political positions similar to those of the Protestant Right. Their increased cooperation among each other and with diverse anti-LGBT actors may also hint at the realization that broader religious representation may be conducive to winning over larger publics in order to achieve movement goals. As already mentioned, the compatibility of Buddhist and Catholic actors with conservative Protestant ones is surprising. This is because in other occasions, the Protestant Right shows overt hostility towards the Catholic church and Buddhism at large (cf. chapter 5.3, footnote 16). As is the case among actors from different conservative Protestant branches, theological and religious conflicts appear to be obliterated by a common goal and a matching socio-political ideology. Apart from these two overtly anti-LGBT Buddhist and Catholic groups, official representatives from Korean Buddhism and Catholicism remain rather silent on LGBT-related topics (cf. Interviews 4, 10, 19, & 30). This reluctance to get involved is noteworthy, at least for Catholicism, since Vatican and Catholic officials in several countries

21 The UCCK was established in an effort to reunite Protestant denominations, claiming that it brings together 90% of Korean Protestants (Kim, Kwang-su 2020). The other two conservative church associations, CCK and CCIK, however, continue to exist, and conflicts among these organizations, among denominations, and churches are ongoing (Yi, Jungyeon 2022). In this process, however, the CCK has lost most of its members churches, and, as a consequence, much of its influence due to internal strife and various scandals, as recent research shows (Shin, Jaeshik 2022, 148).

have been central actors in the fight against LGBT rights worldwide (Brinkschröder 2017; Kováts 2017).²²

The final central cluster is made up of SMOs with an 'ex-gay' focus. The most important groups in this category are *Holy Life*, the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum*, and the *Network of the Chosen*. I assign the latter organization to the 'ex-gay' spectrum, since it most frequently cooperates with groups of this kind and explicitly promotes 'ex-gay' views. In general, these three groups cooperate most intensively with each other, but they also feature strong connections to other central actors of the anti-LGBT movement like CFMS, PSHS, and the *Taskforce on the Problem of Homosexuality*. While the relative rift between 'ex-gay' groups and mainstream anti-LGBT groups observed in 2015 does not continue to be relevant in the consolidation period after that, the 'ex-gay' segment of the movement remains special. The three 'ex-gay' groups in particular hold on to their 'ex-gay' focus and foster relations with groups that would otherwise not be so well-connected to the anti-LGBT network. The *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum* in particular is active in brokerage, featuring a relatively high value of betweenness centrality.

Brokerage towards subclusters of the consolidated network 2016–2020 is also done by other actors. The *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, for example, held events with media actors such as *Kukmin Daily*, *C Channel*, and the *Far East Broadcasting Company*. These media outlets would otherwise remain unconnected with the rest of the network. Other potential brokers include local Protestant organizations like the *Busan Federation of Christian Churches* and the *Christian Council of Inchön*. These groups feature relatively high betweenness values despite comparatively low numbers of linkages (cf. Table 12). They predominantly serve as connectors between local groups and the rest of the anti-LGBT network.

In summary, the 2016–2020 anti-LGBT network confirms trends that had already become apparent in previous years. There have always been a relatively small number of actors occupying central positions. Some SMOs, which display high levels of betweenness centrality and can thus be expected to act as important brokers for the movement, have continuously played crucial roles for networking (e.g., CCK) while others' relative importance decreased over time (e.g. *Esther Prayer Movement*). New SMOs emerged and developed into major connective actors (CFMS, PSHS, and *Tongbanyön*). There is a tendency of some segments of the movement to collaborate more closely with actors belonging to the same category as themselves, like denominations and 'ex-gay' groups. To a certain extent, the networks of the anti-LGBT movement thus reveal factionalism. On a more positive note, one could speak of a specialization within these networks. Denominational actors, for instance, may cooperate with each other more frequently to reach a specific conservatively oriented, Protestant public – different from SMOs like PSHS and *Tongbanyön*, which, as I have shown, direct their activism towards a larger, also non-Christian public. Some level of factionalism notwithstanding, the networks in general

22 One further non-Protestant religious actor appearing in the 2016–2020 network is the *National Confucian Alliance*. It only participated in a total of 3 protest events in 2016 and 2017, making it rather irrelevant for the overall movement. Also in South Korean society at large, Confucianism as an organized religion has lost most of its historical influence. Only very few Koreans identify (Neo-)Confucianism as their religious affiliation (cf. Baker 2011).

make obvious that originally adversarial organizations within the Protestant Right unify in face of a common enemy. Such a unifying potential crosses religious borders and has as its foundation a shared leaning to the political right.

When comparing the different networks over the years,²³ the average degree does not vary greatly. It starts off with an average of 6 edges in 2000–2012, reaching a low in 2015 with 4.51, to then attain 6 linkages again in 2016–2020. In every case, there is a relatively small number of actors featuring many connections while the vast majority of SMOs only rarely participates in joint actions. This is also true for the final, consolidated network, even at a time of high activities and increased overall participation. The quantitative approach of network analysis thus confirms the fact that the Korean anti-LGBT movement has developed a broad basis, but is mostly held together by only a few central actors. This section focused on the leading anti-LGBT social movement organizations, more or less treating them as black boxes. SMOs are, of course, made up of people who implement the actions of their respective organization. The following section shall elaborate on these people, with a special focus on the leaders of the anti-LGBT movement.

10.4 The leaders of the anti-LGBT movement: norm brokerage in diverse capacities

The PEA dataset provides information not only on the SMOs active in the Korean anti-LGBT movement, but also on individuals prominently taking action at protest events. The database also includes information on individual party politicians partaking in anti-LGBT events. These political actors, however, will be treated in detail in the following section. I shall now give an overview of the most important activists – or in other words, the leaders of the movement. This section focuses on the types of leaders in terms of their different backgrounds and roles, and the multiple belongings that these leading figures have.

23 This study does not provide a cumulative network for the whole period 2000–2020 for several reasons. As I have shown, a detailed analysis of certain time periods and single years allows to investigate changes over time and to discern special occurrences and constellations in the respective networks. The added value of an all-encompassing network is also questionable, since it would most probably just confirm the most important brokering actors that we already know. A too broadly defined network may even be misleading, since one would not be able to differentiate between newly emerging actors, actors getting more important over time, and SMOs that, on the other hand, decline in importance.

Table 13: Anti-LGBT activists' frequency of protest participation^a

Activist's name	Occupation / positions in anti-LGBT social movement organizations ^b	Year of first appearance	Number of participations
Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng	Professor (physics) at Busan National University, head of operation of <i>Tongbanyŏn</i> , executive chairman of <i>Coalition for Moral Sexuality</i>	2007	61
Yi Yong-hŭi	Professor (economics) at Gachon University, head of <i>Esther Prayer Movement</i> , representative of <i>Korean Churches' Counter-measures Committee against Homosexuality</i>	2010	41
Kim Chi-yŏn	Pharmacist, head of <i>Parents' Alliance for Building the Next Generation</i> and <i>Korean Association of Family and Health (KFAFH)</i>	2015	29
Lee Jonah (Yi Yo-na)	Pastor, Calvary Chapel, head of <i>Holy Life, Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum</i> , other ex-gay groups	2010	28
So Kang-sŏk	Head pastor at <i>Sae Eden Presbyterian Church</i> (a mega church), 105 th president, Presbyterian <i>Hapdong</i> denomination, UCCK chairman	2013	26
Cho Yŏng-gil	Lawyer, I&S (law firm)	2015	22
Kim Kyu-ho	Pastor (Presbyterian <i>Hapdong</i> denomination), leading positions in <i>Network of the Chosen</i> , <i>Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality</i> , <i>Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum</i> , <i>Christian Social Responsibility</i> , <i>Council of Christian Civil Society Groups in Korea</i> , <i>Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights</i> , etc.	2011	17
Ko Yŏng-il	Lawyer at Harvest Law (law firm), former party leader of the minor <i>Christian Liberty Party</i> , now deputy party leader of the succeeding <i>Liberty Unification Party</i>	2015	16
Yŏm An-sŏp	Medical doctor, director of the Sudong Yonsei Convalescence Hospital, Youtuber for anti-LGBT contents (channel: <i>Rainbow Returns</i>)	2014	13
Yi T'ae-hŭi	Lawyer, from the United States	2015	12
Han Hyo-gwan	Head of <i>People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society</i>	2015	10
Kim Yŏng-gil	Head of <i>Just Military Human Rights Institute</i>	2016	9
Chŏn Yong-t'ae	Lawyer at Logos Law LLC (law firm), Chairman of the <i>World Holy City Movement</i>	2007	7
Min Sŏng-gil	Honorary Professor (psychiatry) at Yonsei Univ.	2015	7
Kim Kye-ch'un	Catholic Priest, Military Ordinariate of Korea, representative of <i>Tongbanyŏn</i> , leading pastor of <i>Catholic Patriotic Prayer Meeting</i>	2015	6

Activist's name	Occupation / positions in anti-LGBT social movement organizations ^b	Year of first appearance	Number of participations
Yi Su-jin	Head, <i>School Parent's Union for Health and Family</i>	2016	6
Pak Chin-gwŏn	<i>I Ministry</i> (ex-gay group)	2016	6
Yi Chŏng-hun	Professor (law) at Ulsan University	2017	6
Paek Sang-hyŏn	Journalist, <i>Kukmin Daily</i>	2016	5

Note: anti-LGBT activists were mentioned on 267 occasions in the articles on protest events (out of a total of 513). Further frequencies of activist appearances: Once: 55 people; twice: 8 people; three times: 4 people; four times: 2 people. ^a Information retrieved from PEA dataset and SMO websites; period covered: Jan. 2000–April 2020. ^b Including not only current positions, but also important former ones.

Table 13 displays the activists who appeared most frequently at anti-LGBT protest events, for example, in the capacity of organizer, host, moderator, speaker, or ‘expert’ lecturer. The table includes activists with protest participations greater or equal to 5. In total, 88 activists have been discerned. Their names were mentioned in *Kukmin Daily* reports on anti-LGBT protest events. Among these, only 10 feature more than 10 protest participations. The vast majority is rather inactive. 55 people only appeared once at a protest event. The analysis will now focus on those activists who have been most active.

When looking at Table 13 and considering the results just presented, it is noteworthy that the most active activists belong and correspond to the most important anti-LGBT SMOs. Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng (61 protest event participations) occupies leading positions in the *Tongbanyŏn* alliance and in the *Coalition for Moral Sexuality*. Yi Yong-hŭi (41 participations) is the head of *Esther Prayer Movement* and a central representative of the *Korean Churches' Counter-measures Committee against Homosexuality*. Both feature a longstanding ‘career’ in anti-LGBT activism, first appearing in 2007 and 2010 respectively, according to PEA data. Another important early activist is Lee Jonah (29 appearances since 2010), whose SMOs *Holy Life* and *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum* have equally turned out to be central brokering actors, as shown in the social network analysis. One can thus assume that the people behind these SMOs are in fact brokers themselves. There are certainly also other people, members or activists belonging to the respective SMOs, who engage in relational work, for example, by assisting in the dissemination of anti-LGBT contents. But essentially, it is these leading figures who go out into the public and use their growing standing to broaden the organizational basis and mobilize bystanders for the movement. This is not only true for the three men just mentioned but also for most of the other activists, namely those that occupy leading positions in anti-LGBT SMOs.

Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, Yi Yong-hŭi, and Lee Jonah are prime examples of movement entrepreneurs. They emerge as leaders of the movement precisely because they build new movement structures. Kil Wŏn-p'yŏng, for instance, a physics professor at Busan National University, had initially been committed to a group called *Scientists' Assembly Opposing Embryonic Cloning* to then become one of the first prominent anti-LGBT activists in

the course of the contentions around the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2007. He founded CFMS, the first explicit anti-LGBT organization, and serves as head of operation of *Tongbanyŏn*, the most important actor in the field as of 2020. Yi Yong-hŭi, a university professor, too, pursued a similar path into the anti-LGBT movement. As already mentioned before, he founded Esther Prayer Movement with the main intention of doing North Korea-related evangelization activities. But soon, when the Anti-Discrimination Law and, particularly, homosexuality became hot topics, the group widened its focus to also include anti-LGBT actions. Yi, just like Kil, became a frequent speaker at anti-LGBT protest events, and centrally assisted in establishing and consolidating yet another anti-LGBT alliance, one with a more obviously religious focus than *Tongbanyŏn*. The fact alone that two *alliances* became two of the most important anti-LGBT organizations makes the leaders of these influential brokers. As I have elaborated already at the beginning of this chapter, however, the substance of these alliances needs to be questioned. In most cases, it is only the leaders, Kil and Yi, who represent these (allegedly) collective actors at anti-LGBT events.

In general, the list of the most active anti-LGBT campaigners in Table 13 reveals that many activists have multiple belongings. Lee Jonah, for example, is the head of Holy Life and many other 'ex-gay' subsidiaries, which he also leads, like the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum* (cf. chapter 8.1). Kim Kyu-ho, a pastor of the Presbyterian Hapdong denomination, also features high positions in various organizations. His accumulation of offices includes leading positions in anti-LGBT SMOs such as the *Network of the Chosen*, the *Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality*, and the *Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum*, but he is also actively engaged in other groups without such a clear focus like *Christian Social Responsibility*, the *Council of Christian Civil Society Groups in Korea*, and the *Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights*. Kim Kyu-ho may be an extreme example, but the concentration of leading positions in the hands of just a few people turns out to be a common trait of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Kim Kyu-ho joined the movement at a relatively early stage, in 2011. The majority of activists listed in Table 13, however, made their public appearances as anti-LGBT activists, at a later point in time, most of them in 2015 or after that. Despite this comparatively late activation, many of these 'latecomers' show all the more zeal in their fight against LGBT rights. Kim Chi-yŏn, for example, one of the few women active in the movement's leading circle, joined the ranks in 2015 and soon developed into one of the most assiduous campaigners of the movement. She boasts the third largest number of protest participations. Kim Chi-yŏn is a pharmacist and head of two anti-LGBT organizations, the *Parents' Alliance for Building the Next Generation* and the *Korean Association of Family and Health* (KFAFH). As a representative of the latter group in particular, Kim carries out 'educational' events on AIDS, which, however, largely provide inaccurate information on this disease, with the prime purpose of creating fear of homosexuality (cf. chapter 7.2). Kim Chi-yŏn is especially well known for her anti-LGBT lectures, of which she claimed to have given already more than 2000 as of 2018 (Chang, Myŏng-sŏng 2018, December 18). While she stands out as a lecturer – even being called the “Andrea Williams of Korea” (Williams being a globally active UK-based anti-LGBT activist; Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, August 19) – other leading figures of the movement also frequently deliver speeches on various occasions.

The leaders of the movement thus do not only act as brokers in the sense of creating new or stronger connections²⁴ among organizations for the fight against LGBT rights. They also, importantly, link their relational efforts with the dissemination of certain values and worldviews. Most of the actors that propagate the frames analyzed in chapters 7 and 8 can therefore be found in Table 13 above. They are norm brokers who, for example, achieved the gradual appropriation of Protestant denominations for the socio-political (i.e., not only the religiously based) fight against LGBT rights described above. I argue that such an appropriation worked well *within* the Protestant Right due to the relatively high level of miscibility (cf. Vasi 2011). The movement leadership and church leaders alike have conservative outlooks on religion and politics, which facilitates 'knowledge' flows and the entrenchment of such knowledge with previously unconnected actors. The conservative and pious demeanor sported by the leaders of the anti-LGBT movement has certainly aided in this endeavor, as well as their 'expert' status, which is frequently emphasized at anti-LGBT events.

Typology of anti-LGBT movement leaders: 'experts', organizers, and charismatic religious figures

Both aspects just mentioned, expertise and religious reaffirmation, play important roles for the characteristics of activists and leaders of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. These characteristics are part of a typology of actor roles which I propose here and which builds upon the backgrounds, positions, and concrete actions of the people listed in Table 13. The point of departure for this typology is a mixture of Wilson's (1973) and Killian's (1964) suggestions of three types of movement leaders. I adopt these models and refine them by taking into account Gramscian thinking and the special kind of collective action this study analyzes, that is, a both politically and religiously conservative social movement. The categories are as follows.

- *Charismatic leaders* are akin to the original Christian meaning of the term 'charisma'. This type includes religious leaders and individual pastors who gain their authority and legitimacy from their outstanding position within a Christian context. They commonly use religious arguments and frames and can be expected to be influential especially with religious crowds.
- *Intellectual or ideological leaders*. This type is similar to Gramsci's concept of 'organic intellectuals'. These actors present themselves, or are presented as experts endowed with educational capital or experiential personal knowledge (cf. Vasi's [2011] 'epistemic brokers'). Their expertise makes them relatable to non-Christian publics. This

24 While it would be helpful for the analysis to also present a network of the activists who jointly participated at anti-LGBT protest events – analogous to the networks of SMOs – the data basis is not sufficient for such an endeavor. For many protest events, only one activists is prominently mentioned. This hinders the generation and meaningful interpretation of an interpersonal network. However, since many of the movement leaders are tightly connected to one or more SMOs anyways, this lack of data does not pose a large problem for the analysis.

category also encompasses figures who are leading in the movement's outward-facing communication of frames. Gramscian 'organic journalists', who centrally contribute to movement success, are a subcategory of this leadership type.

- *Pragmatic leaders* assume the administrative-organizational tasks of a movement. They thus also fall under the Gramscian concept of 'organic intellectuals', however, as organizers rather than as "permanent persuader[s]" (Gramsci 1971, 10).

These categories are ideal types of movement leaders. In fact, the empirical data shows that these types are not exclusive. Movement leaders display many overlaps, adopting different roles all at once, or foregrounding one role depending on the circumstantial needs.

To give an example, the charismatic leadership type definitely includes So Kang-sök, the head pastor of the *Sae Eden Presbyterian Church*, a mega church located in the metropolitan area just outside Seoul. He has occupied further eminent positions, for example, as a former president of the Presbyterian *Hapdong* denomination and as a UCKK chairman – making him an illustrious figure within the Protestant Right. When appearing at anti-LGBT protest events, he usually includes theological or church-related aspects into his speeches. Apart from this 'pastoral' work in the narrow sense, however, So Kang-sök also provides intellectual reflections related to anti-LGBT issues, mainly as a frequent columnist in the daily newspaper *Kukmin Daily* (cf. also chapter 11). Other leading figures of the movement also assume charismatic roles like the Protestant pastors Lee Jonah and Kim Kyu-ho, as well as Kim Kye-ch'un, who represents the Catholic branch of the movement's leadership circle. These church officials bestow anti-LGBT activism with credibility and expertise from a religious point of view. The particularly religious charisma is not exclusive to the clergy, though. Lay people among the movement leaders also commonly utilize religious elements such as prayers during their appearances at protest events.

Hence, the leadership roles are not so distinct. But the categories do have analytical value, for they highlight the different functions that leading figures fulfill for the movement, even if there are cases of accumulated roles. The second leader type is emblematic for this 'multifunctionality'. This category comprises persons whose actual or alleged expert status makes them valuable for the anti-LGBT movement. There are, for instance, several people with a background in medicine or related fields, such as the pharmacist Kim Chi-yön, the medical doctor Yöm An-söp, and the emeritus psychiatry professor Min Söng-gil. Legal expertise is covered by activists such as Cho Yöng-gil, Ko Yöng-il, and Yi T'ae-hüi. The latter also has a US-American background, which equips him with trustworthiness on international matters, for example, when relating that an allegedly negative development abroad should be avoided in Korea (cf. also chapter 7.5). I mention all these specific 'expert' traits because the movement itself ostentatiously stresses these points, designating them as hallmarks for the asserted authenticity and objectivity of the struggles against LGBT rights. The purported expert status of many speakers at protest events seems to aim at legitimating the frames and narratives brought forward. Professors and alumni of prestigious universities are often introduced by accentuating exactly these special traits to underpin their educational capital. For example, moderators of events commonly point out that Cho Yöng-gil studied law at the renowned Seoul Na-

tional University, that Yöm An-söp studied at Yonsei and Korea Universities and achieved a doctorate in medicine, and that Kim Chi-yön has a pharmacy degree from Ewha Womans University. The alleged scientific facts they relate create the impression of being well-founded precisely due to their academic background. This way, these ‘experts’ gain legitimacy also beyond their religious rootedness – becoming potentially appealing to non-religious crowds as well.

Academic prestige is not the only factor raising the credibility of movement narratives. Personal experiences can also serve to win over people for one’s purposes, in that they have the potential to touch people emotionally. *Holy Life’s* Lee Jonah is one example of such a strategy. He and further ‘ex-gay’ activists usually tell their personal stories of having allegedly ‘overcome’ their homosexuality through faith. Other important mouthpieces of the anti-LGBT movement are actors like Paek Sang-hyön, a Kukmin Daily journalist who has published hundreds of articles covering anti-LGBT topics. In fact, Paek Sang-hyön, along with his journalistic colleague Yu Yöng-dae, have created the largest number of articles quoted in this study. These ‘educational’ and media activities of the movement will be addressed in greater detail in chapter 11.

Finally, pragmatic leaders also play an important role for the movement, while also occupying overlapping positions in the leadership circle. Organizing and administering one’s own organization, but also connecting oneself to other potential partners is crucial for the sustainability of a movement. When considering the latter aspect, brokerage comes to mind. As the previous section has demonstrated, SMOs like *Tongbanyön*, CFMS, and PSHS occupy central and, thus, highly connective positions in the anti-LGBT network. The respective heads of these groups can, consequently, be expected to also act as important individual brokers. Chapter 6.3 has shown that a relatively frequent action form of the anti-LGBT movement consists of strategic and preparatory meetings (6.3%). Such background work is crucial for strategic planning and collective decision-making. Many of the people appearing in Table 13 have participated in such meetings on multiple occasions. As this example shows, organizational and executive tasks can also be geared towards creating publicity. Part of pragmatic leadership is thus also the concrete organization and implementation of protest events. One phenomenon that struck me during my six-months field research in Korea in 2019 was that most protest events that I attended as an observer were moderated by the same two people: Han Hyo-gwan, the head of PSHS, and Yi Su-jin, chairwoman of the *School Parent’s Union for Health and Family*.

In conclusion, the data on the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement reveal that they rarely get active in one capacity only. Most, if not all of them, serve as pragmatic *and* ideological leaders, and some also have a clear religious charisma on top – although one could argue that other, not so obviously religious actors also regularly jump on this ‘religious bandwagon’ whenever it serves their purpose. Gramsci’s original concept of organic intellectuals, which integrates the aspects of organizing and persuasion as important leadership tasks (Gramsci 1971, 10), thus fits well with the characteristics of Korean anti-LGBT movement leaders. Overlapping leadership roles can benefit a movement, since they allow for the flexibility necessary in different circumstances. Movement leaders act as catalysts whose different traits enable them to filter out or foreground belongings, characteristics, and related contents in a way that helps them to reach their goals.

However, the movement leadership also has to deal with potentially contradictory or even irreconcilable aspects of leadership identities. Religious charisma on the one hand, and allegedly objective, non-religious expertise on the other hand may cause problems depending on the public addressed. As I have suggested in chapter 9, the success of the movement's framing efforts *outside* religiously and politically conservative circles is rather meagre. This chapter has confirmed this point, showing that the movement predominantly consists of religiously rooted people and organizations. When taking Vasi's (2011) argument on miscibility seriously, the lack of success can be attributed to the low level of miscibility with non-religious parts of society – despite efforts to speak to exactly these portions of the public. Ultimately, one can assume that the partial success of the anti-LGBT movement will not be sustainable since they have, so far, failed to convince larger parts of Koreans of their perspectives. In Gramscian terms, the Korean anti-LGBT movement and with it, its leadership, may be losing their 'war of position'.

Be that as it may, the movement did manage to enter one important principally non-religious arena, which is South Korean politics in the narrow sense. The now following section investigates in detail politically active movement figures as well as, vice-versa, established politicians active in the movement.

10.5 The political connections and endeavors of the anti-LGBT movement

This subchapter sets out to investigate two aspects of 'the political' in the workings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement. First, the concrete involvement of politicians in the movement, focusing on the attributes of politicians participating in anti-LGBT protest events and on the way they approach the issue of LGBT rights. Second, the political endeavors of anti-LGBT activists and SMOs themselves, inspecting their anti-LGBT efforts within minor conservative Christian parties and attempts at influencing election campaigns in a way that decries (alleged or actual) pro-LGBT positionings held by individual politicians and political parties.

Since the mid to late 1990s, the topic of homosexuality in general and gay and lesbian rights in particular slowly gained public attention and, by extension, entered the political arena in Korea (Bong 2009). The debate even reached the highest echelons of the political system. During the presidential election campaign in 1997, the daily newspaper *Hankyoreh* conducted a joint interview with four major candidates for the presidency on 28 November. One of the questions asked also concerned homosexuality: "Have you seen books, movies or theater plays on the thoughts and lives of homosexual people? How do you think about their movement?" (quoted in Yi, Ch'ong-sin 2017, April 26). The answers given by the presidential candidates back then, while not being fully supportive and rather reticent, turned out to be surprisingly positive.

Lee Hoi-chang: I have never seen any. There is a consensus that the privacy of homosexuals should be recognized and human rights should be guaranteed. However, considering the reality that homosexuality is not generally seen as normal, I do not think that we can readily accept them becoming a social movement.

Kim Dae-Jung: I have not had the particular opportunity to learn more about the

subject yet. I do not approve of homosexuality, but I do not think that homosexuality should be considered heretical in that it is based on affection for humans just like heterosexuality. The activities of homosexuals need to be approached as part of human rights guarantees.

Lee In-je: Homosexuality is a very delicate issue. It is good to resist society and claim one's own sexual identity, but one has yet to conclude what form human life will take based on the principles of nature. However, it is important to have a warm look at homosexuals as sacred persons, as shown in the film 'Philadelphia'.

Kwon Young-ghil: I watched the movie 'Philadelphia'. I think that Korean society has sufficient social conditions to accept the homosexual movement, and the authorities should keep up with this social trend. (Quoted in Yi, Ch'ong-sin 2017, April 26)

All candidates mentioned something positive about homosexuality – irrespective of their political alignments. Both the conservative candidate Lee Hoi-chang (*Yi Hoe-ch'ang*) and the progressive Kim Dae-jung (*Kim Tae-jung*), for example, highlighted the importance of human rights protection, despite also showing some reservation. Lee In-je (*Yi In-je*) emphasized the need to show a welcoming attitude and to approach homosexuals as “sacred persons”. He came to this conclusion also through watching the movie ‘Philadelphia’, which deals with the unfair treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in the 1980s and 1990s’ United States. The left-leaning candidate Kwon Young-ghil (*Kwŏn Yŏng-gil*) went farthest in his answer to the interview question, indirectly demanding positive political changes for homosexual people.

In the South Korea of 1997, it seems, homosexuality has not yet been an overly politicized topic. This is why politicians were able to speak about the topic with relative ease. Twenty years later, however, this had changed. During the presidential race after the impeachment of Park Geun-hye in 2017, homosexuality became a contentious topic, which was brought into the political discussion not by a journalist, but by one of the presidential candidates himself. In a televised debate, the candidate of the conservative *Liberty Korea Party*, Hong Joon-pyo (*Hong Chun-p'yo*), directly addressed Moon Jae-in, the candidate of the progressive *Democratic Party of Korea*, asking whether he opposed homosexuality or not, to which Moon answered: “I oppose”. This verbal exchange created a public stir, considering the fact that Moon Jae-in had started his career as a human rights lawyer and had supported a comprehensive anti-discrimination law including provisions for LGBT protection in the past. LGBT rights groups were very much disappointed and angered by Moon's conservative turn, and activists tried to directly confront him, and appeal to the presidential candidate Moon, but to no avail (Han 2021, 247–249).

The negative positioning of would-be president Moon towards LGBT rights and the resulting activation of the pro-LGBT movement are noteworthy phenomena in themselves. What I wish to highlight in the context of this study, however, is that homosexuality has developed into a delicate political topic by 2017. Hong Joon-pyo intentionally and strategically tackled his electoral contender with several LGBT-related issues, in a way to suggest that Moon may be in favor of LGBT rights. Moon Jae-in, meanwhile, finds himself cornered into reinforcing his opposition against gay men in the military and against same-sex marriage, yet claiming that he is against discrimination (Yi Sŭng-jun 2017, April 26). In other words, homosexuality has become politicized, meaning that the

topic is not only political in relation to LGBT-related policy proposals and concerning increasing pro-LGBT activism and countermobilization. Homosexuality has also become political in the narrow sense. In Korea, the topic is being used to actively influence other parts of the political process like electoral campaigns as the present example shows. In the now following section, I shall demonstrate how politicians are affected by such ‘smear campaigns’, but also, how politicians – like Hong Joon-pyo – themselves use anti-LGBT impulses for their own political benefit.

Politicians in the movement: the importance of religious and political affiliations

The PEA dataset reveals that 48 politicians have participated once or repeatedly in overall 60 anti-LGBT events (out of a total of 513, 11.7%) from 2000 until 2020. The vast majority of these politicians joined such events after 2012 (44 of 48, 91.7%).²⁵ Table 14 gives an overview of these politicians’ political and religious affiliations, as well as of their concrete attitudes on LGBT rights. Slightly more than half of the politicians who participated in anti-LGBT events are members of the main conservative *Saenuri Party* and its predecessor *Grand National Party (Hannaradang)* and successor *Liberty Korea Party (Chayu han’guk-tang)*. The main liberal party, the *Democratic Party of Korea (Töburö minjudang)*, counts 14 politicians who attended such events. The remaining politicians either belong to minor parties (7 participants) or are unaffiliated (2 politicians). One has to note that not all politicians who took part in anti-LGBT events necessarily advocate anti-LGBT stances. 31 politicians (64.6%) show clear attitudes against equal rights for LGBT people, while the rest features ambivalent or pro-LGBT positionings (4.2% respectively), or stay neutral on the issue (27%). We can explain this relatively high number of politicians without clear anti-LGBT stance when considering that the PEA also counted meetings with politicians as protest events, provided that the gathering was used to express anti-LGBT content – regardless of whether the statements were made by politicians or representatives of the movement in the strict sense. On many occasions, politicians have been invited as mere interlocutors, perhaps also with the intention of (further, or at all) convincing them of the alleged need to fight against LGBT rights.

25 A detailed list of all these 48 politicians has been produced for this study, indicating their political and religious affiliations, their attitude towards LGBT rights, the frequencies of their protest event attendances, and the year they first appeared at such an event. For the sake of brevity, however, it is left out here. Table 14 is a cross-tabled summary of said list.

Table 14: Politicians at anti-LGBT events: affiliations, attitudes, and attendances

Party affiliation	Religious affiliation				Attitude on LGBT issues				Total ^a (N) (%)
	Protestant/ evangelical	Catho- lic	Bud- dhist	n/a	Anti- LGBT	Pro- LGBT	Ambi- va- lent	n/a	
Saenuri/ Lib- erty Korea Party ^b	16	2	2	5	22	1	1	1	25 52.1
Democratic Party	6	4	-	4	4	1	1	8	14 29.2
Yeollin Uri Party	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1 2.1
Unified Pro- gressive Party	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1 2.1
People Party	1	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	3 6.3
Bareun (Mirae) Party	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	2 4.2
Unaffiliated	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2 4.2
Total (N)	25	8	2	13	31	2	2	13	48
Total (%)	52.1	16.7	4.2	27	64.6	4.2	4.2	27	100.0

Attendances: Once: 35 politicians; twice: 7; three times: 4; four times: 1; nine times: 1. **Notes:** ^a The total of this column is counted for the categories 'religious affiliation' and 'attitude on LGBT issues' separately. ^b Saenuri Party (2012–2017) and Liberty Korea Party (2017–2020) are classified as one party since they are the consecutive successors of the Grand National Party (1997–2012). The party's current name is People Power Party.

The distribution of politicians having anti-LGBT attitudes differs depending on the party affiliation. 22 of the 25 representatives of the main conservative party (88%) assume a negative stance on LGBT issues, while only 4 out of 14 (28.6%) politicians from the *Democratic Party* do so. The numbers for the remaining parties are too small to draw reliable conclusions, although it is noteworthy that all three politicians from the *People Party* (*Kungmin-ŭi tang*) oppose LGBT rights. The politicians with anti-LGBT opinions generally express their rejection of LGBT rights at events, in most cases in the form of short welcome addresses. This is especially the case when the protest events take place in the premises of the National Assembly, where members of parliament need to serve as hosts so that civil society organizations can use these rooms.

In the research interviews conducted for this study, anti-LGBT activists stated that they did not favor one political party over the other, but that they worked mostly together with conservative politicians since they were more responsive (Interviews 7, 16, 17). Indeed, except for the progressive and distinctly pro-LGBT *Justice Party* (*Chŏngŭi-dang*), politicians of all main parties have been present at anti-LGBT events, however,

with starkly differing levels of overall activity. Anti-LGBT politicians from the conservative *Saenuri* or *Liberty Korea Party* represent by far the largest portion. This means that there is an especially intense link between the movement and this political party. It is questionable, though, whether this relationship is a sustainable one. When taking into consideration the number of participations at anti-LGBT events by politician, it turns out that the vast majority of them only appeared once (35 politicians, 72.9%) or twice (7, 14.6%). There are just a few politicians who are more active in the movement. Four politicians participated three times. However, among these, there are the former Seoul mayor Park Won-soon and Moon Jae-in from the Democratic Party, who both display ambivalent positionings towards LGBT rights, but can hardly be considered part of the anti-LGBT movement. In fact, the movement frequently denounces these two politicians for their allegedly positive stance on LGBT rights.

Yi Hye-hun is the exception among the politicians taking part in anti-LGBT events. She participated nine times, outperforming the second-most active politician, Yun Sang-hyŏn from the *Saenuri* Party (4 participations), by a long way. When Yi Hye-hun first joined an anti-LGBT event in 2013, she was also a member of the *Saenuri* Party. She was one of the earliest politicians actively supporting the movement, being particularly active in 2016, the year of the 20th national legislative elections in Korea. In December 2017, Yi Hye-hun left *Saenuri* Party, defecting with 28 other lawmakers in the aftermath of the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye to form the *Bareun* Party (*Parŭn chŏng-dang*). She was elected a short-term leader of the latter party before it merged with the main conservative party again, forming in early 2020 the *People Power Party* (*Kungmin-ŭi him*). As a member of parliament, Yi prominently supported the struggles against various LGBT-related issues. For example, she participated in prayer meetings against the Seoul Queer Culture Festival, against homosexuality in general, and against Islam (Kukmin Daily 2016, June 12; Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, May 15). She also criticized fellow party member Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his support of LGBT rights (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, June 2).²⁶ At an event against the inclusion of homosexuality as a topic in schoolbooks in 2013, Yi Hye-hun explains why she fights against LGBT rights. “We must fight against any force that shakes and obstructs heaven.” She adds: “As a Christian politician, I will, together with the churches, take the lead in firmly protecting heaven” (quoted in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2013, October 4).

The politician Yi Hye-hun thus displays a distinctly ‘Christian’ agenda in her activities against LGBT rights. Table 14 reveals that she is not the only one. 35 politicians (72.1%) belong to a religion, including 25 members of diverse Protestant and evangelical denominations, eight Catholics, and two Buddhists. These numbers roughly correspond to the numbers of religiously affiliated members of parliament in general, which is, in general, higher than the share of Christians or Buddhists in the general public.²⁷ However, a re-

26 Ban Ki-moon is one of the few Korean politicians with a clearly supportive stance towards LGBT rights and, in fact, the only one in his political party, as shown in Table 14.

27 A JoongAng Daily article of 2008, for example, reported that 82% of the members of the National Assembly belonged to a religion (40.1% Protestant, 26.8% Catholic, 15.7% Buddhist, 0.3% Won-Buddhist, 17.4% non-religious), which is much higher than the shares in the general public at that time (22.8% Buddhist, 18.3% Protestant, 10.9% Catholic, 0.3% Won-Buddhist, 46.5% non-religious) (The JoongAng 2008, September 6). Protestant and Catholic MPs in particular have been

ligious affiliation does not necessarily mean that these politicians also have clear anti-LGBT attitudes. For instance, only three of the eight Catholic politicians have a clear anti-LGBT orientation. The share within the Protestant politicians is significantly higher: 19 out of 25 Protestant politicians (76%) actively support anti-LGBT endeavors. A particular bias of Protestant lawmakers comes to the fore here. Their support for anti-LGBT efforts is, however, not so surprising after all. As I have shown previously in this chapter, the central actors behind the Korean anti-LGBT movement are predominantly Protestant. It is therefore most likely that they seek support from Protestant politicians as well. As just presented, the PEA data shows that these connections actually exist.

Religiously unaffiliated politicians also advocate anti-LGBT positions (8 out of 13), so that one can assume that anti-LGBT activism has made its mark on politicians beyond the traditional Protestant link as well. While this may be true, one also needs to take into account the political affiliation of this latter group. It turns out that seven of the eight non-religious politicians belong to parties in the conservative political spectrum. In summary, being a member of a Protestant church and belonging to a conservative political party is correlated with the participation of politicians at anti-LGBT protest events and the support of anti-LGBT politics.

The majority of the 48 politicians discerned in the PEA are lawmakers at the National Assembly. Such a political position can be regarded as relatively prestigious, in that anti-LGBT activists may expect benefits from a potential active endorsement by members of parliament. The movement anticipates and in fact demands that these politicians prevent pro-LGBT bills from being passed. Movement representatives, however, also place importance on having contact with even higher-ranking politicians. Eleven politicians who attended meetings with anti-LGBT actors occupied eminent governing or representative positions. Among them were the already mentioned President Moon Jae-in, Seoul mayor Park Won-soon, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Despite the fact that these and other politicians display neutral, ambivalent, or even positive opinions concerning LGBT rights, meetings with such senior political actors can prove valuable for anti-LGBT activists. They can make their points, ask for a reaction from the respective decision maker, and reckon on increased media attention. Some high-level politicians, however, clearly profess their opposition against LGBT rights. These include, for example, the former National Assembly President Chŏng Ŭi-hwa (*Saenuri Party*), the independent former justice minister Kim Sŭng-gyu, and the former prime minister Hwang Kyo-an. The latter has been reluctant to actively endorse anti-LGBT positions while still in office when he met CCK and CCIK representatives in 2015 (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2015, July 22), but did so after he had left the government, arguing as the new leader of *Liberty Korea Party* that the clause on sexual orientation in the projected anti-discrimination law was “toxic” (quoted in Kukmin Daily 2017, October 28). Having politicians as supporters benefits the movement, and vice-versa, politicians potentially profit from the endorsement by anti-LGBT activists or the Protestant Right at large. As I will demonstrate in the now

overrepresented in the South Korean national parliament. This tendency continued in the following years, with the share of Protestant representatives occupying 37% in the term 2012–2016, 34% in 2016–2020, and rising to 41% again since 2020 (Song, Kyŏng-ho 2020, June 24).

following section, anti-LGBT groups indeed intervene in electoral campaigns. However, they mostly do so to vilify candidates who are viewed as supporters of LGBT rights.

Anti-LGBT actors campaigning for and against politicians and political parties

In an interview with the US newspaper *San Francisco Examiner* on 12 October 2014, Seoul mayor Park Won-soon expressed his hope that South Korea would become the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. He said that activists needed to convince the general public in the first place and then politicians would follow suit.²⁸ The ensuing fierce reactions from anti-LGBT activists are hardly surprising. They reproached Park of disregarding the alleged majority opinion of Koreans, and framed the introduction of same-sex marriage as a threat to the social and creation orders. Mayor Park soon succumbed to the backlash, relativizing his statements made during his trip to the United States. Already in the interview, however, Park pointed to a phenomenon that impedes policy making in the area of LGBT rights. "Protestant influence in Korea is very strong, so it is not easy for politicians" (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, October 16).

Park here expresses a concern that affects many politicians, especially if they hold beliefs and opinions different from those of the Protestant Right. Also in the area of LGBT politics, politicians face strong opposition when they are perceived to be in favor of law proposals benefitting queer people. A common approach in this respect is to inquire the stance on LGBT rights of individual politicians and threaten to start campaigns against all those who support pro-LGBT bills. In 2010, for instance, the anti-LGBT groups *Coalition for Moral Sexuality* and *Esther Prayer Movement* sent questionnaires to all members of parliament asking whether they supported the proposed anti-discrimination law (Yu, Yöng-dae 2010, November 9). Prior to the election to the National Assembly in 2016, the *Korea Christian Public Policy Council* drafted a similar policy questionnaire, which they forwarded to more than 1,400 candidates. The primary goal was to track down those politicians with positive views on homosexuality and Islam (Yu, Yöng-dae 2016, February 16).

Ahead of the elections, several SMOs launched campaigns against individual pro-LGBT politicians. The *Task Force on the Problem of Homosexuality*, for example, discerned 19 candidates who defended and promoted pro-LGBT laws or legislative amendments. The majority of the politicians detected ran for center-left parties (*Democratic Party*: 10, *Justice Party*: 3, *People's United Party*: 2) (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, April 3). One politician from the Democratic Party of Korea in particular, P'yo Ch'ang-wön, faced a great amount of opposition during his electioneering. Less than a week ahead of the 2016 election, 74 organizations demanded that P'yo withdraw his candidacy, denouncing his support for the rights of homosexuals and his alleged plan to legalize porn in South Korea (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, April 10). *Kukmin Daily* also joined the alarmist chorus of criticism, vilifying

28 Mayor Park's view that the general public has to be convinced first before pro-LGBT policies can be passed is in fact a rejection and delegation of political responsibility. It is also a strategy allowing politicians to not actually get active in favor of human rights, but rather frame LGBT-related legislative change as future endeavors, what Ju Hui Judy Han (2021) has termed "the politics of postponement". Two of my interviewees (1 & 3) have also stated that arguing for the need of a social consensus is a common strategy used by politicians to turn down the socio-political concerns of LGBT people and activists.

candidates under the headline “Five enemies who advocate and instigate homosexuality”. In face of such denunciations, these politicians verbally withdrew their support for LGBT rights to some extent. One of the attacked candidates, the Democrat Chin Sŏn-mi, for instance, had promoted the decriminalization of homosexuality in the Korean army, but then argued that it was a misunderstanding and that she never defended homosexuality. The naming and blaming of these politicians are not only based upon their actual or alleged endorsement of LGBT rights. P’yo Ch’ang-wŏn also comes under fire for his critical stance against Christianity in general (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, April 6).

Similar vilification strategies have been used ahead of other elections as well by anti-LGBT actors, who go to great lengths to get their message through. The *Tongbanyŏn* alliance created an index of pro and anti-LGBT politicians ahead of the local elections in 2018, coming up with a point system evaluating politicians according to diverse categories. In this evaluation, Seoul mayor Park Won-soon, who was up for reelection, gained by far the highest score, making him the epitome of a pro-LGBT politician for *Tongbanyŏn*. This assessment of Park is paradoxical when taking into consideration that he repeatedly succumbed to pressures from anti-LGBT forces, eventually dropping pro-LGBT stances and legislative processes, such as in the case of the *Seoul Human Rights Charter* in 2014. The index also identified politicians promoting staunch anti-LGBT orientations, to whom the SMO interestingly assigns negative scores. The politician who “opposes homosexuality the most” was Kim Sŏk-ki, a candidate for the post of Superintendent of Education in the city of Ulsan (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, May 30).

This index produced by *Tongbanyŏn* shows that anti-LGBT actors do not only wish to create negative media attention for politicians perceived to be in favor of LGBT rights. The other way around, the movement also actively supports those politicians who share their negative views on homosexuality. So when *Tongbanyŏn* conducted another survey prior to the national elections in 2020, the results that 100% of the respondents from the far-right *Our Republican Party* (*Urigonghwadang*) and 86% of the major conservative *United Future Party* opposed the anti-discrimination law represented an indirect recommendation for the upcoming elections. The one-hundred percent support for the passing of this bill from *Justice Party* and *Minjung Party* (*Minjungdang*) candidates, on the other hand, renders them unelectable according to *Tongbanyŏn*,²⁹ as the appeal of the alliance’s chairman Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng directed at voters reveals: “I hope that voters will make the right choice in the 21st National Assembly election on the 15th so that the citizens’ freedom of thought and expression to protect sound sexual ethics does not wither” (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2020, April 15).

A more direct endorsement of candidates also exists. During the 2016 parliamentary election race, Kukmin Daily supported candidates who actively blocked the anti-discrimination law and advocated for the revision of the National Human Rights Commission

29 The reliability of this survey is questionable, though. *Tongbanyŏn* only received answers from 58 out of 384 candidates who had originally been approached. What is more, the survey does not indicate the exact number of respondents per political party, but only gives percentages. Showing ‘facts’ and figures, even if they are hardly meaningful, can still have an effect on readers and the politicians affected. Conducting surveys and producing indices creates the image of scientificity, ultimately increasing the credibility of the claims of the anti-LGBT movement (cf. chapter 8.3).

Law: “They are not yielding to pressure from homosexual groups and keep their beliefs” (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, April 7). The article singles out five candidates in particular, appearing with photographs and receiving accolades. Among them are Yi Hye-hun, Kim Mu-söng, and Chöng Mi-gyöng from *Saenuri Party* and Pak Yöng-sön from the *Democratic Party* who all pledged they would oppose LGBT-related bills in case they were elected. The article also highlights that all ten candidates from the minor *Christian Liberal Party* firmly oppose homosexuality and Islam. The KACC secretary general Yi Pyöng-dae, who is also quoted in this article, finds dramatic words to express his recommendation for these candidates: “The April 13 general election may be the last chance to prevent the legalization of homosexuality and homosexual marriage and the enactment of the anti-discrimination law.” He adds: “Let us actively advance candidates with sound thinking to the National Assembly and adjust wrong tendencies” (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, April 7). Explicitly espousing anti-LGBT positions can thus prove beneficial for politicians seeking (re)election, for they receive support from anti-LGBT actors.

The active endorsement or disapproval of politicians does not only work through releasing lists and indices. The threatening potential is often enhanced by referring to the alleged support basis that activists claim they could mobilize against a candidate. In 2017, for example, Protestant churches in South Ch’ungch’ön Province demanded that the local Human Rights Ordinance, which included a provision on sexual orientation, be withdrawn again. Should Governor Ahn Hee-jung (*An Hŭi-jöng*) not abide by this demand they threatened that they would start a campaign supported by 3200 churches and 42,000 believers so that he would not get reelected (Yu, Yöng-dae 2017, February 10). In another instance, a Protestant organization claimed even more supporters. In October 2015, the *Christian Voters’ Union* (*Kidokkyo yugwönja undong tanch’e yönhaphoe*) was founded to influence politics, especially to counter pro-LGBT legislation. This newly established alliance of 33 Protestant groups claimed that they would launch a voters’ movement to reach 10 million people (Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, October 14). One can assume that it is no coincidence that this tally roughly corresponds to the number of Protestants in South Korea. Protestant activists in general, and anti-LGBT campaigners in particular, thus claim significant discretionary power over churches and church members. While it is hardly probable that the claimed mobilization potential could ever be fully exploited, references to such large supporter bases may still make a lasting impression on the politicians addressed. The assertion of representing a great many people or even an overall majority is a common framing strategy of the anti-LGBT movement (cf. chapter 7.3), which activists also apply to influence elections.

As I have shown, such pressures, along with a shared political ideology and religious affiliation, are factors that lead politicians to adopt anti-LGBT positionings. Several of my pro-LGBT interviewees have argued that politicians do so for opportunistic reasons, fearing that they would lose votes should Protestant churches turn against them (Interviews 4, 14, 26). One interviewee claimed that stating one’s opposition against homosexuality was “like a new ideological verification in Korean society” (Interview 26). Another interviewee concurred with this view, analyzing that in election phases, “the question about whether you are for or against homosexuality has come to be used as an ideological litmus test” (Interview 13).

Politicians also go beyond merely adopting anti-LGBT positions. In some cases, politicians advance concrete policy proposals that are in line with the claims of the anti-LGBT movement. The most prominent example in the National Assembly so far is the amendment bill introduced in September 2017 by the conservative politician Kim T'ae-hŭm, which sought to abolish the reference to sexual orientation in the NHRCK Law – a longstanding demand of the movement. Sixteen additional *Liberal Korea Party* lawmakers also supported this proposal (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017, September 20). In an interview with *Kukmin Daily*, Representative Kim makes the proposal a partisan issue: “I know I can be criticized and attacked by some liberal leftists, but this is my conviction and philosophy. In terms of the identity of the conservative right-wing party, which values the community, I also judged that this issue must not be overlooked.” He asserted that the opposition against homosexuality and same-sex marriage formed part of his party's platform (quoted in Yi, Chong-sŏn 2018, January 23). So far, however, as of spring 2023, the amendment proposal has not been passed, putting the claimed party support into question. The examples of Kim T'ae-hŭm's amendment bill as well as the attacks launched by Hong Joon-pyo against Moon Jae-in show that LGBT rights have turned into a political issue that gets used by politicians to discredit the political competitor. Two interviewees expressed their views that conservative politicians often raised LGBT issues in order to actually criticize progressive governments (Interviews 13, 36) – no matter if these governments actually support LGBT rights or not.

While there is an evident accordance between the anti-LGBT movement and individual politicians from the main conservative parties in South Korea, the overall party positionings on the topic are not so clear after all. *Kukmin Daily* has scandalized several cases in which conservative parties displayed positive views on homosexuality. Thus, the naming and blaming does not only affect individual politicians but also political parties as a whole. In 2016, several anti-LGBT activists called out *Saenuri Party's* code of ethics for stating that the party shall not discriminate against people for any reason, including sexual orientation. The code of ethics had been introduced in 2007, and the fact of its existence seems to have baffled party officials, one of whom claimed: “I did not know that this clause was included in our party's ethics code.” The matter was especially delicate since *Saenuri Party* actively promoted anti-LGBT positions in the race for the 2016 general elections, criticizing the *Democratic Party* of allegedly supporting LGBT rights. This ‘faux pas’ was also addressed by the main political contender. Kim Sŏng-su, a *Democratic Party* politician denounced *Saenuri* party leader Kim Mu-sŏng for his hypocritical stance that now came back to him “like a boomerang”: “Kim has been eager to slander other party candidates without knowing that his remarks are directly violating his own party's ethics code” (quoted in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, April 12). In another case, a *Kukmin Daily* report deplored an unclear demeanor of the *People Party*. At an event on 26 April 2017, organized by Protestant churches ahead of the presidential election, Yi Tong-sŏp, a party representative, said that “the People Party has a firm stance on homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and the anti-discrimination law”, adding that “as long as our Christian lawmakers keep guard, evil bills like the anti-discrimination law will not be passed.” On the same day, however, the *People's Party's* election committee policy headquarters issued a statement expressing starkly different positions. The *Kukmin Daily* report highlights this internal inconsistency, quoting from the committee's statement: “Same-sex marriage needs more

serious discussion in society” and “homosexuality is not a matter of pro or contra, but a matter of personal judgment of community members” (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017, April 26). It becomes clear that not only pro-LGBT views get under fire from the anti-LGBT movement. Ambivalent party positions are not appreciated either.

The trustworthiness of individual politicians or of whole political organizations seems to be put into question due to such contradictory positionings, especially from the perspective of the anti-LGBT movement, as well as from the Protestant Right at large. This section has revealed that the movement pursues clear political goals which they also attempt to implement by directly interfering in the political process. It may therefore be unsurprising that Protestant leaders have also endeavored to establish their own political parties to acquire more immediate access to political influence. The now following section will focus on these political ambitions, emphasizing the role anti-LGBT attitudes and activists play in them.

Anti-LGBT politics and the political endeavors of the Protestant Right

Since the mid-2000s, parts of Korean Protestantism have attempted to enter politics by creating their own political parties.³⁰ Table 15 gives an overview of the oft-renamed and restructured Christian parties competing in the elections for the National Assembly. The first Protestant political offshoot, the *Korean Christian Party*, was founded in 2004 by two eminent Protestant leaders, Cho Yonggi, head pastor of the *Yŏido Full Gospel Church*, one of the largest ‘mega-churches’ in Korea and worldwide, and Kim Joon Gon (*Kim Chūngon*), leader of the interdenominational evangelization organization *Korea Campus Crusade for Christ* (*Han’guk taehaksaeng sŏn’gyohoe*). Their party was mainly created in opposition to the Kim Dae-jung government’s rapprochement politics towards North Korea and in reaction to perceived anti-US-American tendencies in politics and society. The voting system introduced for the 2004 general elections also benefited the establishment of new parties, since it seemed achievable to exceed the threshold of 3 percent necessary to obtain proportional seats in the parallel voting system. Cho and Kim boasted that they could become the biggest Korean party, counting on the votes of the then roughly 12 million Protestant Christians (Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 20).

30 Right after the liberation from the Japanese colonial regime in 1945, there have also been endeavors to establish Christian political parties. However, these attempts have been unsuccessful also due to the geopolitical turmoil ahead of the Korean War. For details, see Yi, Chin-gu (2020, 18f.).

Table 15: National Assembly election results of Christian political parties in Korea

Elec- tion year	Party name (Korean name)	Proportional seats ^a		Constituency seats ^a	
		%	Votes (N)	%	Votes (N)
2004	Korean Christian Party (<i>Han'gukkidoktang</i>)	1.08	228,837	0.04	8,267
2008	Christian Party for Putting Love into Practice (<i>Kidok- sarangsilch'öndang</i>)	2.59	443,775	0.02	3,720
	Peaceful Unification Family Party (<i>P'yöngghwat'ongilkajöng- dang</i>)	1.06	180,857	1.94	334,715
2012	Christian Liberal Democratic Party (<i>Kidokchayuminjudang</i>)	1.2	257,190	0.01	2,241
	Korean Christian Party (<i>Han'gukkidoktang</i>)	0.25	54,332	-	-
2016	Christian Liberty Party (<i>Ki- dokchayudang</i>)	2.63	626,853	0.01	1,367
	Christian Party (<i>Kidoktang</i>)	0.54	129,978	-	-
2020	Christian Liberty Unification Party (<i>Kidokchayut'ongildang</i>)	1.83	513,159	0.03	7,663

Notes: ^a The voting system changed over the years. In 2016, for example, the 300 seats of the National Assembly included 253 seats allocated according to the first-past-the-post system in single member districts and 47 seats in a proportional representation (PR) system based on party lists. To win seats through PR, parties needed to win at least 3% of the total list vote.

However, the *Korean Christian Party* fell short of these expectations, scoring only about 1 percent of the votes in the proportional representation section of the election. In fact, Christian parties have failed to receive enough votes to enter parliament in all elections ever since. The discretionary power over believers as claimed by church leaders does not appear to be effective in reality. Christian voters predominantly opt for other, mostly established political parties. Several surveys have demonstrated that laypeople are, for the most part, even critical of parties that have a Christian focus. One survey conducted by the Christian online newspaper *Newsjoy* and by the portal site *God's People* (*Katp'ip'ül*) showed that 86 percent were opposed to a Christian party in 2004. The '2019 Protestant Perception Survey on Major Social Issues' revealed similarly high numbers of rejection among Protestants, with 79.5 percent disapproval (Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 25). Important Protestant organizations have also voiced their criticism. The critics cite the necessary separation of religion and politics, the unfortunate fact that immoral leaders were heading the parties in question, the intensification of religious conflict, and the impression that Protestant churches were merely seeking power through founding their own political party (Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 25f.; Kim, Tae-jong 2011, September 22).

Protestant leaders gave it another try in the 2008 election nonetheless. They mainly did so to counter another religious political project, the *Peaceful Unification Family Party* founded by the *Unification Church* (also known as ‘Moonies’), a new religious movement inspired by Christianity that is widely considered as dangerous for and by Protestant churches (Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 21). Despite winning more votes than in the previous election, the *Christian Party for Putting Love into Practice* was not able to gain any parliamentary seats, reaping just 2.59 percent. What is noteworthy, however, is that from 2008 onwards, the Christian parties started problematizing homosexuality. In 2008, the party manifesto included a reference to the anti-discrimination law, which was a hot topic at that time (cf. chapter 5.3). In 2012, the *Christian Liberal Democratic Party* again targeted homosexuals (Paek, Sang-hyön 2012, April 10), besides demanding that ‘pro-North Korea leftists’ be persecuted and that church interests such as low interest rates be duly considered. With merely 1.2 percent of the proportional list votes, the party fared worse than four years before. Yi Chin-gu (2020, 22) argues that the reason for this was the all too obvious emphasis on the special interests of Protestant churches and not the greater good. The general election of 2012 also revealed that those Protestants eager to directly enter politics through traditional channels were not able to build a common basis anymore. Besides the *Christian Liberal Democratic Party*, the *Korean Christian Party* also competed for votes. While the two parties both advocated conservative issues, the internal rifts and animosities within Korean Protestantism thwarted a party merger. Two anti-LGBT activists interviewed for this study said that it was mainly owing to conflicts among leading pastors that Christian parties were not able to find common ground (Interviews 27; 34).

The fragmentation of the Protestant parties continued in 2016, when the *Christian Liberty Party* (CLP) received 2.63 percent of the votes, and the *Christian Party* 0.54 percent. Put together, they would have surpassed the 3 percent threshold. But again, party officials could not agree on joining forces, mainly because the program of the *Christian Party* also included demands for a better welfare state, which was irreconcilable with the CLP’s liberal stance in economic matters. The parties did agree, however, on most other issues, particularly concerning anti-LGBT, anti-Islam positions, and on a strict opposition against the anti-discrimination law (Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 22f.). The CLP particularly focused on anti-LGBT topics in its 2016 election campaign. This strategy earned them broad support from conservative Protestant organizations such as CCK, CCIK, the *Council of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, and the *Korean Association of Protestant Leaders*. At a political prayer meeting, all these actors endorsed the CLP as the only political party they would back in this election in order to “stop the anti-discrimination law which incites the spread of homosexuality and Islam” (quoted in Yi, Sa-ya 2016, February 29). The CCK and its leader Chŏn Kwang-hoon in particular intensively promoted the CLP, claiming at another prayer meeting in commemoration of the founding of the Republic of Korea that one of the party’s main goals was to prevent the “legalization of homosexuality”. He also claimed that the CLP was necessary to effectively block pro-LGBT and pro-Islam legislation in the National Assembly, since other politicians – even when they are Christians – could do so owing to the need to follow party lines (quoted in Kim, Chae-san 2016, April 4). Pastor Chŏn Kwan-hun has been a longstanding leading figure in the Protestant involvement in society and politics, and especially a driver of party-political endeavors of Korean

Protestantism. He is also, however, infamous for radical remarks and actions, which has generated critical evaluations from within conservative Protestantism as well.³¹

Support for the CLP came also from other sides. Three weeks ahead of the elections, the *Democratic Party* lawmaker Yi Yun-sök left his party to become a member of the CLP, making him the first and only parliamentary member of a Christian party in Korea, even if only for a short period of time (Yi, Yong-sang 2016, March 24). The actress Sö Chöng-hŭi also actively supported CLP, as a Kukmin Daily article on her involvement as public relations advisor in the party's campaigning shows (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, April 11). One important reason for joining the CLP, both Yi and Sö asserted, was their opposition against homosexuality. Yi Yun-sök was put on the first place of the party list, granting him good chances to enter parliament again in case the CLP had reached more than 3 percent of the votes.

Anti-LGBT activists active in Christian political parties

Other candidates on the CLP's party list are also noteworthy, since their nomination reveals the close link between this far-right Christian party and the Korean anti-LGBT movement. Yi Chin-gu (2022, 18) accordingly argues that, in Korea, "the recent far-right movement and conservative Protestantism are connected through Christian parties". Several eminent anti-LGBT activists have been active in the CLP, appearing prominently during the 2016 election campaign and occupying several positions on the party list for proportional representation seats. Two activists attained quite promising positions. Kim Chi-yön was placed in third place on the party list. She is praised in a Kukmin Daily report on the CLP candidates as an expert from the *Korean Churches' Countermeasures Committee against Homosexuality* who has already delivered "more than 500 lectures telling the truth about homosexuality" (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, March 27). The lawyer Ko Yöng-il, a similarly active anti-LGBT activist, was assigned the fourth place on the party list. After the loss in the 2016 election, he would become the party leader of CLP. Yi T'ae-hŭi, another lawyer and anti-LGBT activist, obtained place 9. This intense political involvement of central movement figures in 2016 coincides with the steep increase and

31 Pastor Chön Kwang-hun heads the Presbyterian *Sarang Cheil Church* in Seoul, which counts about 4,000 members. He was a founding member of the *Christian Liberal Democratic Party*, which ran in the 2012 general election and claimed support from other church leaders, among them Pastor Cho Yonggi, who, however distanced himself from the party and from Chön (Kim, Tae-jong 2011, September 22). In recent years, Chön intensified his political activism, mostly directed against the Moon Jae-in government, which he and his followers denounce as communist and pro-North Korean. His large anti-government rallies drew criticism when they violated protective measures against the Covid-19 pandemic in August 2020, causing a surge of infections (Choe, Sang-Hun 2020, August 20). Chön is also infamous for his radical rhetoric, leading the *New York Times* to call him the "Populist Pastor Leading a Conservative Revival in South Korea" (Choe, Sang-Hun 2019, November 8). For example, he once demanded that families with less than five children should be punished, besides slandering remarks against Islam and homosexuals. In 2019, he was elected head of the *Christian Council of Korea* (CCK), but only three years later, he was declared heretical and was expelled from the CCK (Cho, Hyön 2022, December 7). He remains party leader of the *Liberty Unification Party* (*Chayut'ongildang*), a successor party of the *Christian Liberty Party* as of February 2023 (Liberty Unification Party 2023a).

high level of anti-LGBT activities in general during this time (cf. chapter 5.3). At a prayer meeting held to support the CLP, Ko Yöng-il gave a special lecture especially on the topic of homosexuality, emphasizing the Biblical foundation of the party's opposition against homosexuality, as well as the alleged negative impact on Korean society and on the churches should further pro-LGBT bills be passed:

If the homosexual and the anti-discrimination laws were passed, schools would be unable to teach that homosexuality is the reason for the spreading of AIDS, the 236 mission schools in Korea would be unable to decline the entry of homosexuals, and we have to fear that blood tests for homosexuals in the army would be forbidden, leading to a weakening of combat power and the spread of AIDS as well. [...] Other religious groups, Islam, and homosexual associations are in favor of legalizing homosexuality, of spreading Islam, and of passing the anti-discrimination law. This is to attack the churches. (Quoted in Kim, Chae-san 2016, April 4).

Similar expressions of anti-LGBT sentiments have permeated other candidates' electioneering as well. While CLP did not manage to enter parliament in 2016, they did fare well in the proportional representation votes, getting the support from 626,853 voters. Had the overall voter turnout been smaller, as for example in 2008, when the *Christian Party for Putting Love into Practice* reached a similar percentage with just 443,775 votes, the CLP could have made its mark in the National Assembly. If assuming that CLP candidates were mainly chosen by Protestant voters, 626,853 people represent a rather small but significant share of Protestants in Korea (about 5–6%). The strategy of fearmongering, othering, and opposing certain policies rather than proposing ones themselves has thus proven partially successful for the CLP after all (cf. Yi, Chin-gu 2020, 23).

The internal analysis of the failure to enter the parliament mainly blamed the fact that the Christian vote was split between the Christian Party and CLP. The narrow focus of CLP on fierce opposition without policy alternatives was also met with criticism.³² At a follow-up event organized by Protestant circles after the election, a professor from Seoul Theological University, Pak Myöng-su, commented that “laypeople do not feel the sense of crisis that pastors feel about homosexuality and Islam” (quoted in Kim, Na-rae 2016, April 14). In a Kukmin Daily column, however, Pastor So Kang-sök defended the chosen strategy, arguing that the CLP itself was not the goal of Korean churches, but that the prevention of the anti-discrimination law and of pro-homosexuals bills was at the core of Protestant political involvement. He continues: “if the ruling and opposition parties fail to prevent [these laws] and the Korean church continues to be challenged and in crisis, the Christian Liberty Party will have to take up the challenge again next time.” So Kang-sök demanded that then, the Christian vote must not be split and that Korean Protestantism in general needed to seek greater unity (So, Kang-sök 2016, April 27).

In fact, only one Christian political party competed in the 2020 general election: the *Christian Liberty Unification Party* (CLUP). The *Christian Party* failed to enter the election race due to internal conflicts (Yi, Yong-p'il 2020, April 7). Like its direct predecessor CLP,

32 The success of Christian political parties in other parts of the world, in fact, often relied on the fact that they strove to be catch-all parties (cf. Pelinka 2004; Gehler & Kaiser 2004).

the CLUP still had a focus on the anti-discrimination law and LGBT issues, along with a strong anti-communist and anti-government orientation. For example, the specially designed party jackets – a common trait of South Korean electioneering – unmistakably displayed the core messages of the CLUP: “Eradicate homosexuality, the anti-discrimination law, and the *Chuch’e* faction” (Yi, Yong-p’il 2020, April 7). The term ‘*Chuch’e* faction’ (*chusap’a*) refers to a group within the South Korean student movement in the 1980s, which sympathized with the North Korean state ideology *Chuch’e*. Nowadays, the term is mainly used by conservative and far-right actors to disparage political opponents.

The strong interrelation between the anti-LGBT movement and this Christian party continued. The party list of the CLUP included several anti-LGBT actors. The former Justice Minister Kim Sŭng-gyu, who had displayed anti-LGBT positions at movement events in the past, ran for a post (2nd place), as did again Ko Yŏng-il, this time in the capacity of party leader (6th). Further candidates included Yun Chae-sŏng (10th) and Pak Ŭn-hŭi (13th), members of the anti-LGBT SMO *Parents’ Alliance for Building the Next Generation*, Chi Yŏng-jun, representative of the *Korean Churches’ Countermeasures Committee against Homosexuality* (12th), and Han Hyo-gwan, head of *People’s Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (16th) (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2020, March 26).

Yet in 2020 again, the Christian party failed to win seats in the National Assembly. The CLUP remained below the 3-percent threshold, faring worse than four years before, receiving only 1.83 percent of the proportional representation votes. The repeated failure may be based on the scandal-ridden pre-election phase. The main sponsor of the CLUP, Pastor Chŏn Kwang-hun, was arrested in late February, among others on the charge of breaching the electoral law. During his mass rallies against President Moon Jae-in in December 2019 and January 2020, he had called upon the protesters to vote for the main opposition party. Political campaigning, however, is only allowed during a designated period of time ahead of elections in South Korea (Kang, Yunsook 2020, February 24).³³ Another controversy occurred around the nomination of Yi Ŭn-jae, a member of parliament who left the main opposition *United Future Party* shortly ahead of the election to join the CLUP as number 1 on its proportional representation party list. A *Chosun Daily* report revealed, however, that she had multiple memberships in diverse religions, having received a Protestant baptism in 1980, a catholic baptism in 2019, but also attending Buddhist worships. This was considered a breach of the Christian foundations of the CLUP, especially the first of the ten commandments (“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”), leading to the exclusion of Yi Ŭn-jae from the party list and the party (Wŏn, Sŏn-u 2020, March 26). In a press statement, the CLUP itself blamed the political polarization and the consequent focus of voters on the two major parties for its failure. The CLUP also reproached the main opposition party’s satellite party *Future Korea Party*³⁴ and the widely

33 Chŏn Kwang-hun was released on bail in April, to be put under detention again in September for violating the terms of bail. In the meantime, he had again organized anti-government rallies. In late December 2020, a court acquitted Chŏn of all charges (Shim, Kyu-seok 2020, December 30).

34 In 2020, a new electoral system was introduced that aimed at granting smaller parties more representation through putting into practice new allocation rules for the proportional representation (PR) seats. The 47 PR seats remained the same, but 30 of them were to be allocated through a compensatory system, while 17 seats kept the parallel voting system. The two major parties, the ruling *Democratic Party* and the main opposition party *United Future Party*, however, bypassed the com-

read newspaper *Chosun Daily* of lowering the Christian party's prospects since they had claimed that CLUP spread fake news. The main reason for the loss, the press statement argues, lies in the lack of party members. Therefore, the party leadership pledged to win 1 million members in the following years (Yu, Yöng-dae 2020, April 17).

It is questionable whether such boastful promises can be kept. In fact, the durability of the CLUP – as of all Christian parties – has not been long. In June 2021, the party changed its name to *National Revolutionary Party* (*Kungminhyöngmyöngdang*), forgoing its reference to Christianity.³⁵ The party nominated the anti-LGBT activist Ko Yöng-il as its presidential candidate for the election in 2022 (Yi, Tae-ung 2021, December 13), but in the end, he withdrew his candidacy. Then, in April 2022, the party renamed itself again, assuming henceforth the name *Liberty Unification Party* (*Chayut'onggildang*). What remained constant are the radical positions and demands, and Pastor Chöon Kwang-hun who became the party leader, thus keeping a clearly 'Christian' orientation, even if the party name does not suggest this connection anymore.

In general, it is surprising that all attempts at establishing a Christian party over and over again followed similar strategies. One could, alternatively, conclude from the repeated defeats that too radical rhetoric, hostility against minorities, and narrow policy platforms may not be the key to success. This is especially the case when it is rather obvious that, actually, the interests of (some) conservative Protestant churches lie at the core of these party-political endeavors. The limited focus on Protestants as electoral base is equally noteworthy. While the anti-LGBT movement tries to also convince and win over non-believers, for example, by adding frames to their repertoire that may also appeal to publics beyond conservative Protestantism (cf. chapter 8.3), all Christian parties heavily relied on mobilizing Christians for the voting booth – and failed.

Had party officials paid closer attention to opinion polls among this target audience, they might have realized that the persistent focus on homosexuality might not be sufficient to perform better in elections. Several surveys commissioned by Protestant organizations had shown that homosexuality was an issue of only minor interest for Christians in general and Christian voters in particular. A Kukmin Daily survey from 2019 revealed that only 3 percent of Christian respondents considered homosexuality as a big threat for churches. 'Heresies' like the *Shinchönji* sect came in first place (37.9%), followed by the

pensatory system by establishing satellite parties which only competed for PR seats, ultimately betraying the original purpose of the modified electoral law. For details, cf. Cho, Sundai 2020.

35 The name of the *National Revolutionary Party* may seem odd on first sight, since the term 'revolution' is mainly associated with progressive upheavals. Unfortunately, party officials did not comment on the choice of party name. The party statutes of the party do not provide clues either, especially because the statutes seem to be unchanged in comparison to the version of its predecessor party CLUP or even CLP. The statutes of the *National Revolutionary Party* state that they were stipulated on 3 March 2016. When considering one of the main assumptions of this study, however, i.e., that the Protestant Right is pursuing a broad hegemonic project, this name makes more sense. The name is evocative of the 'Conservative Revolution', a group of political actors in the German Weimar Republic who advocated nationalist, anti-democratic, and anti-liberal positions, serving as trailblazers for the rise of Nazism (cf. Mohler 1972). Recently, representatives of the *New Right* in Europe and the United States have taken recourse to the ideology of the Conservative Revolution (Strobl 2021). As chapters 7 and 8 of this study have demonstrated, it is highly probable that Protestant right-wing actors in South Korea follow similar lines of thought.

low social trust that churches have (27.4%), and the breakaway of younger people (20.6%) (Sin, Sang-mok 2019, March 6). In another survey on the perceptions and political participation of Christians ahead of the 2017 presidential election commissioned by the *Korea Christian Press Forum* (*Han'guk kidokkyo òllon p'òròm*), the participants were asked what they considered the most pressing 'Christian' tasks for the next president to tackle. Only 16.4 percent of the respondents stated 'homosexuality' as the main priority. Other topics mentioned included church taxes (26.2%), the way Christianity is treated in schoolbooks (19%), heresy (15.7%), and Islam (12.4%).³⁶ While such 'Christian' topics do have some importance for the participants, the survey also revealed that the influence of faith is rather low in their voting decisions. 77.9 percent said that their voting behavior was not affected by influence from pastors (Pak Chae-ch'an 2017, April 25) – another piece of evidence for the lack of discretionary power of church leaders over their communities.

In summary, this subchapter has shown that anti-LGBT sentiments have made their way into Korean party politics. Political parties supported by parts of the conservative Protestant leadership in particular have focused on the fight against LGBT rights. Regarding the close personal overlaps that the CLP and the CLUP have with the anti-LGBT movement, I argue that these parties have become an integral part of the movement. Vice-versa, anti-LGBT activists have grown into crucial assets for the concrete political endeavors of the Protestant Right. One can assume that they have centrally influenced the programs of recent Christian parties to take on outspoken opposition against LGBT rights. At the same time, anti-LGBT attitudes have percolated traditional politics as well, as this chapter has demonstrated. Over the past years, I argue, the anti-LGBT movement has managed to politicize LGBT issues to an extent that politicians from established parties utilize the topic for their purposes, although they mostly do so when having a conservative, and especially, a Protestant background.

The involvement of anti-LGBT activists in (Christian) party politics also bespeaks their will to political power. Several of my neutral or pro-LGBT interviewees have claimed that the endeavors of the anti-LGBT movement were rather political than based on religious convictions (Interviews 1, 6, 9, 18, 26, 35). I argue that the aspiration for political power and for influence in and on society unifies large parts of the Protestant Right in Korea. The party statutes of the *National Revolutionary Party*, which remained unchanged since the foundation of the CLP, put it this way: "The National Revolutionary Party aims to [...] achieve national unity to fulfill Christian social and political responsibilities for the nation and people" (Liberty Unification Party 2023b). Consequently, the party indirectly asserted that advocating anti-LGBT sentiments were their downright responsibility as Christians. As seen in this chapter, however, self-interests rather than a sense of responsibility seem to be the basis of the Protestant Right's party politics. In general, the negative politicization of LGBT rights serves as one means to the end of enforcing allegedly 'common' Protestant interests and enlarging Protestant influence on politics

36 The survey results do not indicate whether the answers were of an open type or predetermined. In the latter case, even the validity and significance of the answers given is questionable. A methodologically sounder approach would then have been to have the survey participants evaluate each answer possibility on a scale from 'not important at all' to 'very important'.

and society, besides, and in combination with promoting other topics such as anti-communism, anti-Islam and anti-migration attitudes and pro-Americanism.

As the cases of Christian political parties revealed, however, these political projects proved largely unsuccessful. Taking a Gramscian perspective on these attempts at concrete political influence, one could invoke the assumption that this move for political power may have come prematurely. Apparently, the issues promoted by right-wing Protestants did not convince many people, at least not in the sense that ferocious anti-LGBT rhetoric would lead them to voting for a Christian party. Overall, it seems that the endeavors of the anti-LGBT movement and the Protestant Right at large are mostly (and only) effective within conservative Protestant circles. In the political arena in particular, these actors are unlikely to wield much influence on non-Christian parts of voters. The lopsided concentration on a conservative Protestant electorate is certainly to blame for this. But the recurring electoral failures are also testament to the fact that the Protestant Right is far from achieving cultural hegemony. Otherwise, one could have expected Christian parties to fare way better. Yet, as already mentioned, the efforts of the anti-LGBT movement have not at all been in vain. Anti-LGBT politics of the Protestant Right increasingly make their mark on established political actors.

Pro-LGBT civil society actors, aware of these developments, try to exert indirect and direct influence in the political realm themselves. In fact, despite concerted actions and defamation campaigns against individual politicians who support LGBT rights, several pro-LGBT bills have made their way into parliaments and have been passed since the early 2000s. What is more, unlike the Protestant Right, the pro-LGBT movement does have parliamentary representation. For many years now, the progressive *Justice Party* has been an active and unswerving advocate of LGBT rights. Also owing to the electoral system, the Justice Party only occupied a few seats in the National Assembly until 2024. But the parliamentary presence of this party is proof that non-exclusionary, pro-human rights, and pro-LGBT positions do have the potential to yield electoral success – at least more so than the opposite political agenda promoted by the Protestant Right.

10.6 Conclusion: politicized and professionalized anti-LGBT networks

Using the empirical data from this study's protest event analysis and the method of network analysis in particular, this chapter set out to investigate the central actors of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, as well as their roles, and interrelations. The results reveal that while indeed many collective and individual actors are involved in the movement, only a relatively small core is in charge of the bulk of anti-LGBT activities. For the case of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, one can confidently claim that it did not take the path of informal, non-hierarchical, and grassroots structures as suggested by scholars of progressive social movements (cf. Sutherland et al. 2013; Voss & Sherman 2000, Staggenborg 1988). Rather, professionalized, specialized, and functionally differentiated leadership structures have emerged, which comes close to fulfilling Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" (Michels 1958; cf. also McCarthy & Zald 1973; 1977). This is perhaps a special trait of conservative movements, especially those that have a religious foundation. Pre-existing structures as well as the traditionally hierarchical fabric of Christian churches may

have contributed to this kind of development. However, further comparative research is needed to confidently confirm this point.

A closer look at these leading actors showed that, early on, central organizations of the politically active Korean Protestantism, that is, the *Protestant Right*, got active against LGBT rights, most prominently the CCK. Soon, however, other subgroups of Korean Protestantism such as denominations also joined the fight, partially even institutionalizing anti-LGBT positions in their denominational statutes. These latter, specifically religious actors have been drawn into the movement by SMOs that had already been advocating anti-LGBT attitudes for a longer time. Many of these organizations were newly established, mostly in the course of the intensification of activism in the period 2013–2015. They have an explicit anti-LGBT focus and they often specialize and concentrate on concrete topics like health, families, or the military – at least when judging from their names. Some alliances like *Tongbanyŏn* figure prominently among these specifically created SMOs, but when scrutinizing the actual acting people, it turns out that only a small leading circle of organizers, disseminators, and ‘masterminds’ executes and accompanies the lion’s share of activities. They fulfill the function of norm brokers and thus centrally contribute to the enlargement and professionalization of the movement. Several of the anti-LGBT SMOs have adopted ‘secularly’ sounding names, with representatives using secular, that is, non-Christian arguments against LGBT rights. However, these SMOs are – besides the few rightist Catholic and Buddhist groups – firmly embedded in Korean Protestantism, an identity background that they apparently attempt to hide to appeal to larger publics.

In addition to the social movement organizations and individual movement leaders, political actors in the narrow sense have emerged as important for the development and workings of anti-LGBT politics in Korea. These actors can be divided into two groups. First, established politicians like lawmakers and government representatives join the movement by adopting anti-LGBT positions and participating in protest events. They also depend on the movement in the sense that politicians can benefit from an endorsement and active support if they declare themselves opponents of LGBT rights. On the other hand, politicians can also get under fire as soon as they are perceived to be in favor of pro-LGBT bills. On many occasions, anti-LGBT activists have obstructed election campaigns of candidates, often combining this opposition against individual politicians with fundamental criticism directed against governments led by the *Democratic Party of Korea*. The second group of political actors are Christian political parties. The fight against LGBT rights has been a longstanding core feature of these parties, which is hardly surprising since several anti-LGBT activists are active members of these parties, serving as candidates in the 2016 and 2020 general elections.

These insights demonstrate that the opposition against LGBT rights has the potential of bringing together and creating closer links between the Protestant Right and ‘traditional’ politics. At the same time, the network analysis shows that a similar connective effect can be observed within Protestantism itself. The struggles against LGBT rights render possible the cooperation between otherwise opposing organizations, such as CCK and CCIK in the religio-political area, but also among the manifold Protestant denominations in Korea, which are often only united in mutual disdain. At the same time, rifts within the anti-LGBT movement itself have also come to the fore through network anal-

ysis. Certain 'ex-gay' organizations close to Pastor Lee Jonah keep some distance to the mainstream anti-LGBT SMOs and rather cooperate among themselves, reproaching the mainstream leaders of the movement of acting out of a will to political power rather than 'caring' for LGBT people out of religious conviction.

This chapter has demonstrated that the Korean anti-LGBT movement has close links to both conservative parts of Protestantism and the conservative political sphere. To some extent, the movement carries on the historically grown alliance between the conservative historical bloc in South Korea and the conservative Protestant sub-bloc (cf. chapter 3.2). At the same time, however, anti-LGBT actors are part of a larger political project which, so-to-speak, aims for breathing new life into Korean conservatism in general. The (failed) attempts at establishing Christian parties at the national level are just the most obvious example. More important, I argue, are the underlying political contents that the anti-LGBT movement, and generally, the Protestant Right have been promoting, and that have actually brought dynamism to conservative politics. Of course, these contents (anti-LGBT, anti-Islam, anti-migration, anti-communist, anti-government sentiments) consist mostly of a strategy of fueling exclusion and hostility, and 'innovative' combinations the two. But when taking a non-normative perspective, the evidence clearly shows that these elements have entered broad areas of politics. Politicians have become increasingly aware of the delicate character of these topics, and some of them – mostly politicians on the conservative political spectrum – proceeded to actively address these topics, presumably also for the purpose of augmenting their own political standing and electoral success.

This increasing joint usage of anti-LGBT framings is built upon a precarious basis, though. While ideas may travel with ease, complicated personal connections can thwart these very diffusion channels. The case of Pastor Chŏn Kwang-hun, who, as I have shown, heavily relies on anti-LGBT rhetoric in his religio-political projects, is exemplary of this unstable relationship between the Protestant Right and established politics. The anti-government mass rallies he initiated in 2019 and 2020 attracted eminent political figures. Among them was Oh Se-hoon (*O Se-hun*), a politician from the major conservative party and former mayor of Seoul (2006–2011). When Oh attended one of Chŏn's rallies in October 2019, he had joined in the radical rhetoric, calling President Moon Jae-in a dictator. After he was reelected mayor of the capital city in 2021, however, he turned his back on Chŏn due to the latter's continued violations of Covid-19 social distancing and quarantine rules (Yin, Hyŏn-u 2021, August 10). By then, Chŏn had become a liability, not only for Oh Se-hoon, but also in the eyes of large parts of Korean Protestantism, by whom he was declared heretical and expelled from the CCK (Cho, Hyŏn 2022, December 7). Future research will have to further investigate the connections of the Protestant Right with other conservative and far-right political and civil society actors. Some inter-personal relations seem to exist, as well as a significant potential to mobilize Christian protesters for far-right rallies (cf. Cho & Lee 2021). This study was not able to unfold inter-organizational connections beyond the area of anti-LGBT politics, for example in relation to other minor far-right parties like the *Our Republican Party* (*Urigonghwadang*), which emerged in Korean politics after the impeachment of Park Geun-Hye, but has been equally unsuccessful in elections so far.

However, the fact that anti-LGBT politics are largely dominated by Protestant actors is a remarkable result in itself. The deep embeddedness in Protestantism definitely constitutes an asset of the anti-LGBT movement, benefitting from mobilization-related and other resources. At the same time, this one-sidedness also represents a constraint. In fact, the results of the network analysis and this study at large confirm Vasi's (2011, 16) argument on the miscibility of social movements: "Contention spreads faster when brokers connect few groups and when they connect groups that are highly miscible; yet, contention spreads furthest when brokers connect diverse groups and groups with low miscibility." Against this background, the lack of relations with actors outside the confines of conservative Protestantism may explain the limited success of the anti-LGBT movement to reach out to non-Christian publics as well, as chapter 9 has suggested.

11. Communicating anti-LGBT content: the roles of education and media

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the Korean anti-LGBT movement treats and uses education and media to promote its worldviews. In a broad sense, I focus on the communicative actions and channels that activists utilize, emphasizing the particular characteristics of these socio-political actors as a social movement with a conservative Christian background. This background comes with grown structures, resources, and linkages – the social movement bases – that can be expected to influence the communicative means activists use and promote. This chapter thus concentrates not on the mediated anti-LGBT discourse that activists wish to create, but rather on the means of creating public attention and of promoting a certain kind of ‘learning’¹ of anti-LGBT sentiments, which the movement wishes for. Additionally, I investigate how education and media themselves have been problematized by movement actors.

The previous chapters have focused on the *what* (i.e., action forms, targets, and frames) and *who* (social movement organizations, movement leadership) dimensions of movement activities. This chapter delves into the *how* of the dissemination of frames, including the questions of which roles activists play in this, and how the means and institutions of communication, for example TV stations and educational material at schools, get criticized for spreading positive views or even just neutral information on homosexuality and other LGBT issues. The analytical chapters so far have demonstrated that communicative and ‘educational’ action makes up a large part of the movement’s action forms: The PEA dataset reveals that press conferences and press releases are

1 Here and at other places in this study, I put the words ‘learning’ and ‘education’ (and derivatives) in quotation marks to denote the tension between a concept of education which aims at teaching things that are helpful for leading a successful and fulfilling professional and personal life. Within the normative model of conservative Christian moral doctrine, teaching the sinfulness of homosexual acts and queer lifestyles may make sense. From an empirical perspective, however, for example in the fields of psychology and social sciences, we learn that such teachings have the potential of causing great harm to LGBT people and on the people in their close social environments (cf. e.g., Linville 2017; Sowe et al. 2014; Wilkerson et al. 2012; on Korea: Lee, Hyemin et al. 2021). Under certain circumstances, the beneficial quality of ‘education’ thus becomes questionable, which justifies the usage of quotation marks as a marker of counterpurposiveness and inappropriateness.

used at 52.1 percent of all protest events investigated. ‘Educational’ events like seminars and fora make up 17.2 percent (cf. Table 6). But also other protest forms like rallies, petitions, and prayer meetings rely on media coverage to exploit the full potential of public attention. As I will show, the coverage of the conservative Protestant newspaper *Kukmin Daily* in particular plays an important role in the communication of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

Previous research on anti-LGBT movements has mostly provided content analyses of the media activities of anti-LGBT activists. Nami Kim (2016, 98–100), for example, has cursorily described how the Korean Protestant Right problematized the appearance of homosexuals in TV programs. Didi Herman (1997, 25–59) analyzed how the conservative evangelical US newspaper *Christianity Today* had constructed a “devil discourse” on homosexuality since the 1950s, among others by linking the latter topic with other issues such as anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism. Studies on other countries also focus on the media representation and conveyance of anti-LGBT contents: for example, moral panics and homophobia created and reproduced by Ghanaian media (Tettey 2016), anti-LGBT coverage in the name of religious freedom in the US state of Mississippi and in US national newspapers (Brown et al. 2018), a social media campaign organized by Christian and Muslim actors against gay pride parades in Singapore (Han, Sam 2018), an anti-LGBT Twitter campaign in Indonesia (Fitri et al. 2019), and homophobic hate speech on Turkish social media platforms (Karayığit et al. 2022). In recent years, research has thus mainly concentrated on the usage of newer information communication technologies (ICTs), suggesting that they play an increasingly important role for the construction of anti-LGBT discourses.

Research on anti-LGBT attitudes and education mostly deal with the situation of LGBT students in formal education. Jones (2014), for example, examined homophobia in secondary schools (K-12) and higher education. Another study by Callaghan (2018) specifically focuses on institutionalized homophobia and transphobia in Catholic schools in Canada. In recent years, scholars have also increasingly interrogated how conservative political and movement actors politicize formal education curricula on issues of sexuality and gender. One example for such an endeavor is the so-called *Demonstration for all* (*Demo für alle*), a group that formed in the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg in 2014, opposing a new curriculum for sexual education. The group fights against an alleged ‘early sexualization’ of children, against same-sex marriage, and ‘gender ideology’ (Schmincke 2015). In Uganda, the government developed an “anti-gay public pedagogy” in cooperation with Anglicanism and US evangelicals, a lifelong learning program which also fueled the passage of a draconic anti-homosexuality bill in 2014 (Grace 2016). In their introduction of a special issue, Miller-Idriss and Pilkington (2017, 133) state that generally, there is a lack of scholarly work on educational interventions and endeavors of the radical right, especially in relation to the broad topic of gender. This study strives to help fill this research gap by analyzing in depth the educational ambitions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, including its mediatized efforts, which also constitute channels of teaching and learning.

The now following section shortly recapitulates the Gramsci-inspired insights on journalists, the media, and education, which have already been introduced in chapters 3.4 and 3.5. The analytical section of this chapter then consists of two parts: I will first

investigate attacks against media outlets and educational actors that (are perceived to) positively cover LGBT issues. In the second analytical part, I proceed to the movement's own educational and mediatized activities against homosexuality and transgender topics. A brief conclusion assessing the communicative means of fighting for hegemony finalizes the chapter.

11.1 The roles of (social) media and education for social movements

Education is a key element in Antonio Gramsci's thinking on hegemony. In his view, hegemony can only be achieved when successfully educating the masses. Education should not be a top-down relationship, though, but rather a reciprocal one, in which the educators are also expected to be open to learning from popular knowledge (Gramsci 1971, 349f.; quoted in Borg et al. 2002, 8; Gramsci 1977b, 13). Gramsci has thus an active or activist conceptualization of education (Borg 2002, 6), which, in order to accomplish actual transformation, should not only be directed at pupils and students in educational institutions, but involve everyone irrespective of age and educational background.

Social movement studies have also granted high importance to non-formal, mostly adult education (Kuk & Tarlau 2020; Hall et al. 2006, 6; Freire 1970). A crucial social mechanism related to education is, of course, *learning*, which can affect both individual members of a movement and people outside the movement (Hall et al. 2006, 6; cf. also Hall & Clover 2005). Complex learning in the sense of changing one's beliefs, values, and behavior is a prime goal of the ideological efforts of any social movement (cf. Ayoub 2016, 34). Learning on the individual level is, however, not easily observable. Therefore, this chapter shall focus on the educational efforts of the anti-LGBT movement, analyzing the ways and means that activists use to incite learning processes in their adherents and, so they wish, in the general public as well.

Educating is, whether reciprocal or not, always a communicative process. The communication channels through which learning can take place are diverse. The educator may be an instructor, a lecturer, or an expert who presents their insights at seminars or in other kinds of 'traditional' educational settings. Education in a broader sense can also work through other means such as authored books, televised programs, or blogs and videos on social media. The media play a significant role for the dissemination of movement contents. Gramsci, indeed, argues that journalism can and should be used for political purposes. He pictures such an *integral journalism* as explicitly activist and pedagogical, in a way that it actively modifies and creates the needs and perceptions of the public, while at the same time also building upon existing knowledge and aspirations (Gramsci 1985, 408; Hoare and Sperber 2016, 49).

The concept of 'journalist' should be understood in broad terms here. Gramsci's *organic intellectuals* certainly fall into this category. Accordingly, movement leaders and rank-and-file activists alike appear in the media, but they also cooperate with and make use of media and create their own, 'alternative' media outlets. The traditional mass media play an eminent role in the creation and influence of public discourse (Gamson 2004, 243), but newer information communication technologies have also found increasing usage by social movements in recent decades (Earl 2019). Activists target and use

different media channels depending on the audiences they wish to reach. TV and radio programs, as well as newspapers are conducive for targeting large numbers of people, while self-created ICTs serve to speak to the primary constituencies of a movement (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 136f.). Each means of communication thus comes with obstacles and benefits. Social media channels are attractive since they are low-cost, and activists keep control over their content production (Earl & Kimport 2011). Traditional media, on the other hand, are less easily accessible due to media bias and the gatekeeping function of journalists (Gamson 2004, 243). It can be expected that activists seek cooperation with media outlets that have a similar ideological orientation to avoid negative media attention, which could turn out detrimental for a movement (Rohlinger & Corrigan-Brown 2019, 139). Finally, the usage or fabrication of charismatic leading figures is an important factor for successful media attention. Movement strategies often include a concentration on a few selected spokespersons in their media representation to promote these individuals as leaders and make the movement more relatable (Gamson 2004, 252f.). This chapter demonstrates that all the aspects just mentioned play a role also in the workings of the Korean anti-LGBT movement.

11.2 Education and media as topics and targets of anti-LGBT activism

Beyond taking action in 'educational' and journalistic contexts themselves, the Korean anti-LGBT movement also tackles the topics of education and media in a twofold manner. On the one hand, activists criticize pro-LGBT policy proposals, regulations, as well as media programs, targeting the *content* that is produced. On the other hand, the movement also attacks the *organizations* behind the production of these contents: local governments, the ministry of education, and media companies. Table 16 provides an overview of the most frequent topics and targets around educational and media issues. The following two sections zoom in on some of the cases given in the table below.

Table 16: Education and media as targets and topics of anti-LGBT protest 2010–2020

Topic/target		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Education area	Seoul Student Human Rights (HR) Ordinance	-	6	8	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	19
	School textbooks	-	-	-	6	2	1	1	-	-	3	-	13
	South Kyöngsang Province Student HR Ordinance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	6
	Seoul National University Human Rights Guidelines	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	5
	Feminist lecture at Handong University	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	7
	Chongshin University controversy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
Media and cultural products	Criticizing films, TV programs, etc.	4	2	3	2	4	2	-	3	2	-	-	22
	Hankyoreh reports (e.g. on Esther Prayer Movement)	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	7	1	-	10
	Journalistic regulations on homosexuality	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4

Notes: This is an excerpt from Table 3 in chapter 6.1, displaying the topics of protest related to education and the media. Only topics/targets with more than 3 protest events are given. The year 2020 only includes data until the end of April.

School textbook controversies, educational policies and educational institutions: evoking dangers for children and young people

Educational policies in the broad sense are among the most prevalent protest topics of the anti-LGBT movement. The *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* has been met with the greatest amount of resistance,² but also other policies and bill proposals of a similar kind have come under fire on the regional and national levels, such as the *South Kyöngsang Province Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2018 and 2019, the *Seoul Children and Youth Human Rights Ordinance* in 2012, the *North Ch'ungchöng Province Education Rights Charter* in

2 Kim Ol Teun's (2021) PhD dissertation analyzes pro and anti-LGBT discourse coalitions. The *Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance* is one of his primary case studies. For details on the policy-making process of this ordinance, refer to Kim's thorough study.

2016, and the *Kangwŏn Province Student Human Rights Ordinance* in 2013. In the area of legal codification, it is not only policies and ordinances that the movement finds fault with. Ministerial and governmental regulations and directives also get under attack. Examples include, on several occasions, the Ministry of Education's decision to include information on homosexuality in school textbooks, as well as the *Standard Plan for Sex Education at Schools*, and a plan of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Families to introduce gender education for public servants.

Also beyond the political and governmental arenas, regulations related to LGBT topics in education have come under fire from the anti-LGBT movement. Educational institutions – universities in particular – have been faced with backlash. The prestigious Seoul National University (SNU), for example, set out to introduce *Human Rights Guidelines* in 2016, explicitly including provisions for protection on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The *Human Rights Center* of SNU had done preparatory work in the previous years and joined forces with the university's student council to enact the guidelines. In the end, however, the enactment failed owing to pressures from conservative Protestant actors from inside and outside SNU. The *Seoul National University Christian Association* (*Sŏuldaehakkyo kidokkyo ch'ongdongmunhoe*), the *Conference of Christian SNU Professors* (*Sŏuldaehakkyo kidokkyo hyŏnbŭihoe*), and the ad-hoc group *Students' Solidarity Against the SNU Human Rights Guidelines* (*Sŏuldae in'gwŏn kaidŭrain pandae haksaeŋ yŏndae*) in particular fought against human rights protection at SNU, problematizing mainly the inclusion of homosexuality. Yet, other prominent anti-LGBT activists like the leader of *Es-ther Prayer Movement*, Yi Yong-hŭi, also appeared at protest events against the guidelines (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, September 21; Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, October 10). The openly lesbian SNU student council president Kim Po-mi, who was elected in 2015, became a particularly favored target of anti-LGBT activists. For instance, on a protest poster, she was accused of being a "dictator", insinuating that the Human Rights Guidelines would lead SNU into a "homosexual dictatorship" (Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, September 21). As of December 2022, human rights guidelines have not been introduced at SNU, as subsequent attempts to pass an *SNU Human Rights Charter* have been unsuccessful so far, despite ample support among students.³

Universities have become the sites of anti-LGBT occurrences on other occasions as well. Again at Seoul National University in 2016, a banner produced by the queer students' groups QIS (*Queer in SNU*) got destroyed by unknown perpetrators. The banner explicitly welcomed all new students to the campus, regardless of whether they belong to sexual minorities or not. The person(s) who cut the banner into pieces, however, apparently aimed at reversing this welcoming message into its opposite. In his study *When Words Become Knives* (*Mal-I k'al-I teolttae*), Hong Sŏng-su describes how QIS dealt the incident. The students, rather than producing a new banner, used band aid to restore the original, creating a sign of the wounds that those who wish to exclude LGBT people inflict

3 A survey conducted among 5,363 SNU students by the Graduate School of Public Administration of SNU found that 95% of respondents approved of the items of non-discrimination proposed by the projected *SNU Human Rights Charter*, explicitly including the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity (Kang, To-hŭi 2022, December 8).

on them. As a result, QIS and queer students in general received a lot of support and solidarity on campus, eventually reversing the intended effect of anti-LGBT forces (Hong, Söng-su 2018, 219f.).

QIS has kept up the struggle against anti-LGBT occurrences at SNU by protesting against special lectures given by anti-LGBT activists on campus. Among these anti-LGBT events were, for example, a lecture by Yöm An-söp, one of the most industrious anti-LGBT activists in Korea, organized by the *Conference of Christian SNU Professors* (Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, March 30), and a talk by a US 'ex-gay' activist organized by the *Truth Forum*, a group with dependencies at several Korean universities, which got established in opposition to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye and promotes anti-LGBT policies, the interests of conservative Protestantism, and the alliance of South Korea with the United States (Yu, Yöng-dae 2018, July 11). Several further events with anti-LGBT contents have also taken place at SNU. An SNU professor, with whom I conducted a research interview for this study, stated that it was a clever strategy to hold events at SNU premises, since anti-LGBT forces thus communicate to the public that the most prestigious university of Korea approves the promoted contents. Anti-LGBT activists take advantage of the name of SNU, despite the fact that the actual academic quality of the lectures is highly questionable (Interview 6). As a public and religiously unaffiliated educational institution, using SNU resources renders anti-LGBT positions more reliable, legitimate, and objective, even though the actual support from the overall institution may be rather superficial. In fact, several SNU premises can be rented without much effort also by non-members of SNU. Yet just the fact that the name SNU appears on promotional posters as an event's location endows the movement, in the broad sense, with institutionalized cultural capital insofar as activists can indirectly claim recognition from a renowned educational institution (cf. Bourdieu 1986, 247f.; cf. also Interview 26).

Conflicts around LGBT issues have also entered the campuses of Christian universities. Chapter 12 delves deeper into pro and anti-LGBT endeavors at two Protestant institutions of higher education, Handong University and Changshin University. I will now focus on a case that occurred at the private Yonsei University, another prestigious university in Seoul, which has its origins in missionary activities of US Presbyterians. In 2019, Yonsei University declared that it would introduce mandatory human rights education for all undergraduate students. On 13 August of the same year, the *Alliance of Citizens Loving Yonsei University* (*Yonsedae-rül saranghanün kungmin yönhap*) held a protest and press conference at the front gate of Yonsei campus. I conducted an observation of this event. The KACC dedicated a press release to this protest (KACC 2019, August 14). The participants included several eminent figures of the anti-LGBT movement like Yöm An-söp and Yi Su-jin. After singing the *aegukka*, the South Korean national anthem, they expounded the reasons for their opposition, finding especially fault with two topics of the projected human rights curriculum: gender equality and refugees. Two parents of Yonsei students, one student, a member of parliament, and the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement took the floor, asserting that the gender education would in fact promote homosexuality, criticizing that this would not fit the Christian foundation of Yonsei University. Kim Hyun Mee (*Kim Hyön-mi*) in particular, a Yonsei professor of Cultural Anthropology specializing on gender studies, was lambasted for her feminist positions, an

alleged hatred against men, and ‘gender ideology’.⁴ The speakers worried that students would be taught un-Christian contents and that Christian attitudes would be marginalized, which one of them referred to as “reverse discrimination”. In this line of thought, the KACC (2019, August 14) noted:

Rather than pushing ahead with such a crooked human rights education, Yonsei University should strengthen its educational system to teach students more deeply about what true Christian spirit and values are. Why do students need education on gender, and included in this, homosexuality, which shows the height of human corruption?

Be it pro-LGBT policies, the discussion of homosexuality in school textbooks, or pro-LGBT endeavors at universities: it becomes clear that anti-LGBT activists frame education or educational settings, in which positive or also just matter-of-fact information on sexual orientations and gender identities are shared, as dangerous for the public in general – and especially for Christians, children, and young people. The latter two groups in particular frequently end up being focused on by the movement. Chapter 7.2 has already established that the reference to the allegedly endangered well-being of children is a common and potentially effective framing strategy of the movement. Invoking concerns about children and young people grants credibility, moral superiority, and attention (Schmincke 2015, 93). I therefore argue that calls for protecting young people represent a common part of anti-LGBT framings, also and especially in the context of education. Many statements from anti-LGBT activists substantiate this assumption.

The head of Esther Prayer Movement, Yi Yong-hŭi, for example, claimed that education on homosexuality had already entered school education without the knowledge and consent of parents, thereby referring to concrete occurrences already mentioned above.

Parents are not aware of it, but children of elementary, middle, and high school students are thoroughly receiving homosexual advocacy education through textbooks and sex culture centers. It is no coincidence that homosexuals are elected as the president of the student council of Seoul National University and that homosexual groups are formed at theological colleges. (Yi, Yong-hŭi, quoted in Paek, Sang-Hyŏn 2016, February 23)

At a theological conference, another prominent anti-LGBT activist, Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, maintained that general pro-LGBT policies like the Anti-Discrimination Law would also have grave effects on the education of children.

The bigger problem with the law against discrimination of homosexuals is its impact on education for the next generation. [...] It is problematic that one would no longer be able to include the view that homosexuality is abnormal, unethical, and sinful into educational goals, educational contents, and living guidance standards. [...] This would

4 For the sake of objectivity, I hereby disclose that Professor Kim Hyun Mee served as my mentor during my field work as an affiliated guest researcher at Yonsei University from March until August 2019.

lead to a serious distortion of the perception of homosexuality in the next generation. (Kil, Wŏn-p'yŏng, quoted in Ch'oe, Ki-yŏng 2016, March 9)

Activists also attempt to invoke concrete fears that children may be harmed when learning about homosexuality, also by constructing far-fetched linkages between phenomena that are not necessarily related to each other, as the following quote from activists Kim Chi-yŏn at a meeting of the *Heresy Task Force of the Korean Churches* shows.

The school teaches homosexuality as human rights, and treats moral values as old-fashioned relics, calling it sexual orientation, sexual self-determination, and third sex. According to statistics, about 15 percent of runaway boys are *alba* having sex with homosexuals for money. (Kim, Chi-yŏn, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, May 15)

'*Alba*' is the Korean term for part-time jobs. Kim Chi-yŏn thus suggests in her statement that teaching positively about homosexuality might lead children to go astray and get involved in sex work. Besides such starkly fearmongering assertions concerning the well-being of children, another alleged, yet more diffuse dangers also get invoked. Despite the fact that the projected revision of the *Gender Equality Ordinance* of Kyŏnggi Province in 2020 did not include any reference to homosexuality or trans people – or to related educational contents, for that matter – parent activist Ok Kwang-jŏng insinuated that the passing of the amendment would imply grave consequences for children. "If gender education is carried out according to the Gender Equality Ordinance in Gyeonggi Province, kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools would have to teach homosexuality and transgender people as normal and recognize dozens of third sexes." She adds that "if this happens, homosexuals and transgender people would also work as teachers or employees in daycare centers and schools" (Ok, Kwang-jŏng, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2020, April 3).

Homosexuality and related topics are presented as threats on basically every level and in all areas of education. All institutions, starting from kindergartens until universities, the movement claims, are affected by pro-LGBT education. The underlying fear that activists wish to create is that of a 'sexualization' of children and youth, meaning that teaching and learning about sexual minorities might make kids homosexual or trans. This has been disproven by serious research (cf. e.g., Briken et al. 2019), but the movement tries to spread 'alternative facts' by vociferously claiming the opposite – also through referring to allegedly scientific research (cf. chapter 8.3). The framing strategy of combining educational 'threats' with the focus group of children and young people seems to be regarded as effective to the extent that a vast range of policies, educational curricula, and institutions gets connected to this topic. In this 'logic', a broadly conceived bill like the Anti-Discrimination Law, which, essentially, does not have an educational component, would also ultimately and centrally harm the youth.

Another aspect of education is of course the Gramscian perspective. If we assume that the Korean anti-LGBT movement follows a Gramsci-inspired strategy of reaching cultural hegemony, for which this study has demonstrated much evidence, then we should also expect them to counteract similarly oriented activities on the side of the opponents. Since education plays an eminent role in Gramsci's 'war of position' strategy,

delegitimizing the opponents' educational efforts can be regarded as a key task as well – even though such strategies may include nonfactual claims and consciously launched attacks against selected, unrelated policies and institutional settings. Similar strategies of delegitimization and blaming can also be observed in the area of media and cultural production, as the next section will illustrate.

Attacking the media and cultural production for covering LGBT themes

A particular point of contention for the anti-LGBT movement in the area of media is the *Human Rights Reporting Rules* of the *Journalists Association of Korea* (*Han'gukkiyahyŏphoe*). Passed in September 2011 with the support of the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea* (NHRCK), these rules specify in article 8 that media coverage should not present sexual minorities as wrong or corrupt, that hateful speech should be avoided, and that sexual minorities should not be linked to mental illness and other social pathologies such as HIV/AIDS (Journalists Association of Korea 2022). Anti-LGBT activists blame these rules for what they regard as a biased, that is, *positive* media coverage on LGBT topics. At many protest events, activists especially attack the NHRCK, a common target of anti-LGBT activism, which they claim is mainly to be held accountable for “dictatorial” press control as the following KACC statement suggests.

The current NHRCK has strong powers. For example, in September 2011, the Journalists Association of Korea issued the ‘Human Rights Reporting Rules’, which contain provisions that block honest reports on sexual minorities (homosexuality). Because of this, most of the media in Korea are doing things like ‘press control’ like it is common in a dictatorship, so that they cannot approach and report about the problems of homosexuality in Korea and social problems caused by it. (KACC 2015, July 9)

Another press statement accompanying a protest event against the NHRCK claims that, as a result of the Human Rights Reporting Rules, “no media in our country are properly reporting on the misery and evils of homosexuals” (quoted in Yu, Yŏng-dae 2016, June 23). At yet another protest directed directly against the NHRCK and the Journalists Association of Korea, an activist from the *Real Love School Parents’ Alliance* (*Ch’amsaranghakhpumoyŏnhap*) argued that the reporting rules “cover the eyes and ears of people”, adding that “as a result of these policies that make people more ignorant, AIDS is spreading rapidly among teenagers” (An, Ch’ŏn-il, quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2016, August 3).

Based upon the claim that an allegedly biased coverage on homosexuality would harm people (especially the youth) and that the freedom of press was in danger, the anti-LGBT movement not only attacks the NHRCK and the Journalists Association, but also other media companies. Media houses with wide coverage in particular often come under fire when reporting, in the eyes of anti-LGBT activists, ‘all too positively’ about homosexuality and transgender topics. In September 2012, for example, anti-LGBT groups protested in front of the public KBS (*Korean Broadcasting System*) subsidiary KBS Joy against the projected airing of a program on trans people. Activists called it a “shameful transgender talk show”, demanding KBS “not to raise its ratings with sen-

sational and provocative material while turning a blind eye to the national sentiment”, and announcing a “one million signatures movement” against the TV station (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2012, September 2). The program ‘That XY Woman’ (*XY künnyö*) was in fact cancelled shortly afterwards owing to the massive opposition from Protestant groups, which had formed the ad-hoc *National Alliance against KBS which Instigates Transgender and Transsexuals*, comprising a total of 237 SMOs. One representative of the alliance demanded that “such programs should be completely abolished because they can especially affect children and confuse gender identity” (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2012, September 13).

TV stations have been attacked on numerous other occasions as well. In 2014, MBC (*Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation*) came under fire for airing the historical drama ‘The Diary of Hyöng Yöng-dang’ (*Hyöng Yöng-dang ilgi*), lambasting a homosexual storyline and criticizing the appearance of handsome male actors (“*kkotminam*”) who might influence the imagination of young people (Yu, Yöng-dae 2014, October 1). Anti-LGBT activists often raise the fear that the gender and sexual identities of children and adolescents are not yet fixed, so that movies and TV series could lead them to ‘become’ homosexual. A KACC press statement in 2011 focused on the alleged dangers of the gay-themed movie ‘Just Friends?’ (*Ch’in’gu sai?*), even increasing the threat through indirectly comparing homosexuality to cases of sexual violence:

The problem of homosexuality has a huge impact on young people. This film is an artwork that does not interest the older generation. However, it is a topic that young people are interested in and show curiosity for. This is the period when gender identity is less established. Therefore, there is a high possibility of imitation. In 2008, there was an incident in the Taegu area in which elementary school students imitated sexual violence that they saw on cable TV. (KACC 2011, April 21)

A lesbian-themed drama, ‘Sönam Girls High School Detectives’ (*Sönam’yögo t’amjöngdan*) produced by the private TV station JTBC (*Joongang Tongyang Broadcasting Company*) was also met with fierce resistance from anti-LGBT groups for depicting the first lesbian kiss on Korean TV. The groups handed over 30,000 signatures to JTBC, criticizing the “support and promotion of homosexuality among female students” (quoted in Yu, Yöng-dae 2015, March 3). In June 2017, ‘ex-gay’ groups and other anti-LGBT SMOs criticized an MBC program on the human rights of sexual minorities for failing to also include an ‘ex-gay’ perspective (Yu, Yöng-dae 2017, June 5). A special broadcast by EBS (*Educational Broadcasting System*) in December 2017, in which homosexual, bisexual, and trans students spoke about their experiences, was also met with protest by anti-LGBT activists who blamed the TV station for advocating homosexuality and radical feminism. The activists used violence against objects, throwing eggs and flour onto the EBS company sign, and tried to occupy the lobby of the broadcasting service, demanding EBS’s CEO Chang Hae-ran to resign (Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, January 10).

The cases just presented give an overview of the action forms and frames used against the televised coverage of LGBT themes irrespective of whether they take the form of artworks such as series or films, or a more documentary or informative style. The alleged threat to children and youth gets invoked here as well, and also the educational ‘mission’

of TV stations is emphasized in many statements. It is noteworthy, however, that over the years, TV stations seem to have become less amenable to anti-LGBT groups' demands. Except for the KBS program on transsexuality in 2012, broadcasting services have predominantly remained steadfast in the face of attempts to restrict their press freedom. This shows that the very arguments on the freedoms of press and of expression, which anti-LGBT very much like to point out to their opponents, can also be turned against them. As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, in fact, nobody hinders anti-LGBT activists from exercising their freedom of press, a freedom that they, I argue, interpret in narrow terms in order to spread their own worldviews and impede others from getting public attention.

Media formats other than TV and movie productions also often get attacked by anti-LGBT actors. This is especially the case when the activists themselves or the Protestant Right at large draw criticism due to their actions, which shows that they are very much aware of the negative effects that unfavorable media coverage can have on them. In this context, both social media companies, as well as progressive traditional media have become targets of protest. In May 2016, for instance, anti-LGBT SMOs criticized Facebook for deleting a post by the group *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* on what they claim was "sound" criticism against homosexuality, reproaching Facebook of seriously violating the freedom of expression and "manipulating public opinion in a biased manner" (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyön 2016, May 16). The influential Korean portal website Naver was confronted with similar complaints, after it had deleted an online comic ('webtoon') from a Christian blog. The comic dealt with the alleged problems in the way school textbooks treat homosexuality. The KACC decried Naver's course of actions as "defaming Christianity" and criticized that "such a large Internet company shuts its eyes and ears in face of actions deprecating and dishonoring certain religions, but shows a supportive attitude towards homosexuality, which has unethical, immoral, and anti-social tendencies" (KACC 2013, July 6).

Such self-victimization frames are commonly used by anti-LGBT activists to divert attention away from accusations of misconduct brought against them (cf. chapter 7.3). This strategy also became apparent when the progressive daily newspaper *Hankyoreh* published an investigative report about the spreading of wrong or misleading information by conservative Protestant groups. The piece particularly referred to *Esther Prayer Movement* as a "fake news factory" fueling hatred against homosexuals and refugees" (Pak, Chun-yong 2018, September 27). *Esther Prayer Movement* retaliated by releasing a detailed press statement in which they provided sources for the information that *Hankyoreh* had pointed out as 'fake news'. Yet mostly, they denounced *Hankyoreh* for allegedly suppressing the freedoms of faith, conscience, and expression, and arguing that this was "an attempt to obliterate Christian forces who oppose the legislation of homosexuality" (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, September 28). This counterattack was accompanied by the formation of an alliance catering specifically to this case, the *Meeting of the Victims of the Hankyoreh Fake News* (*Hankyore sinmun kajjanyusú p'ihaeja moim*), which accused the newspaper of using the "fake news frame" as a "dictatorial" means to suppress opposing opinions and "truths" (Paek, Sang-hyön 2018, October 10). Several of these self-declared victim groups filed a lawsuit against *Hankyoreh* on the charge of damage of honor, but lost in court (Kim, Min-je 2020, February 19).

Anti-LGBT actors react sensitively when their reputation gets tarnished and when their actual strategies get revealed, especially when this is done by actors with opposing political positions. The large public attention that media such as Hankyoreh are capable of producing is particularly problematic for the movement, which may explain their harsh reactions, including legal action to clear their name of a bad image and rather transfer similarly oriented vilifications to the opponent, where the accusations had originated. This is true for media actors external to Protestantism. But also within Korean Christianity, journalists have set out to expose and debunk the hostile communication strategies of the anti-LGBT movement. The case of the progressive Christian online newspaper *Newsnjoy* will be treated in detail in chapter 12. In the face of such adversity from established media and in the area of formal education, it does not come as a surprise that the movement has been striving to create their own media outlets and ‘educational’ formats, over which they can exert control. The next subchapter details these ‘educational’ and journalistic efforts of anti-LGBT activists.

11.3 Communicating anti-LGBT contents: the movement’s ‘educational’ programs and media activities

‘Education’ as a main action form of the movement

The ‘Christian Academy for Countermeasures against Homosexuality’ at the *Hapdong Theological Seminary* in the city of Suwŏn on 18 March 2019 provided a diverse program for the participants.⁵ The event started off with music,⁶ a Bible reading, and a common prayer, in which the moderator pleaded with God “to save this country”. This way, the religious and patriotic character of the ‘academy’ was set. The patriotic nature of the event was underscored by the collective singing of the Korean national anthem in between lectures. As the label ‘academy’ suggests, however, the lectures given by prominent anti-LGBT activists represented the most important items on the agenda. The pharmacist Kim Chi-yŏn talked about “the global sexual revolution and the sexualization of children”, the lawyer Cho Yŏng-gil concentrated on “the Anti-Discrimination Law and homosexual dictatorship”, Reverend Kim Yŏng-gil from the anti-LGBT *Just Military*

5 I was present at this event myself, conducting a participant observation. For the sake of objectivity, I hereby disclose that as a non-Korean, it was not easy to ‘just’ observe the event. In fact, despite sitting in a back row and attempting to remain low-key, I was especially welcomed by the moderator who, without asking, apparently assumed I was a supporter of the anti-LGBT cause. Another participant later during the event approached me to ask whether I was available for an interview with a journalist, which I kindly declined.

6 More specifically, it was a piano version of ‘By good forces’ (*Von guten Mächten*), a famous poem written by the German Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was an opponent of the Nazi regime and got killed in a concentration camp on 9 April 1945. While ‘good forces’ may be a fitting self-description in the eyes of anti-LGBT forces, it is highly doubtful that Bonhoeffer would have approved of the exclusionary and discriminatory behavior of the Korean Protestant Right – demeanor and ideologies against which Bonhoeffer fought as a founding member of the anti-Nazi Protestant movement *Confessing Church* (*Bekennende Kirche*).

Human Right Institute focused on the “human rights frame” used by pro-LGBT forces, and the law professor Yi Chōng-hun argued for the political engagement of churches in politics to safeguard the constitution and Christianity against oppression, gender ideology, and political correctness (cf. also Paek, Sang-hyōn 2019, March 12). The moderator highlighted the academic credentials of the speakers (Cho and Yi, for example, have a degree from Seoul National University) and praised the speakers’ expertise in the field of ‘countermeasures against homosexuality’. Besides presenting their ‘expertise’, the lecturers also larded their talks with spontaneous prayers and fervent outbursts of emotion – giving the event, again, an evangelical and revivalist touch very much welcomed and replicated by the audience.

I am expounding the details of this ‘academy’ at length since these kinds of events are a common feature of Protestant anti-LGBT activism in Korea. The PEA dataset counts 119 ‘educational’ events from 2000 until April 2020. The conveyance of anti-LGBT and related contents in nonformal ‘educational’ settings forms the centerpiece of these events, be they called ‘academy’, ‘academic forum’, ‘seminar’, ‘colloquium’, ‘discussion’, or ‘lecture event’. These designations grant such events academic weight and an objective or neutral semblance, and in fact, many of the speakers are university professors. At the same time, the events keep a clearly ‘Christian’ nature in most cases, be it concerning the locations (churches, theological seminaries, Christian universities), regarding the oft-cited Christian foundations of the alleged necessity to counteract LGBT rights, as well as the audience, which presumably consists of the faithful for the most part. Such forums or seminars are thus mainly directed internally to train devoted and loyal church members so that they also get active against homosexuality. Many of these events have also been recorded on video and are accessible on websites such as YouTube to create greater public attention.

Many important anti-LGBT activists give lectures at such events. Kim Chi-yōn is especially active in this ‘educational’ branch of the movement. She is part of the inner leadership circle, representing two SMOs, the *Parents’ Alliance for Building the Next Generation* and the *Korean Association of Family and Health* (cf. chapter 10.4). As of 2018, she claimed having given already more than 2000 lectures with anti-LGBT content (Chang, Myōng-sōng 2018, December 18). At the above mentioned ‘academy’, Kim Chi-yōn covered a wide array of topics, claiming that public education conveyed wrong and biased information on homosexuality, that children got sexualized and endangered early on by such a kind of sexual education, which ignores the alleged connection between homosexuality and AIDS, that male homosexuality was not innate, that one could not call everything that was, according to Kim, obscene and lewd, love, and that one should strive for sanctification (*sōnghwa*) rather than sexualization (*sōngaehwa*) – to name only some of the aspects mentioned. After getting emotional and shedding some tears, saying that it was all about the children, she maintained in a closing prayer and final statement that Korea was in a “spiritual war” (*yōngjōk chōnjaeng*) and that Korea must not end like Europe. Kim directly addressed the audience, asking them to not surrender and to incessantly spread anti-LGBT messages through the Internet. Following her lecture, she stayed a bit longer at the venue to promote and sell a book she published on the ‘truths’ about homosexuality that are purportedly being covered up (Kim, Chi-yōn 2019).

The ‘academy’ in March 2019 gave a general overview on anti-LGBT topics and arguments, but the movement also hosted ‘educational’ events with thematic foci. Indeed, the movement proved to be capable of quickly reacting to new situations and summoning up venues and speakers to treat the respective topics of interest – also on the local and regional levels, not only in Seoul and its surroundings. This was, for example, the case when churches in the city of Taegu organized a seminar against the local Queer Culture Festival on 28 May 2014 or when anti-LGBT groups hosted a forum on 14 December 2017 against the new terminology in relation to ‘gender equality’⁷ proposed by the Ministry of Women and Family.⁸ Forums were also held in reaction to decisions that the movement welcomed in order to emphasize that their lines of argument kept the upper hand, for instance, on 29 August 2016, when the Constitutional Court declared the anti-gay article 92–6 of the *Military Criminal Law* constitutional. On other occasions, however, the title of an event like ‘Emergency Seminar on Countermeasures against Homosexuality’ organized by the Presbyterian *Kosin* denomination on 15 June 2015 did suggest a sense of immediacy and urgency, but rather rhetorically, urging churches and attendees to get active against LGBT rights, and not so much concerning a concrete burning issue.

Despite having a concrete thematic focus, a broad repertoire of arguments and frames is commonly used at all kinds of ‘educational’ events. As shown in chapters 7 and 8, combining and juxtaposing different frames is often done by anti-LGBT activists. Fearmongering, medicalization, ‘othering’, nationalism, and legal approaches, as well as Christian self-efficacy or self-aggrandizement and other frames have been adapted to many contentious cases and circumstances. This becomes obvious also in the creative recombination of topics of educational events: While most of them focused, as already mentioned, on homosexuality in general or on *one* related topic such as the Anti-Discrimination Law, the NHRCK Act, or AIDS, organizers also combined several diverse topics in one seminar or forum. On 7 July 2015, the *Christian Future Research Institute* arranged a seminar on ‘Unified Korea and Homosexuality’. The Presbyterian *Hapdong* denomination held a seminar on 23 February 2016 on the problems of halal food and homosexuality, and the ‘We Korea 2020 Forum’ on 11 February 2020 concentrated on the fight against the Anti-Discrimination Law, abortion, and alcohol addiction. While seemingly unconnected at first sight, these topics capture well many of the topics and attitudes that the Protestant Right has been promoting for the past decades: anti-Muslim sentiments, fear of North Korea, ‘pro-life’ efforts, and hostility against sexual minorities (cf. Kim, Nami 2016). Apparently, the intermixing usage and combination of these topics make sense within the ideological spectrum of conservative Protestantism in Korea.

The movement also offers educational events with an explicitly religious focus, such as a seminar on homosexuality from a theological perspective (22 September 2015), and a seminar dealing with the “heretical character of queer theology” organized by ‘ex-gay’ groups (20 November 2015). Some events had special target groups such as a seminar on countermeasures against homosexuality attended by 150 pastors (24 September 2015),

7 Refer to chapter 8.3 and footnote 2 in chapter 6.1 for details on this contentious definitional issue.

8 I refrain from providing references for all the events mentioned in this section. Details on the involved groups, the frames used, etc. at these protest events can be accessed in the PEA dataset.

the 'Kukmin Daily Christian Women's Forum' on the topic of "Stop Homosexuality! Christian Women in Korea, Wake Up!" (28 April 2016), and a seminar on the dangers of homosexuality directed at Christian teachers (10 August 2016). These latter cases are examples of explicitly training people that presumably already show a high level of involvement in Protestant churches. This strategy of educating potential educators or, in other words, disseminators and mediators, appears to be a key goal of these educational meetings. While most of the events are free of charge, some do have an entrance fee. The motivation to participate and receive education in the these events can be assumed to be quite high, considering that people are willing to pay for it.

Broadening the support and activist basis by means of 'educational' efforts is not only done domestically, but also abroad. On 16 September 2019, for instance, Kim Chi-yŏn gave a seminar on Biblical values and homosexuality in Sweden. While this is an example of the transnational connections of the Korean anti-LGBT movement, basically, the event kept an intra-Korean nature since it was held at a *hanin* church, that is, a church attended by Koreans living abroad.

A recurring type of educational or informational events are the 'Ex-Gay Human Rights Forums'. Being both a series of events and a group sustained by ex-gay SMOs like *Holy Life*, these forums were first arranged in 2014 and have seen 12 editions until 2019. Just like the rest of the 'educational events they also include lectures, but the key element of these events are personal testimonies given by self-declared 'ex-gay' people from Korea and from other countries worldwide. They share their life stories, their sufferings as homosexual or trans people, to then relate their 'conversion', both in the religious sense and in the sense that they claim being gay (or lesbian, or trans, etc.) no more. These typically emotional testimonies may be regarded as a special feature of 'ex-gay' events, but when looking closer at other 'educational' events, they exist there as well. The shedding of tears and emotional outbursts have already been mentioned. In addition to this, activists like Kim Chi-yŏn commonly also share personal information, particularly on parenthood and personal and professional experiences. The next section will further detail the 'self-dramatization' or 'self-staging' of central figures of the anti-LGBT movement. For now, suffice it to say that such testimonies have the potential of making anti-LGBT causes more relatable and convincing for audiences, who may be moved by what they have heard – both in the literal and metaphorical senses: being touched and thus motivated to 'move' from inactivity towards activism within the movement in one or another capacity.

Other action forms of the anti-LGBT movement, particularly rallies and press conferences also feature personal statements and attempts to convey a special kind of anti-LGBT 'knowledge'. However, the difference to the educational events of the movement is that the latter openly flaunt their alleged educational quality. As already mentioned, this is done through labeling the events as 'academies', 'seminars', etc., and by inviting 'experts' for extensive talks. Among these experts are also university professors who provide educational capital to the movement. But the contents that they portray as academic knowledge are in fact often inaccurate and biased (cf. chapter 8.3). The 'educational' character of these events may also aim at 'neutralizing' anti-LGBT actions in the sense that activists can claim outwardly that they have the neutral objective of disseminating 'true' and 'proper' knowledge. As the close analysis of these educational events

reveals, however, they are always political, promoting an agenda that is clearly hostile towards sexual minorities.⁹ Antonio Gramsci's activist conception of education points to exactly this finding, namely, that education is always political and that, actually, activism needs to include educative elements in order to be effective (cf. Fontana 2002, 32).¹⁰ In a research interview conducted for this study, an anti-LGBT activist pointed out that education was the most important action form of the movement. The interviewee elaborated that in their perspective, only when actively listening to lectures and when learning by heart contents that have often been repeated, activism can be successful. According to the interviewee, lecture events are also crucial for forming new speakers and activists. The interviewee claimed that the movement aimed at educating Christians first so that the rest of South Korea would change as a result (Interview 7).

Informing and educating about anti-LGBT topics is not confined to educational events only, though. In fact, several of the key social movement organizations provide plenty learning material on their websites. For example, the *Korean Sexology Research Association* (*Han'guk sŏnggwahak yŏn'gu hyŏphoe*), an SMO that promotes anti-LGBT positions under the guise of scientificity (Baek 2018), provides a well-organized online "reference library" (*charyosil*) including texts on different aspects of homosexuality such as definitions, statistics, allegedly scientific insights on whether it is a phenomenon based on genetics, and on the alleged possibility of 'healing' it. Further materials include topics such as sexual education, gender ideology, feminism, transgender, and many other subjects. In many cases, informational and 'educational' videos are part of the materials, demonstrating that the movement uses diverse media types to communicate its contents (cf. also the next part of this chapter) (Korean Sexology Research Association n.d.). Other anti-LGBT SMOs like *Tongbanyŏn* and the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* (PSHS) provide similar online collections of materials, including information on several pro-LGBT legislative issues.¹¹ These latter websites often feature links to other anti-LGBT-themed websites that offer anti-LGBT information and learning materials, showing that diverse anti-LGBT actors closely cooperate also in the area of 'education'.¹²

The question remains whether the educational efforts of the movement have in fact been successful. While further research, for example in the form of conducting a survey among the participants of the events, would be needed to confidently draw conclusions concerning this question (and also on the assumption of identity shift which may come along with educational activities, cf. chapter 7.3), some tentative assumptions can be made based upon the existing research data. One can suppose that the main goal of

9 A common venue of anti-LGBT 'educational' events, rooms at the National Assembly, also bespeak their immanently political nature. Lectures held at these premises are often preceded by welcome addresses held by members of parliament, whose approval and invitation is needed to use these rooms in the first place. Explicitly political messages, especially concerning concrete law proposals, are commonplace at such gatherings.

10 This part of Gramscian thought has also led me – besides the empirical reality found in the field – to include 'educational events' into the list of items of action forms in the protest event analysis.

11 Printouts of informational material and of collections of the lectures given are also often provided at the 'educational' events of the movement.

12 The respective websites are the following. People's Solidarity for a Healthy society: <http://www.pshs.kr/homo>. Tongbanyŏn: <http://nahs.kr/85>.

the educational efforts of the movement is to enable the *learning* of anti-LGBT positions. In the perspective of anti-LGBT activists, learning ideally affects both outsiders and insiders of the Protestant Right. As I have demonstrated, however, the educational events are mostly directed at a Christian audience. While restricting the potential reach of their efforts, the strategy of especially addressing conservative Protestants in Protestant environments (both socially and in terms of the venue) may also prove successful. One can assume that learning is particularly effective in settings made up of like-minded participants. When experiencing or assuming that a collective of believers is convinced by the contents and sentiments presented and that one is not alone, accepting the common mission passed on to them becomes more probable. This is especially the case when the participants get the impression that they do something good for the church and for the country, as they are indefatigably told by the lecturers.

Complex learning in the sense of fundamentally changing one's values and beliefs may not even be necessary in this context since most participants can be expected to share similar values and beliefs from the outset. The speakers and organizers can build upon the ideological foundation of the Korean Protestant Right, which has been established over the past decades. In general, the relationship between educators and educated can be described as rather hierarchical, but one cannot say that the educators are unreceptive for the needs and learning environments of their 'students'. They strategically create links to elements of their audience's presumably conservative, and preexistent Protestant *common sense* – reflecting at least indirectly the Gramscian conceptualization of reciprocal educational relationships (Gramsci 1971, 349f.; quoted in Borg et al. 2002, 8). Dynamic continuity is thus also present in the explicitly educational framing efforts of the movement. Hearing and potentially internalizing the anti-LGBT contents promoted by anti-LGBT actors is the new, dynamic part of the learning process. This learning process may also be enhanced when the lecturers promote the image that the participants learn something special, which makes them stand out amid the religious and socio-political actors in Korea. The Gramscian idea of raising the intellectual levels of people so that they become aware of their own activist potential and turn into educators themselves (cf. Hoare & Sperber 2016, 39) may play into this, even though the actual content may in fact be incorrect or inaccurate. I argue that it not so much about the quality or accuracy of the 'curriculum' that influences learning in the context of social movements. Rather, it is the emphasis on significance and agency that draws people into a movement. The combination of anti-LGBT 'educational' contents with appeals to duty and protective behavior is often done at educational events, which suggests that activists regard such an educational program as particularly effective (cf. also chapter 7.3). Taking part in such 'educational' events makes people believe that they belong to a 'knowledge elite', that they are ideologically and morally ahead of other parts of society.

In summary, four main insights can be drawn from the analysis of the educational efforts of the anti-LGBT movement. First, 'education' plays a significant role within the repertoire of action forms. Second, the formats and contents of the 'educational' events are mainly directed at conservative-minded Protestants, thus catering a clientele that activists could assume sympathetic to their agenda from the outset. Third, lectures attempt to appeal to these particular audiences by combining the 'new' aspects of anti-LGBT politics with established behavioral and thought patterns of the Protestant Right,

especially in terms of encouraging participants to get active out of a sense of self-efficacy and special duty. Fourth, the pretension of objectivity and academic quality, coupled with personal and emotionalized statements increases the trustworthiness and authenticity of the contents presented, and ultimately, the likelihood of successful and effective learning.

Implicitly, of course, almost all actions of the anti-LGBT movement can be regarded as having 'educational' elements and goals, in the sense that activists strive to change the worldviews of people in order to eventually reach hegemony. The now following section details how journalistic activities and cultural production, accomplished by activists themselves, feed into this hegemonic project.

Mission-conscious organic journalists: using traditional and social media for anti-LGBT 'proselytization'

Anti-LGBT activists in Korea do not only act as educators as just illustrated, but also as journalists in the broad sense as I will now demonstrate. I argue that they serve as *organic journalists* in the Gramscian sense, which means that they actively use communicative and, especially, journalistic means for their activist purposes. This happens in three main ways: first, activists cooperate with, or work within traditional media to disseminate anti-LGBT content. Kukmin Daily is the one of the main media partners in this respect, through favorable reports about the movement, but also by granting some of the central activists the possibility of writing columns themselves. Second, many of the activists write books with anti-LGBT content, or support the publication of books written by foreign anti-LGBT actors. Finally, besides using traditional media, activists also create their own social media channels on YouTube or other platforms, which allows them to exert greater control over the contents produced.

Kukmin Daily as the anti-LGBT movement's main mouthpiece

Kukmin Daily is the central source of empirical data for this study. This conservative newspaper with a Protestant foundation has published over 4000 articles treating homosexuality in one or the other way from 1990 to 2020. Since the mid-2000s, its coverage on LGBT topics has been overwhelmingly negative (cf. chapter 5). The reports do not only include summaries of anti-LGBT protest events and occurrences, but also opinion pieces and renderings of press statements released by organizations with an anti-LGBT orientation. Kukmin Daily itself has produced a total of 34 editorials from 2003–2020, which clearly show the newspaper's overall hostile positioning against LGBT rights. The largest share of articles with anti-LGBT content is written by just two journalists: Yu Yŏng-dae closely reported on the topic in the period from 2010 until 2017, and Paek Sang-hyŏn has been intensively covering anti-LGBT themes since 2015.¹³ Consequently, it can be assumed that these journalists have been maintaining particular close relations with

13 The importance of these two journalists also becomes obvious when taking a look at the primary sources of this study. More than half of the primary sources quoted have been written by Yu Yŏng-dae and Paek Sang-hyŏn.

the anti-LGBT movement. In fact, I argue that they are an active and crucial part of the movement, guaranteeing the reporting on anti-LGBT topics in an established newspaper with print and online presence. Paek Sang-hyŏn is not only a reporter favorable of the movement, he is also a ‘traditional’ activist himself. He participates in anti-LGBT events, for example, by giving talks about what he claims is the ‘truth’ about homosexuality (cf. chapter 10.4). He is also the author of two books with anti-LGBT contents (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017; 2015). The importance of the Kukmin Daily journalist Paek Sang-hyŏn was also highlighted in one of the research interviews conducted for this study (Interview 8).

The close relationship between Kukmin Daily and the leadership of the anti-LGBT movement also becomes apparent when considering the manifold columns that the latter contribute to the newspaper. Table 17 gives an overview of the Kukmin Daily columns with anti-LGBT content.¹⁴

Table 17: Kukmin Daily columns written by anti-LGBT activists

Column title	Author(s)	N of columns on LGBT topics (out of total, where applicable)	Period
<i>“So Kang-sŏk’s flower seed column”</i>	So Kang-sŏk	13 (30)	2015.04 – 2016.05
<i>“Sound of Zion”</i>	So Kang-sŏk	15 (45 by So Kang-sŏk; in total 802 by diverse contributors)	2017.03 – 2020.08
<i>“Telling the truth about gender ideology”</i>	Cho Yŏng-gil, Min Sŏng-gil, Kim Chi-yŏn, Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, and others	23	2019.10 – 2020.03
<i>“God’s righteous army fighting against homosexuality”</i>	Yŏm An-sŏp	41	2019.10 – 2020.08
<i>“The church’s evangelical response to the anti-discrimination law”</i>	Cho Yŏng-gil	19	2020.08 – 2021.01
<i>“Homosexuality is not genetic”</i>	Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng	20	2021.01 – 2021.05
<i>“Getting to know correct knowledge on gender issues”</i>	Min Sŏng-gil	10	2021.06 – 2021.10

While all columns have the common theme of opposing homosexuality and related topics, each one also has its special features. The contributions by the university professor Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng in the year 2021, for instance, give the impression of imparting scientific

14 Anti-LGBT activists have written columns for other media as well. Pastor Chu Yo-sep, for example, contributed the ‘Chu Yo-sep column’ to the online newspaper *Christian Today*, counting 11 opinion pieces explicitly directed against LGBT rights published in 2015 and 2016 (cf. e.g., Chu Yo-sep 2016, February 21).

knowledge on homosexuality. The column written by the lawyer Cho Yŏng-gil combines a focus on legal arguments against pro-LGBT laws with a general perspective on how LGBT rights are, allegedly, part of a larger ideological project directed at oppressing churches. He also gives recommendations on how to concretely fight against such developments. In the last edition of his column, for example, he praises educational programs like the ‘Christian Academy for Countermeasures against Homosexuality’ as “a good pathway helping to arm oneself correctly against homosexuality” (Cho, Yŏng-gil 2021, January 1). The second crucial task for Christians that he promotes besides ‘learning’ is to “persuade, and pray for the rulers of the nation” (ibid.), thus taking a clearly political perspective. In the same text, however, he attempts to conceal the political character of anti-LGBT struggles when claiming that

the anti-homosexuality movement is not based on the ideology of left and right, progressivism and conservatism, which were created by humans. It is a war between the gospel and the anti-gospel, the Bible and the anti-Bible. The Korean churches should transcend ideological and regional factions within the gospel against homosexuality. We must pray with all our might so that we can unite as one. (Cho, Yŏng-gil 2021, January 1)

The focus on the alleged sufferings of churches and the appeals to the responsibility of church members are present in many of the other columns as well. They appear in columns which highlight the necessary fight of churches against the phenomenon that anti-LGBT activists call ‘gender ideology’, as is the case in the contributions written by several authors under the title ‘Telling the truth about gender ideology’ or in the column by the former university professor Min Sŏng-gil. Pastor So Kang-sŏk in particular offers reflections that touch upon basic religious and political questions of interest for Korean churches. Very much like Cho Yŏng-gil in the above quote, he often calls for the unity of church actors and tries to overcome rifts that also run through the Protestant anti-LGBT camp, for example, on how exactly to counter the *Seoul Queer Culture Festival* (e.g., So, Kang-sŏk 2019, July 3; cf. esp. chapter 12). The head pastor of the *New Eden* megachurch writes his columns in the style of a wise spiritual leader who claims to have the greater good in mind when pondering difficult questions. Yet, he consistently comes to the same conclusions, that is, that the fight against homosexuality and LGBT rights in general must be vigorously fought and that the political involvement of Korean Protestantism is appropriate and necessary, despite criticism from within and from without. After the repeated loss of Protestant political parties in the 2016 general elections, for instance, Pastor So asserts that the establishment of a political party and political representation were not the primary aim of churches, but that “the goal of Korean churches is to eliminate toxic clauses on homosexuality, Islam and other aspects in the anti-discrimination law” (So, Kang-sŏk 2016, April 27). In contrast to other leading figures of Protestantism who pointed out the potential harm caused by disregarding the separation of state and churches, So Kang-sŏk argues that a Christian political party is necessary if the established parties fail to prevent pro-LGBT legislation (ibid.). He makes homosexuality an issue that should be a common concern for all Christians, often deriving from this claim the justification for the political involvement of Korean Protestantism. In this

respect, Pastor So's commentaries in Kukmin Daily play an important role for the anti-LGBT movement. Being an established and successful leader of a megachurch, So Kang-sök legitimates anti-LGBT activism, also by placing it into a larger context of alleged 'Christian' and national(ist) duties.

Kukmin Daily thus provides So Kang-sök and the other anti-LGBT columnists with a platform for directly defending their actions. Yet most importantly, the columnists use the opportunity to vaunt their activism and achievements in their opinion pieces. This self-adulation becomes especially obvious in Yöm An-söp's contributions. Of all the columns listed in Table 17, Yöm's 'God's righteous army fighting against homosexuality' has the largest number, counting a total of 41 columns published from October 2019 until August 2020. The medical doctor writes extensively about his youth and the beginnings of his involvements in church, his missionary work, and his fight against homosexuality (Yöm, An-söp 2019, October 22; 2019, October 29). The articles also boast photos showing Yöm in action as a missionary, medical doctor, and lecturer, and at his wedding and graduation ceremony. A picture from July 2018 showing Yöm having his hair shaved off in protest against the *National Action Plan for National Human Rights Policies* stands out in these visualizations, attesting his willingness to make huge sacrifices for the movement (Yöm, An-söp 2020, August 6). Over the course of these columns, Yöm An-söp touches upon many topics such as cases of alleged oppression of people with anti-LGBT attitudes, the lives of 'ex-gay' people, and the purported dangers of homosexuality in relation to AIDS – often emphasizing his special role as an activist and using, or rather claiming his expertise in the area of medicine. Like the other special contributors, he frequently combines his personal stories and descriptions of purported facts with urgent appeals to the readers, as the following rather bellicose example from his last column shows: "Let's wake up and pray, let's become God's righteous army, and make a new history on the spiritual front line" (Yöm, An-söp 2020, August 6). This statement demonstrates that Yöm embeds himself as well as the anti-LGBT movement in a greater context. The fight transcends LGBT issues. What the movement and the Protestant Right at large are pursuing is rather a full-fledged creation of "new history", in the process of which Protestant believers are assumed to be the central leading actors.

Kukmin Daily plays an important role in this desired process of reaching hegemony. The newspaper, through offering communicative means to leaders of the movement, enables a more approachable, personalized, and less abstract image of anti-LGBT activism. Concrete figures like Yöm An-söp are placed on a pedestal. To a certain extent, they become, and in fact: they make themselves subjects of 'hero worship' – an image and a practice that we will come across again when elaborating on an anti-LGBT YouTube channel run by the very Yöm An-söp. In a way, Kukmin Daily can be regarded as a 'party organ' of the anti-LGBT movement. The newspaper uncritically reports about basically anything related to the fight against LGBT rights and grants the activists important opportunities to determine the published contents themselves. The column series written by several central anti-LGBT activists stands testament to this influence. Apparently, Kukmin Daily has made the editorial decision to pursue a clear political line against the rights of LGBT people. The newspaper has therefore become an important agent *and* tool of the movement. As I have shown, part of the movement's media strategy is to actively promote and single out particular activists, bestowing relevance and, to some extent, authenticity on

them. From a Gramscian perspective, Kukmin Daily can therefore be regarded as both an actor and a means of *organic journalism*, that is, a kind of journalism that emerges and grows alongside a social movement.

Publishing books: another means of anti-LGBT communication

Articles and columns in Kukmin Daily are not the only means of ‘traditional’ communication used by the movement. Activists also publish different kinds of books with anti-LGBT contents. Table 18 gives an overview of some selected publications. Figures like Kim Chi-yŏn and Paek Sang-hyŏn are especially active in writing books. Both have released two self-authored volumes with general perspectives. Interestingly, the authors themselves or the publishing houses have chosen bright and flowery cover designs, which contrast with the partly sinister and scandalizing titles. This may have been done to dissipate the attributes of hatred and hostility that pro-LGBT forces often use to describe the anti-LGBT movement. Alongside these books with a general focus on anti-LGBT matters, Cho Yŏng-gil has written a book with a legal focus, and Lee Jonah (Yi Yo-na) published a guide for people who allegedly suffer from their sexual orientation, also recounting his own ‘ex-gay’ life story.

Table 18: Print publications by anti-LGBT activists (selection)

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Type
Kim Chi-yŏn	<i>The one who wants to cover up, the one who wants to spread: the story about the carpet that covers up homosexuality and homo+sexuality</i>	2019	Book
Kim Chi-yŏn	<i>As created by God: education curriculum on Biblical sexual values</i>	2022	Book
Kim Chi-yŏn, Pak Sun-ae	<i>Ding dong! A present has arrived: Christian sexual values project, 5 years plus</i>	2021	Children's book
Paek Sang-hyŏn	<i>Homosexuality is</i>	2015	Book
Paek Sang-hyŏn	<i>Fake Human Rights, Fake Hatred, Fake Minority – Telling the Truth about the Homosexual Dictatorship Frame</i>	2017	Book
Cho Yŏng-gil	<i>The Anti-Discrimination Law and homosexual dictatorship – The problems of ‘sexual orientation’ in article 2–3 of the National Human Rights Commission Law</i>	2019	Book
Lee Jonah	<i>Coming Out Again: truth and freedom</i>	2017	Book

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Type
Min Söng-gil, Youth's Meeting Dreaming for a Beautiful Marriage and Family	<i>Professor Min Söng-gil's homosexuality counseling for youth</i>	2019	Comic book
Gabriele Kuby	<i>The Global Sexual Revolution: Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom</i>	2018	Translated book

There are also other types of books, which are directed at different audiences. Among these are a children's book co-authored by Pak Sun-ae and, again, Kim Chi-yön. The comic book 'Professor Min Söng-gil's homosexuality counseling for youth' is, as the title suggests, mostly directed at adolescents and young adults. These two publications summarize the main arguments and frames of the movement in simplified ways. These publications are evidence for the fact that anti-LGBT activists strive to widen their audiences, trying to exert their 'educational' efforts also with children, starting from an early age.¹⁵ Finally, anti-LGBT publications are not restricted to Korean authors. Foreign books also get translated, showcasing the awareness of Korean anti-LGBT actors (among them, in the broad sense, also publishing houses) about important publications from abroad that may have the potential of supporting similarly oriented endeavors 'at home' in Korea as well. The probably most significant translated book is one written by the German anti-LGBT activist Gabriele Kuby. Her framing of positive socio-political changes for LGBT people as a "sexual revolution", which is said to destroy the freedom of those opposed to such changes, is frequently referred to in talks and texts of anti-LGBT activists. The book has also been on offer for sale at some of the 'educational' events described before.

Some of the books are also evidence for the close network that exists among the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement. For the 2017 book written by Paek Sang-hyön, for instance, several other anti-LGBT activists contributed short recommendations that got printed at the beginning of the book. Among these benevolent reviewers are Min Söng-gil, Ko Yöng-il, Yöm An-söp, and Kim Chi-yön. Yi Yöng-hun, the main pastor of the large *Yöido Full Gospel Church* also provided praise for Paek's book, attesting the relations of anti-LGBT activists with the highest ranks of Korean Protestantism. The book 'Coming Out Again' by Lee Jonah also received praise from Yi Yöng-hun, as well as from another head pastor of a Korean megachurch, So Kang-sök. The anti-LGBT activists Cho Yöng-gil, Min Söng-gil, and Kil Wön-p'yöng wrote recommendations for the translated book by Gabriele Kuby, highlighting its relevance also for the Korean situation.

15 From a critical perspective, these publications directed at children and youth could be regarded as potentially harming to the target groups. Research has shown that discriminatory and exclusionary educational settings can cause great harm with young LGBT people, also and especially when there is a Christian background (cf. e.g., Butler et al. 2002; Wolff & Himes 2010)

Social media activities of anti-LGBT actors: the cases of 'GMW Union' and 'Rainbow Returns'

Beyond print publications and traditional media, the anti-LGBT movement also turned to social media as a means of communication. SMOs like the *People's Solidarity for a Healthy Society* operate a website, a *Facebook* page, a channel in the Korean chatting app *Kakaotalk*, and a blog on the Korean portal site *Naver*. Other groups and also event series like the anti-LGBT academies run similar social media channels to disseminate anti-LGBT contents and to inform followers about upcoming events and protests and to motivate them to participate (Interviews 3; 5; 8). This study cannot cover the whole range of social media activities of anti-LGBT actors, but will focus on two examples that have been especially active in the past years: the blog *GMW Union* (*GMW yŏnhap*) and the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns* (*reinbou rit'ŏnjŭ*). The now following portrayal of these two social media outlets gives a broad overview of their content production and communicative strategies, yet it is not based on a thorough content analysis.

The acronym 'GMW' in the name of the blog stands for 'God make Man and Woman united', highlighting the blog's religious basis, and hinting at a worldview that only accepts heterosexual relationships of cis-gendered individuals. GMW Union began its activities as a blog on the *Naver* web portal in 2015, but since then it has expanded to other fields of action as well. For example, GMW Union representatives participate as speakers in anti-LGBT protest events and run a YouTube channel, which features more than 400 videos, and has more than 12,000 subscribers as of March 2023. A few videos have more than 100,000 views, but the majority of videos only attracted far less viewers, with numbers lying in the hundreds or lower thousands. Initially, the original blog had an almost exclusive focus on LGBT topics, but over time, the spectrum of covered subjects has increased. The blog's landing page displays a short text in which the operators claim that they "offer Biblical and correct information" on various topics (GMW Union n.d.). Table 19 displays the themes that GMW Union has most frequently addressed over the past years.

While topics related to LGBT rights such as homosexuality, the anti-discrimination law and other legislations, schoolbook controversies, queer culture festivals, same-sex marriage, and 'gender' make up a large part of the blog entries, other themes also figure prominently on this website. The religious focus becomes apparent in the more than 1,500 posts including prayers. Yet apart from this, the blog broaches diverse socio-political issues. The category 'Republic of Korea', which has by far the greatest number of entries, for example, consists of posts on the latest issues in Korean politics. GMW Union has turned to covering diverse topics, but all of these contents can be said to be of special interest to a conservative Protestant and politically rightist audience. Beyond the focus on LGBT themes, these common right-wing topics include, among others, North Korea, abortion, the alliance with the United States, refugees and migration, Islam, and a critical stance towards China.

Table 19: Most frequent topics on the GMW Union blog

Topic	N	Topic	N
Republic of Korea	3,127	Contemporary and modern history of school textbooks	224
Prayer	1,513	International, USA	208
Homosexuality	667	Queer culture festival	153
Equality law (anti-discrimination law)	639	Refugees/migrants/multicultural	146
Christianity and politics	448	Same-sex marriage	146
North Korea	379	China	138
Abortion and pregnancy	349	Heresy, religious cults	135
Etc.	312	News reports related to homosexuality	133
Student Human Rights Ordinance	279	Islam and halal	132
Emotional stories	260	Correct sex/gender (<i>parŭn sŏng</i>)	131
TOTAL: 11,482 blog entries			

Notes: The frequencies were taken from the website as of 30 March 2023. The topics given here are the translated versions of the titles/tags assigned by the blog itself.

This broad thematic focus has attracted a considerable number of views, more than 15,7 million over the years. However, the number of active followers, who are designated as ‘neighbors’ (*iut*) on Naver, is comparatively low, counting 14,000 people. Naver also provides data on the views per day. The average number of views per day over the period of existence of the blog amounts to around 5738.¹⁶ Even when considering outliers such as especially successful blog entries, this latter number bespeaks a considerable amount of attention – although one may assume that the viewership is mostly made up of a ‘hard core’ when considering other research results of this study such as the survey of protest participants (chapter 9).

Judging from the contents of the blog, GMW Union seems to play an important role for the communication of the anti-LGBT movement and the Protestant Right at large. Many posts include advertisements for anti-LGBT events and, after these events have taken place, collections of ‘learning’ materials or links to videos of the lectures. The lectures of central anti-LGBT activists like Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, Kim Chi-yŏn, Yŏm An-sŏp, and others even have their own categories on the blog. Books with anti-LGBT or right-wing

16 I calculated this number by dividing the total number of views (~ 15,7 million, as of 31 March 2013) by the approximate number of days that the blog existed (late 2015 – March 2023, that is, around 7.5 years). $15,709,540 / (7.5 \times 365) = 5738.6$. From the period of 31 March until 16 April 2023, I also checked the number of views on the GMW Union blog every day at 3 pm (Central European Time), which corresponds to 11 pm South Korean time, thus covering the largest part of the day. In this period, the average daily number of views stood at around 1000, suggesting that the interest in the blog may have declined recently.

conservative contents are also frequently reviewed. GMW Union often refers to other media, providing summaries of, or links to news reports from relevant Christian and conservative TV stations and newspapers. The posts also often include links to other social media channels like *Rainbow Returns*, which will be covered below, and *PragerU*, a US-based right-wing conservative NGO that produces thematic videos. The blog provides edited versions of *PragerU* videos with Korean subtitles, so that rightist content from the United States can be accessed by interested audiences in Korea as well. The posts mostly feature visual components like photographs of events and YouTube videos. Sometimes, there is no accompanying text at all apart from the headline. Part of the visual contents are also webtoons drawn by an artist called Yun Sŏ-in. These short comics treat common topics of the radical right in Korea such as pro-Park Geun-hye and anti-Moon Jae-in contents, as well as pro-Trump and anti-China sentiments.

GMW Union itself refers to its posts as ‘articles’ (*kisa*), suggesting that the information presented meets journalistic standards such as objectivity and thorough investigation. While the accuracy and impartiality of some of the contents can be put into question – also when considering their obvious bias towards positions that are commonly associated with right-wing politics – the news value of the posts is certainly high for specific audiences. GMW Union can, in fact, be considered a news page rather than just a blog. It has developed from a single-topic social media channel into a provider of news on a wide range of topics which are relevant to conservative Protestant audiences. Even more so than through favorable traditional media like *Kukmin Daily*, the operators of GMW Union can decide on what to cover. They can react to new developments and swiftly adapt the coverage. What is more, the social media platform allows for less strict formats and greater creativity, so that contents can be adapted in a way to appeal to large audiences, or to make contents more ‘digestible’ for them. Embedding self-produced or external videos and webtoons is part of this flexibility, but the links to other content producers also demonstrate the close relationships and networks that exist among anti-LGBT organizations on the one hand, and other actors with right-wing leanings on the other. GMW Union – just like *Kukmin Daily* – has actively promoted anti-LGBT activists as charismatic, approachable, and knowledgeable leaders. The operators of the blog themselves, however, do not come into the picture, at least not in the context of the blog itself. The blog does not mention the names of the content producers of the posts. The exact opposite is true for the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns*.

Rainbow Returns was established in March 2019 on YouTube. From the beginning, the channel produced professional videos in a studio, where a moderator, Yŏm An-sŏp, interviewed or discussed with other anti-LGBT activists. Most videos feature a short opening with a jingle. The visualization of this opening is noteworthy, since four of the leading figures of the anti-LGBT movement are presented as tiny comic ‘supermen’ wearing superhero suits and capes, with the heads of Kil Wŏn-p’yŏng, Yi Yong-hŭi, Cho Yŏng-gil, and Yŏm An-sŏp on top. The design of the opening is colorful and jolly, but I argue that the message that the producers of the videos wish to convey is quite serious. Said anti-LGBT activists are depicted as ‘heroes’ with the mission of rescuing churches, youth, families, the nation as a whole, among others. The name of the YouTube channel itself is also evocative of a superhero. *Rainbow Returns* seems to be a reference to the 1992 Tim Burton movie ‘Batman Returns’. The description of the channel elaborates that “the ‘rainbow’ has

become a symbol of homosexuals, but there is a separate, original ‘rainbow’”. The description continues explaining that it is “a project to recover and restore the real meaning of the rainbow together with homosexuality experts” (Rainbow Returns n.d.). The channel’s ‘about’ section does not explicitly say so, but the ‘real’ meaning of the rainbow implied seems to refer to the Judeo-Christian tradition, according to which the rainbow represents the covenant between God and humans (Genesis 9:11–17). The goal and purpose of the channel are also explicated: “It is a channel that correctly informs about the truth concerning homosexuality”. Before reminding the visitors of the channel of the possibility of donation, the description ends with an appeal: “Check out Rainbow Returns!!! For real facts about homosexuality!! You cannot hear anywhere else” (Rainbow Returns n.d.).

These alleged facts have, as of 3 April 2023, attracted 86,200 subscribers and around 10,3 million views in total. The channel, which is mainly run by Yöm An-söp, has uploaded 945 videos in various formats. One of the most common formats includes Yöm reporting on diverse LGBT-related issues. The channel also offers short Q&A videos, in which Yöm and other ‘experts’ answer questions like “Isn’t homosexuality love?”, “How do you contract AIDS?”, or “How do you differentiate between the truth and lies about homosexuality?” (Rainbow Returns 2019, April 18; 2019, April 11; 2019, September 27). Slightly longer discussions among anti-LGBT actors on various topics with a duration of about 10–15 minutes are also part of the program. The longest formats are livestreams of prayer meetings to stop the Anti-Discrimination Law that have been taking place in a tent in front of *Democratic Party of Korea* party headquarters every Saturday since mid-2021. Another livestream format consists of lectures from the ‘Academy Informing Correctly about the Anti-Discrimination Law’ (*Ch’abyöl kŭmjiböpye paro algi ak’ademi*). Rainbow Returns provides 138 such videos, which are about two hours long each. There is a YouTube channel of the same name, which uploads the same lectures and further broadcasts. This latter channel’s description states similar fields of action and goals as the ones claimed by Rainbow Returns, writing that the channel “informs churches and believers about the hidden identity and dangers of the anti-discrimination law and awakens churches, believers, and even the entire nation” (Academy Informing Correctly about the Anti-Discrimination Law n.d.). The channel was launched in August 2020 and has since uploaded 421 videos, garnered around 12,000 subscribers, yet records only approximately 570,000 views in total as of 4 April 2023.

In comparison, Rainbow Returns has proven more successful in terms of viewership and subscriptions, but it is worth taking a detailed look at the respective numbers. Table 20 shows the numbers of videos sorted by viewership. While the channel does have some very successful videos with more than 100,000 views, these only make up 1.7 percent of the total of 945 videos. The vast majority of the videos is far less successful. 83.3 percent of the videos have less than 10,000 views, and more than half of the videos, 54.4 percent, count less than 3000 views.

Table 20: Videos and viewership numbers of Rainbow Returns (as of 3 April 2023)

Number of views	Number of videos in category 'videos'	Number of videos in category 'live'	TOTAL		Cumulated TOTAL		Cumulated TOTAL (reverse)	
			N	~ %	N	~ %	N	~ %
> 500,000	1	-	1	0.1	1	0.1	945	99.8
300,000–499,000	3	-	3	0.3	4	0.4	944	99.7
100,000–299,000	13	-	13	1.3	17	1.7	940	99.4
50,000–99,999	20	-	20	2.1	37	3.8	927	98.3
25,000–49,999	31	-	31	3.2	68	7.0	907	96.2
10,000–24,999	82	10	92	9.7	160	16.7	876	93.0
5,000–9,999	115	15	130	13.8	290	30.5	784	83.3
4,000–4,999	58	9	67	7.1	357	37.6	654	69.5
3,000–3,999	62	14	76	8.0	434	45.6	587	62.4
2,000–2,999	76	60	136	14.4	570	60.0	511	54.4
1,000–1,999	91	140	231	24.4	801	84.4	375	40.0
500–999	59	81	140	14.8	941	99.2	144	15.6
0–499	-	4	4	0.4	945	99.6	4	0.4
TOTAL	612	333	945	100	945	~100	945	~100

These numbers suggest that the YouTube channel Rainbow Returns is highly industrious, with almost 1000 uploaded videos over a period of just four years, which, by the way, supposedly also requires substantive financial means. However, overall, these efforts do not pay off in terms of viewership numbers for most videos. Considering these data, one can assume that the number of loyal audiences is rather small and that, consequently, the impact of the videos may not be all that significant.¹⁷ But also when reviewing the most viewed videos, in many cases, it is doubtful whether an intrinsic interest for anti-LGBT contents has led the viewers there. The most successful video (with more than 690,000 views), for instance, deals with the openly gay celebrity Hong Sök-ch'ön. Perhaps it was rather the tabloid style of reporting that drew such high numbers of viewers. This sensationalist tendency is also present in other successful videos. Yöm An-söp commonly acts in the style of an investigative journalist, for example, when reporting about a hole in the wall of a public bathroom that he claims is used for sexual actions by gay men (~352,000 views; Rainbow Returns 2020, August 10). In several videos, Yöm

17 In general, one must be cautious not to misinterpret viewership numbers, since it is impossible to find out, for example, whether the viewers have watched the whole videos, which would be necessary to internalize the contents, or whether the audiences agree with the presented information at all. It is conceivable that some of the viewers have stumbled upon these contents unintentionally, e.g., after looking for general information on homosexuality. The search algorithm of YouTube may have led them to this or other anti-LGBT channels, which, however, can be assumed to be desired by the operators of these channels.

tries to blame homosexuals for the spread of Covid-19. For example, he reports about a public meeting spot of homosexuals where, he claims, they gather and contribute to the spread of the pandemic (~349,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2020, March 10). In another video entitled “Fear of repeated spreading of Covid-19! Shocking gay x-file”, Yöm reports about a case of a local Covid-19 spread attributed to a party in a queer club. Here, he also relates the spread to the sexual behavior of gay men by ‘analyzing’ a gay dating app (~190,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2020, May 12).¹⁸ One video deals with the situation in Korean prisons, asking: “How bad is the homosexuality taking place in prisons?” (~268,000 views; *Rainbow Returns* 2019, June 20). Among the ten most-viewed videos of the channel, only three have an exclusive LGBT focus. Two videos feature testimonies of a former trans person about the process of detransition (~396,000; 194,000 views), and one video includes a ‘confession’ of a gay cross dresser (278,000 views).

The YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns* thus broadens its content production by going beyond covering only anti-LGBT issues. Claiming the existence of causal links between sexual minorities and social problems, which potentially affect many people, proves to be especially effective for reaching large audiences. The fearmongering and scapegoating, as well as the sensationalist and scandalizing framings that I have analyzed in chapters 7 and 8 can also be observed in the case of this social media outlet. However, the actual influence exerted through these efforts remains unclear. Overall, the followership seems to be rather small. Both *GMW Union* and *Rainbow Returns* do not reach large audiences. But this does not mean that there is no effect. It can be expected that the – assumably mostly conservative Protestant – loyal following of these social media presences gets ‘empowered’ to some extent for the fight against LGBT rights. The reoccurring ‘Christian’ contents also point in this direction. However, the effect of the social media efforts of the Korean anti-LGBT movement is, arguably, mostly an internal one limited to the Protestant Right.

11.4 Conclusion: anti-LGBT ‘missionaries’ seeking communicative hegemony

This chapter has set out to analyze the actions of the Korean anti-LGBT movement in relation to education and communication. It did so in two steps. First, the chapter investigated how the movement has criticized and tackled educational policies and institutions, as well as media outlets, which treated sexual minorities in a positive or neutral way – or at all. Second, it analyzed in which capacities and through which means activists themselves have gotten active in the fields of ‘education’ and media.

I found that the activists seem to be well aware of the importance of communication and education for sustainable movement success. This is why they turn educational institutions like schools and universities into sites of contention. They attack the very communicative strategy that they themselves are using to induce anti-LGBT ‘learning’ when

18 By reporting in such a sensationalist way and by scandalizing the places where queer people socialize, the videos may have worsened the already precarious situation for sexual minorities during the pandemic, further endangering and limiting the options to interact with like-minded people under the conditions of social distancing.

employed to disseminate benevolent information about homosexuality and related topics. In the context of this communicative 'warfare', concrete institutions like universities, newspapers, and TV stations come under heavy fire. However, activists do not only react to the educational and communicative efforts of opposing forces. They also engage in 'educating' and media production themselves, becoming, in the Gramscian sense, educators and organic journalists. The educational and journalistic endeavors of the movement are 'organic' in the sense that they have emerged along with the movement and are of a clearly political and activist nature. Anti-LGBT activists use both traditional and newer forms of education and, especially, media. The newspaper *Kukmin Daily* plays an important role on the 'traditional' end of the media spectrum, potentially reaching larger audiences. The blog *GMW Union* and the YouTube channel *Rainbow Returns*, on the other hand, represent newer information communication technologies, which I argue target, reach, and consolidate, for the most part, already existing support bases.

In all of these communicative efforts, selected movement figures are presented – or present themselves – as charismatic, proficient, and authentic disseminators of information. Yet, the fact that they frequently emphasize the Christian foundation of themselves and of their contents at educational events or in their social media channels may be damaging to their goal of reaching hegemony. Their communicative strategy is twofold, as I have already demonstrated in previous chapters. The anti-LGBT movement tries to convince both Christian and non-Christian publics. In a way, the activists act like missionaries trying to impose their worldview on others. However, they do not only spread a Christian message, but augment it by adding a political one directed against LGBT rights and other socio-political phenomena that the Protestant Right regards as problematic. The viewership numbers of *Rainbow Returns* show that the movement is remote from hegemony, though, definitely in the field of communication. It is also possible, however, that the focus on a conservative Christian audience is an intentional choice of the movement leadership, for it is easier to reach and mobilize such grown support bases.

Yet in general, the impact that the anti-LGBT movement has on Korean politics needs to be raised at this point. Korean politicians have often claimed that a majority among all South Koreans must be achieved as a precondition for introducing pro-LGBT legislation. Moreover, politicians seem to be afraid of campaigns directed against them should they support or approve of such bills (cf. chapter 10.5). When reversing this argument, one could also ask how big the support of *anti-LGBT* positions actually is. This chapter has demonstrated further evidence that the core support base of the anti-LGBT movement is in fact quite small. But the movement is very loud, using sensationalist and fearmongering tactics in their external, 'educational' communication, which may especially impress decision makers who generally shy away from scandalous contents.

Speaking of education, it is important to also instruct politicians about the mechanisms, framing strategies, and the actual support numbers of the anti-LGBT movement. The fields of education, journalism, and social media are particularly crucial in this respect since they are prone to potentially harmful misinformation. The partly inaccurate and hostile contents produced by anti-LGBT activists may be especially damaging for LGBT individuals as well as their families and friends. Therefore, communication is not only an important task for social movements, but also for the academic community, in

that relevant research results should make their way into decision-making processes, especially when basic human rights are endangered.

12. Opposing desires revisited: opportunities and threats in pro and anti-LGBT activism within South Korean Protestantism¹

As this study has shown, conservative Protestant groups have been fighting against various political initiatives in favor of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights in Korea since the early 2000s. Anti-LGBT campaigns, many of which were successful, included campaigns against anti-discrimination bills, against human rights ordinances, against gay men in the Korean military, and against school textbooks disseminating information on homosexuality. Recent scholarship considers several explanatory avenues for the emergence of anti-LGBT activism in South Korea, arguing, for example, that while the Christian doctrine may play an important role in the fight against homosexuality, the decisive reason is to be found in the crisis of Korean Protestantism. By focusing on the opposition against LGBT issues, the argument goes, church leaders and professionalized anti-LGBT groups try to deflect attention away from declining church memberships and scandals like embezzlement and sexual harassment (Siwoo 2018, 36–46). In Han Ch'aeyun's view, conservative Protestant church leaders use anti-gay rhetoric to create an “external enemy” or threat to help increase their political leverage and at the same time lessen the divisions among notoriously fragmented denominations (Han 2017, 180–181).

Existing social scientific research on conservative Christian opponents of LGBT rights mainly investigates how Christian forces strive to prevent or undo pro-LGBT legislation in the arenas of politics and law (Kim, Nami 2016 on Korea; Hark & Villa 2015 on Germany; Béraud & Portier 2015 on France; Stone 2016; Dorf & Tarrow 2014; Fejes 2008; Fetner 2008; Green 2000; Herman 1997 on the United States). This chapter examines how anti-LGBT activists create an ‘internal enemy’ too, by fighting and vilifying LGBT-affirmative tendencies *within* Protestantism – going beyond theological and

1 This chapter is a slightly adapted and updated version of my article “Creating the Internal Enemy: Opportunities and Threats in Pro and Anti-LGBT Activism within South Korean Protestantism” published in the *International Journal of Religion* (Johannemann 2020). The permission to reuse the article has been granted by the publisher.

attitudinal (Moon 2014; Rich 2017; Choi, Eunjung 2014) as well as exclusively political disputes. This perspective on the dynamics between Christian pro and anti-LGBT groups complements similar studies, for example on LGBT groups at Christian universities in the United States (Coley 2018; 2017; 2014) by taking into consideration a broader range of forms and arenas of contention. The chapter also goes beyond perspectives that focus on one party of the conflict only, like the Korean LGBT movement (Kwon Kim & Cho 2011; Bong 2009; Park-Kim et al. 2007), benevolent Christian congregations in Seoul (Yi et al. 2017), ex-gay activism within the Christian anti-LGBT movement (Pak 2018), and the latter's transnational connections (Yi, Jung & Phillips 2017). Studying the internal rifts within Korean Christianity is worthwhile considering that Korean Protestantism in general is characterized by a high degree of factionalization and internal conflicts (Clark 2008, 220). From this perspective, the Korean case can serve as an example of how religious contention over LGBT issues works in a non-western context.

Protestant anti-LGBT activists and LGBT-affirmative actors enter into various forms of struggles, which are analyzed by adapting the *contentious politics* framework (Tilly & Tarrow 2015; Tarrow 2011; McAdam et al. 2001) and *movement-counter-movement dynamics* (Meyer & Staggenborg 1996) for the study of religious conflict. These approaches emphasize the importance of interaction between collective actors and their opponents. The first framework in particular focuses on the interplay of 'members' and 'challengers', i.e., between actors with power or access to powerful parts of a certain community and actors who challenge the former's position or worldview. This conceptual lens helps understand what a crucial role perceived or deliberately constructed threats and opportunities play in this interaction. By concentrating on relational, cognitive, and constructivist aspects, this investigation identifies the mechanisms at work as well as the action repertoires used in the contentious relations among anti-LGBT, moderate, and LGBT-affirmative actors within Korean Protestantism.

I argue that the attacks against pro-LGBT stances within Protestantism are crucial to understand the motivations, strategy, and the complex actor constellations of Protestant anti-LGBT activism in Korea. Many major Protestant denominations and their anti-LGBT factions aim at creating an image of Korean Protestantism standing united against homosexuality and related, allegedly anti-Christian 'ills'. This unity, however, shows distinct cracks. Dissent does not only arise between an uncompromising anti-LGBT camp and other conservative, yet more moderate voices. Explicitly affirmative attitudes have also become visible in recent years.

Through a thorough analysis of PEA data and further relevant newspaper articles and press statements, I was able to come up with two main findings on concrete internal struggles over LGBT issues, which emerged and soon substantially expanded from 2015 onwards. First, through being framed as a threat, LGBT-affirmative activism within Protestantism can be strategically utilized as an additional incentive to fight LGBT issues. The anti-LGBT movement can stress the urgency to eliminate this threat, thus trying to mobilize fellow believers for the struggle against an 'internal enemy'. Second, despite these efforts of anti-LGBT factions, practicing Christian LGBT individuals and their allies have become more active and gained greater visibility owing to the very oppression originating from their bellicose Christian 'fellows'.

The chapter proceeds as follows: after shortly presenting the analytical framework, I offer an overview of the contentious interactions over LGBT issues within Korean Protestantism and beyond. The main body of the study consists of an analysis of five case studies, namely, heresy trials against a pro-LGBT pastor, conflicts at Christian universities, the vilification of the progressive National Council of Churches in Korea and the Christian newspaper Newsjoy, and the controversy around an arguably moderate junior pastor of a Protestant congregation. The conclusion summarizes and further contextualizes the results of this chapter's analysis.

12.1 Contentious politics and movement-counter movement dynamics in the religious context

Religious movements have been analyzed from various angles, including cultural or ideological and organizational approaches for analysis (Kniss & Burns 2004, 696). Further areas of research encompass the intersection of genuinely political movements with religious ones, their respective collective identities, and strategies pursued in relation to the state or society at large (Snow & Beyerlein 2019, 576–580). This chapter deals with two specific subsets of research on religious movements and adds a third aspect: social movements within religious organizations, religion as a resource or facilitator for the emergence of movements and their actions (Kniss & Burns, 2004: 695), and religious conflict. While conflict between religious groups is not unusual and has been the subject of extensive scientific investigation, a systematic analysis of such an actor constellation – especially concerning contention over LGBT issues in religious contexts – is still lacking. The chapter will fill this lacuna by applying and adapting two approaches commonly used for the study of conflict in social movement studies: *movement-counter movement dynamics* and the *contentious politics* framework.

Protestant anti-LGBT and pro-LGBT actors in Korea enter into diverse conflicts with each other, one reacting to the other's actions and vice-versa. Social movement scholars speak of “movement-counter movement dynamics” (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996) or “opposing movements” (Dugan, 2004) when referring to such actor constellations. While this chapter is not so much concerned with the circumstances around the emergence of counter movements, it will show that the opportunity structures identified in Meyer and Staggenborg's seminal article (1996: 1635–1643) play an important role in the dynamic interactions between religious pro and anti-LGBT actors. These opportunity structures include the following aspects: the opposing movement shows signs of success, it poses a threat to vested interests or values of dissenting groups, and it receives support from elite allies.

Concerning the role of threats and elite actors, the *contentious politics* approach (Tilly & Tarrow 2015; Tarrow 2011; McAdam et al. 2001) is a helpful complement to the analytical framework of this study. The approach transcends the traditional social movements approach by taking into consideration a less restricted set of actors,² and it highlights

2 Tarrow defines social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow 2011, 9, orig-

the environmental, relational, and cognitive *mechanisms* at work in contentious interactions (for details, cf. chapter 3). McAdam et al. (2001, 5) define contentious politics as “episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.” The ‘political’ bias of this definition may pose problems to the analysis of religious contexts. McAdam and Tarrow (2011, 5) themselves acknowledge that such a state-centeredness excludes many phenomena worthy of study. I contend that by reconceptualizing the government from the definition above as a powerful, authoritative religious body, this bias can be remedied for the purpose of this chapter’s analysis. Authoritative religious bodies are important because they wield power over subordinate religious organizations and individual believers. Moreover, they define what kind of attitudes and actions are legitimate from a perspective of religious doctrine and ethics (cf. chapter 10.2). Influential religious actors possess capacities similar to those of (authoritarian) states. For example, they have a repressive potential, repression being defined as “efforts to suppress either contentious acts or groups and organizations responsible for them” (McAdam et al. 2001, 69, original italicized).³ *Certification* and *decertification* represent important mechanisms for (de)mobilization in this context: “Certification entails the validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities. Decertification is the withdrawal of such validation by certifying agents” (McAdam et al. 2001, 121). This corresponds to the support of influential allies in the movement-counter-movement approach seen above.

Authoritative religious bodies can, as shall be demonstrated in the context of this chapter, consist of denominational leaders, general assemblies of specific denominations, church associations, or the leaderships of Christian universities. Such religious bodies can function as claim makers themselves, or they can assist the *members*, i.e., constituted actors with privileged or routine access to these bodies, in their fight against their *challengers* (cf. McAdam et al. 2001, 12). The focus on religious actors does not preclude the possibility that either members or challengers may receive or seek support from authorities external to the religious arena. In fact, it is rather common that actors attempt to *appropriate* existing organizations or communities to gain benefits and mobilize more effectively (McAdam et al. 2001, 44).

I argue that unlike contention in democratic regimes, many religions, or their religious subsets – especially fundamentalist factions – do not allow for open deliberation over certain doctrinal and moral aspects of religion, thus impeding the emergence and actions of what one may call a civil society within religion (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2015,

inal italicized). I argue that the general properties of this definition apply to the Korean anti-LGBT movement within Protestantism, but less so to LGBT-affirmative activism inside Korean Protestantism. As we shall see, pro-LGBT activities often take place on an ad-hoc basis and are rather uncoordinated, at least when excluding the services offered by certain churches or groups like “Rainbow Jesus” (*mujigae yesu*) that explicitly cater LGBT Christians. For perspectives on *religious* movements and their particularities see Snow and Beyerlein (2019) and Kniss and Burns (2004).

3 Repression can take abstract forms as well. If, for example, a certain religious doctrine presenting homosexuality as morally bad is continuously communicated and thus well known, this can already exert a suppressive effect both on the individuals affected and on their potential allies.

56–58; Tarrow 2011, 179). Therefore, it can be expected that challengers will resort to *transgressive forms of contention*. Transgressive contention involves challengers employing innovative collective action, often out of necessity, since *contained contention*, that is, established forms of claim making within existing institutions, may not be available to them (McAdam et al. 2001, 7f.).

Repression may threaten challengers, while transgressive counteraction can in turn represent threats to members. The contentious politics framework calls attention to the fact that such threats – as well as opportunities – only become relevant as soon as they are perceived, and in some cases constructed. As McAdam et al. (2001, 43) argue, “[r]ather than look upon ‘opportunities and threats’ as objective structural factors, we see them as subject to attribution”. The necessity of *attribution* accentuates the deliberate, strategic construction of opportunities and threats as opposed to the traditional, rather static opportunity structures agenda of social movement studies (McAdam et al. 2001, 14f.). Meyer and Staggenborg also refer to such cognitive and dispositional mechanisms, claiming that the parties to a conflict react dynamically to the actions of the respective opponent and, if the conflict is prolonged, continuously create constraints and opportunities for each other. Consequently, “[t]he opposing movement is a critical component in the structure of political opportunity the other side faces” (Meyer & Staggenborg 1996, 1633). While *opportunities* consist of “the [perceived] probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving a desired outcome” (Goldstone & Tilly 2001, 182), *threats* are commonly perceived ex negativo as “the risks and costs of action or inaction” (Tarrow 2011, 160). This study emphasizes the productive, opportunity-like potential of threats. In comparison to opportunities and mere grievances,⁴ threats involve a greater sense of urgency and intensity (Almeida 2019, 44). Tilly (1978, 134–135) argues that “a given amount of threat tends to generate more collective action than the ‘same’ amount of opportunity.” The attribution or creation of threats, I argue, thus represents an attractive tactical choice for the actors involved in contention.

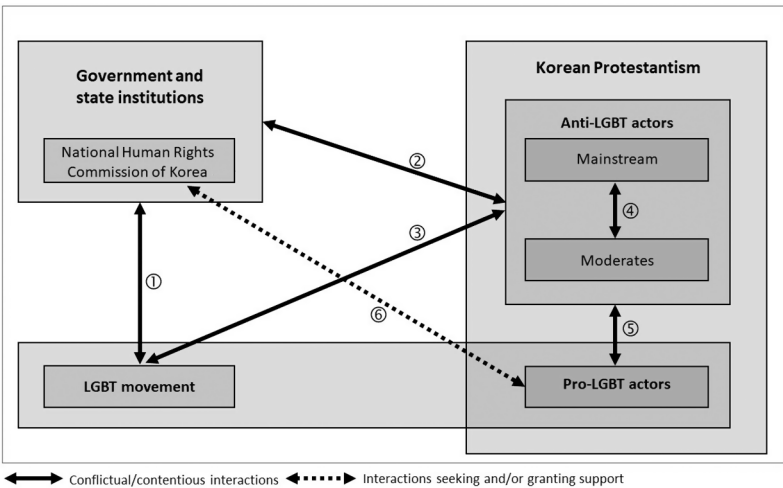
12.2 The complex interactions of pro and anti-LGBT actors in Korean Protestantism and beyond

Regarding the specific constellation of religious actors under investigation in this study, the assumption of a clear-cut picture seems tempting: the actors enforcing anti-LGBT stances within Korean Protestantism can be regarded as the original movement to which LGBT-affirmative counteractors react. However, when taking into consideration non-religious actors as well, the picture becomes more complicated. The Korean anti-LGBT movement can be regarded as a countermovement to begin with, which then engendered opposition from newly forming actors. As Zald and Useem (1987, 249) note, sometimes “a countermovement may in turn generate a counter-countermovement that is different from the original movement.” Figure 11 illustrates the complex web of contentious

4 Grievances being defined as “troublesome matters or conditions, and the feelings associated with them – such as dissatisfaction, fear, indignation, resentment, and moral shock” (Snow & Soule 2010, 23).

interaction, in which both pro and anti-LGBT activism within Korean Protestantism are embedded.

Figure 11: Actor constellation and actor overlaps (Venn diagrams) of Protestant and non-religious pro and anti-LGBT actors interrelating with each other and with the state



The counter-countermovement, consisting of pro-LGBT activities within Protestantism, emerged only at a later stage in the process of contentious interaction around LGBT issues in Korea (depicted as solid double arrows in Figure 11). While the respective forms of interaction shall be the cornerstone of this chapter's analysis, a linear or procedural perspective can illuminate the specific relations among actors and may help identify potential circular interactions. For the sake of clarity, some actor overlaps such as those between governmental actors and the Protestant anti-LGBT camp have been excluded (cf. chapter 10.5 for this). Figure 11 thus represents a simple, ideal-typical depiction of the actor constellation at hand, with a focus on the actors and interactions relevant to research focus of this chapter.

The Korean LGBT movement represented the initial spark. It emerged in the mid-early 1990s after the democratization of South Korea and started lobbying for LGBT rights (arrow ① in Figure 1). In response, from the mid-early 2000s onwards, a subset of actors within conservative Korean Protestantism started problematizing LGBT issues (cf. chapter 5). These groups and activists engage in contentious relations both with the LGBT movement and with state actors, which they perceive to excessively promote LGBT rights, purportedly to the detriment of religious freedom of Korean Christians (②, ③).⁵ I argue that for large portions of institutional Protestantism in Korea, anti-LGBT stances have become a dominant feature of their faith, which is why I call this group the

5 Interestingly, the perception of pro-LGBT groups is the exact opposite. From their perspective, state actors are often unwilling, or fail to enact human rights protection for sexual minorities (which, of course, may be due to the powerful anti-LGBT activism of certain Protestant groups). To be clear, I do not argue that the anti-LGBT movement emerged because of or in opposition to the LGBT

‘mainstream’. I use this term also to differentiate these actors from those who hold less vociferous, less exclusionary attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. As I will show in the next section, such ‘moderate’ positions – despite being rather unimportant in terms of quantity – face strong opposition from mainstream anti-LGBT forces (④). Finally, there is conflictual interaction between pro-LGBT and anti-LGBT forces within Protestantism (⑤). These last two types of interrelation will constitute the main focus of the five case studies below. However, actors external to Korean Protestantism also get entangled, at times in a circular manner. As already mentioned also elsewhere in this study, certain state institutions come under fire for their defense of LGBT rights. When Christian pro-LGBT actors then approach these state institutions to seek support against their anti-LGBT opponents (⑥), the anti-LGBT camp resumes its attacks against the state institution in an even more vigorous manner.

12.3 Case studies of contention over LGBT issues within Korean Protestantism

The cases identified as involving protracted contention over LGBT issues cover a broad range of actors and interactions. Both individual and collective actors become targets of anti-LGBT activism, including the attacks against Pastor Lim Borah and two instances of punishments for pro-LGBT students at Christian universities. Two cases comprise more institutionalized actors, the progressive Christian online newspaper Newsnjoy and the progressive church association NCKK, which are criticized for their LGBT-affirmative stances. Finally, the case of Bundang Woori Church proves relevant as it demonstrates how even slightly dissenting voices can be perceived as a threat. As we shall see, these conflicts reflect broader religious and socio-political cleavages in Korean Protestantism and society at large.

(De)certification and scale shift: the heresy trials against Pastor Lim Borah

Openly LGBT-inclusive congregations are scarce in Korea, but they do exist (Yi et al. 2017). There is even an association of (pro-)LGBT Christians called *Rainbow Jesus*, with members from many Protestant denominations and from Catholic Church. *Sumdol Hyanglin Church* (*sōmdol hyangnin kyohoe*) is perhaps the most famous of the LGBT-affirmative congregations, with its founding pastor Lim Borah (*Im Po-ra*) being one of the first in Korean Protestantism to speak out against hatred and discrimination against LGBT people (Schumacher 2016, November 22). Sumdol Hyanglin Church belongs to the theologically progressive *Kijang* denomination (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, PROK) and is the only Presbyterian congregation in Korea explicitly welcoming sexual minorities (Yi et al. 2017, 1462; Rode 2018, April 25).

Pastor Lim became active in supporting LGBT rights when Protestant anti-LGBT forces began fighting against the inclusion of homosexuality into anti-discrimination

movement and state actors only. It might also be, e.g., a reaction to more general changes in society (cf. Mottl 1980).

bills from 2007 onwards. She organized discussion events bringing together different Christian views on homosexuality, arguing herself that homosexuals are not objects to be healed or pitied, but that they are part of God's good creation (Yi, Tae-ung 2008, January 30). Along with other LGBT-affirmative pastors from Rainbow Jesus, Pastor Lim has been a regular attendant of the annual Seoul Queer Culture Festival (SQCF), running a booth and participating in the pride parade (Kang, Chu-hwa 2014, June 7). The involvement of Christian groups in the SQCF is a recurrent subject of scandalization with conservative Christian media (Yi, Tae-ung 2018, July 16; Ch'oe, Yŏng-gyŏng 2016, August 18). Pastor Lim consistently reaffirmed her strong pro-LGBT attitude and demanded changes in Korean Christianity: "Homosexuality is not a matter of pro or contra, it is about whether we embrace the dignity of a life or not" (quoted in Pak & Chin 2014, October 19). Pastor Lim also points to the opportunities a welcoming attitude towards LGBT believers could have for her own denomination.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) is afraid to take the lead role in advocating for human rights of sexual minorities because they worry about additional loss of members, even though they usually like to see themselves as pioneers. I think taking on this matter and openly advocating for the rights of sexual minorities would enrich the profile of PROK. It might even bring new members. Many LGBT Christians are hurt and deeply disappointed by the church and they are longing for a congregation that welcomes them as they are. (Quoted in Schumacher 2016, November 22)

Conservative Protestant denominations did not only refuse to follow Pastor Lim's recommendations, but accused her of heresy, that is, beliefs or opinions against the established doctrinal principles of a religion (cf. Tutino 2012). At the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in September 2017, the heresy task forces (*idan taech'aek wiwŏnhoe*) of eight major Protestant denominations⁶ demanded that Pastor Lim be declared guilty of heresy. These task forces claimed that her advocacy for homosexuals and her participation in translating the 'Queer Bible Commentary' were unacceptable and that her interpretation of the Bible constituted an "irrevocable error" as well as a threat to Korean Protestantism (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2017, September 4). In this investigative process, Pastor Lim Borah was not given any opportunity to defend herself directly (Kang, To-hyŏn 2019, January 15). Here, the repressive power of churches and their leadership structures becomes evident. The demand to declare Pastor Lim a heretic is a clear example of *decertification*: powerful actors external to her own denomination tried to delegitimize her.

At the same time, the controversy around this pro-LGBT reverend provided an opportunity to extend the conflict by expanding the number of actors involved. The group *Anti-Homosexuality Christian Solidarity* (AHCS, *pandongsŏngae kidok simin yŏndae*), for example,

6 These denominations included the *Presbyterian Church of Korea* (PCK, *T'onghap*), the *General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea* (GAPCK, *Hapdong*), the *Presbyterian Church of Korea* (Daesin), the *Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea* (Kosin), the *Korean Presbyterian Church* (Hapsin), the *Korean Methodist Church*, the *Korea Evangelical Holiness Church*, and the *Korea Baptist Convention*.

joined the chorus of opposition against Pastor Lim by criticizing her mother denomination PROK for allowing such a “heretical” behavior (AHCS 2017, September 4). This process constitutes a case of *scale shift*, “a change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions leading to broader contention involving a wider range of actors and bridging their claims and identities” (McAdam et al. 2001, 311). While the coordinated quality of the contention at hand may be questionable, the extension of the conflict is not. In fact, not only did professionalized anti-LGBT groups join the fight. Progressive Christian organizations intervened as well, showing their solidarity with Pastor Lim and by so doing, at least to a certain extent, (re)certifying her. Already when Lim Borah was still under investigation for heresy, the Women’s Committee (*yösöng wiwönhoe*) of NCCCK issued a supportive statement (Kim, Chin-yöng 2017, August 10), as did the *United Church of Canada*, demonstrating international support (Yi, Ün-hye 2017, August 17). The *PROK Life Mission Solidarity* (*saengmyöng sön’gyo yöndae*) also issued a statement criticizing both the hypocritical behavior of the denominations prosecuting Pastor Lim in light of their own scandals and wrongdoings, and the negative attitude of PROK’s general assembly president towards sexual minorities. At a meeting with other denominations’ presidents, he had supported a statement against homosexuality and same-sex marriage, thus further isolating PROK’s Pastor Lim (Yi, Ün-hye 2017, August 5). These instances of supportive statements for Pastor Lim on the one hand, and dismissive ones on the other, hint at broader underlying conflicts within Korean Protestantism. Moreover, the latter statement by PROK’s Life Mission Solidarity evidences that contention over LGBT issues exists even within this progressive denomination. A year later, when the Presbyterian denominations *Tonghap* and *Daesin Paeksöck* actually declared Pastor Lim heretical, PROK displayed a firmer stance, demanding the withdrawal of these decisions and urging the two denominations to apologize to Pastor Lim (Kim, Chin-yöng 2018, September 13).⁷

Repressive measures and their implications: punishing LGBT activism at Christian universities

Contention over LGBT issues can be encountered at Christian universities in Korea as well. In February 2016, theology and missionary students at the *Methodist Theological University* (*kamsin daehakkyo*) protested against the *Korean Methodist Church’s* decision to include an official ban on homosexuality into its church constitution. The protesters were all wearing masks hiding their faces, fearing potential consequences following their activism against discrimination (Paek, Sang-Hyön 2016, February 21). However, most LGBT-related activism at Christian universities consists of publicly declaring one’s aversion to homosexuality, which has been done by whole universities (e.g. Handong

7 The case of Lim Borah is a prominent one, but not the only one, in which a Protestant pastor got punished for their LGBT-friendly positions. Another case that attracted wide attention is the one of the Methodist pastor Lee Dong-hwan (*Yi Tong-hwan*), who was suspended from being a pastor for two years by an ecclesiastical tribunal in October 2020 because he had held a blessing prayer for sexual minorities at the Seoul Queer Culture Festival the year before. However, just like in the case of Pastor Lim Borah, this repressive measure was met with resistance and solidarity from pro-LGBT groups and churches in Korea and abroad. He was even awarded a special prize by Amnesty International in March 2021 for his relentless commitment (Park, Ji-won 2021, April 29).

University, Yu, Yöng-dae 2017, May 26), by groups of Christian professors (Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, August 11; 2017, September 26) and by students (Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, August 8).

I will focus on two cases of extended contention over LGBT issues at Christian universities, more specifically conflicts that involved a broader range of actors in protracted interactions. In late 2017, the feminist students club *Wildflower* (*tülkkot*) of *Handong University*, a private Christian university located in the city of Pohang in south-western Korea, planned to hold a lecture event on prostitution. The university administration forbade this event, but the club proceeded with the event regardless, inviting feminist scholars who also talked about polyamory and homosexuality. As a result, Handong University considered taking disciplinary measures against three members of *Wildflower*, two participants, as well as against a professor who indirectly supported the lecture (Yu, Söl-hüi 2018, January 8). One student was eventually expelled.⁸

The student club *Wildflower* challenged the repressive measures taken by their university and filed a complaint with the *National Human Rights Commission of Korea* (NHRCK). In this action, the students sought help from an institution outside their Christian university and indeed received support (interaction ⑥ in Figure 11 above). The NHRCK recommended that Handong University withdraw the disciplinary measure as it constituted an act of discrimination of sexual minorities and thus a violation of human rights. Yet, Handong University did not accept this decision (NHRCK 2019, May 7).⁹ In February 2020, a court ruled that while the disciplinary measure taken by Handong University was severe, it was rightful since the lecture event violated the founding philosophy of the school (Chang, 2020).

The NHRCK was established in 2001 as an independent state agency to protect and advocate human rights in Korea. As soon as the NHRCK started an investigation of the *Wildflower* incident, contention became more heated and shifted towards the NHRCK as the main target. Christian parents' groups staged several protests in front of the NHRCK building in Seoul, gathering up to 300 participants (Paek, Sang-hyön 2019, January 23). Press statements reprimanding the NHRCK for infringing on the religious and academic freedom of Christian universities were also issued by various Christian organizations.¹⁰ The *Korean Association of Church Communication* (KACC), mouthpiece of the conservative

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- 8 A related case concerns the lecturer Kim Tae-ok who was dismissed from Handong University for not meeting the requirements for reappointment. Kukmin Daily reported that reasons for his dismissal could be found in his lack of opposition against homosexuality and his support for the student club *Wildflower* (Ku, Cha-ch'ang 2018, January 3). Kim Tae-ok was subsequently found guilty of heresy in a decision "to protect the Korean church" taken by the general assembly of the Presbyterian *Paeksök* denomination in September 2019. "Pastor Kim Tae-ok interprets the Bible arbitrarily, teaches greatly wrong ideas in core doctrines, and advocates Islam and homosexuality" (quoted in Yi, Ŭn-hye, 2019, September 20).
 - 9 The NHRCK issued a similar recommendation to protect the human rights of sexual minorities in a case that occurred at *Soongsil University*, a private Christian University in Seoul. The university had prohibited the screening of a movie as the university deemed the film to show a beautifying image of homosexuality (NHRCK 2019, May 7).
 - 10 Press statements were issued by, among others, the *Handong University Parents' Prayer Association* (*handong taehakkyo hakpumo kidohoe*), the *Christian Voters Union* (*han'guk kidokkyo yugwönja yönhap*), and the *National Union of Professors against the Legalization of Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage*

parts of Korean Protestantism such as the CCK, even demanded that the NHRCK be dismantled: “[...] the National Human Rights Commission of Korea [...] should be dissolved to properly stop the destruction of human dignity and values, and to stop it putting undue pressure on schools that practice correct teaching” (KACC 2019, May 18). It is remarkable that although the lecture event organized by the student club *Wildflower* was predominantly about issues other than homosexuality, most of the statements overemphasize this aspect, accusing the NHRCK of taking a biased stance, overly favoring LGBT rights as against the freedom of religion (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2019, January 8; Yu, Yŏng-dae 2019, February 2; Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, April 4).

Similar repressive measures against pro-LGBT activism were taken by *Changshin University*, another private Christian university in south-western Korea, located in the city of Changwon. Commemorating the international day against homophobia on May 17, 2018, eight students of the student club *Am-ha’aretz* dressed in rainbow-colored clothes and entered the altar area holding a rainbow flag after a church service at Changshin University. The group shared pictures of this rainbow performance on social media. The university leadership did not approve of this action and immediately started an investigation of the students involved, asserting that they violated the regulations of the school and of the Presbyterian *Tonghap* denomination Changshin University belongs to. In a press statement, the students expressed their disappointment with the university’s actions, claiming that their rights of freedom of expression and freedom of conscience were infringed (Yi, Yong-p’il 2018, May 21).¹¹ Nonetheless, in July 2018, four students were suspended from attending Changshin University. With the support from *Hope and Law* (*hŭimang-ŭl mandŭnŭn pŏp*), a lawyers’ association advocating human rights, the penalized students successfully appealed against their university’s verdict. As opposed to the *Wildflower* case, a court decided in July 2019 that their suspensions were invalid, albeit only due to procedural flaws (Yi, Ŭn-hye 2019, July 18). In a press statement, the KACC condemned this decision and accused the court of showing disrespect for Christianity. The KACC (2019, July 23) also demanded Changshin University to take disciplinary measures against the students yet again – this time correctly – in order to protect the church and society at large from an unwanted influx of homosexuality. The KACC statement reveals the ideological and political implications of Protestant anti-LGBT activism by further elaborating on the alleged dangers of homosexuality:

Homosexuality cannot simply be regarded as encompassing sexual minorities or the weak, but it is a ruse conceived by Satan, which aims to destroy the church through ‘Cultural Marxism’. Homosexuality is not just a matter of sex, it is sex politics, it is sex

(*tongsŏngae tongsŏnghon hapbŏphwa pandae chŏnguk kyosu yŏnhap*) (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2018, April 4; 2019, January 8; Yu, Yŏng-dae 2019, February 2).

11 In the press statement, *Am-ha’aretz* also claim that they are not affected by the church regulation since it only mentions staff members of universities and not students. The church constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Korea *Tonghap* states in article 26–12: “Those who support and advocate homosexuals and homosexuality are against the teachings of the Bible, and those who support and advocate homosexuals and homosexuality shall not be members of the Church and professors and faculty members of the Theological University.” Moreover, the students argued that the university regulations did not mention homosexuality at all (Yi, Yong-p’il 2018, May 21).

ideology, it is sex revolution. What they seek to do is destroying Christian values, families, society, and the church as a whole. (KACC 2019, July 23)

While disparaging homosexuality is a common feature of KACC press releases, it is striking that a relatively minor rainbow performance provokes such a strong response. Indeed, any activism in favor of homosexuality – no matter how innocuous – is met with dramatic allegations such as an intent of church destruction, social decay, and communist conspiracy (cf. chapters 7 & 8). In such a discursive environment, engaging in LGBT-affirmative activism entails high risks for the people involved. When Protestant denominations, universities, and specialized anti-LGBT organizations dominate the discourse and institutionalize anti-LGBT stances, established ways of deliberation, for example, at denominational general assemblies, are no longer available. Pro-LGBT actors have to resort to other means, consistently risking shaming, disciplinary measures, and exclusion. Under such circumstances, even seemingly small acts of dissent represent transgressive and potentially threatening actions.

The repressive measures against students who are (perceived to be) fighting for LGBT rights on campus are already noteworthy phenomena in themselves. Even more remarkable, though, is the fact that a broader range of Protestant anti-LGBT actors only mobilized as soon as these ‘incidents’ created a stir also outside the Christian arena – another example of scale shift. When the NHRCK got involved in the Wildflower case at Handong University, other Protestant anti-LGBT forces started mobilizing, staging protests and issuing press statements. Similar furor emerged when a court rendered a verdict in favor of the rainbow performance students. This extended contention brings to light even more fundamental conflicts that have been shaping Korean Protestantism. The liberal political and judicial elites (or those libeled as such) in general and governmental institutions like the NHRCK in particular have been longstanding targets of attacks by conservative Protestants.¹² This church-state antagonism enables, and contributes to counteraction. If this cleavage emerges in conflicts internal to Protestantism as well, the purported threat becomes greater and counteraction more urgent. Furthermore, if this is the case, anti-LGBT actors can resort to well-established arguments and action repertoires more easily.

Reproducing the progressive/conservative divide: the cases of Newsjoy and NCKK

Protestant actors like the progressive Christian online newspaper *Newsjoy* and the theologically liberal church association NCKK (*National Council of Churches in Korea*) have been under attack for their support of LGBT issues as well. Anti-LGBT groups take issue, for example, with *Newsjoy*’s positive reporting on LGBT topics. In December 2018, a pastor of the group *Anti-Homosexual Christian Solidarity* started organizing several rallies against

12 The NHRCK is mainly criticized for the inclusion of “sexual orientation” in its anti-discrimination mandate (article 2 of the NHRCK Act). Courts have been targets of conservative Protestant protest on many occasions, too. For example, Protestant groups tried to exert influence on trials of the Supreme Court, fighting successfully against the lift of the ban on homosexuality in the Korean military, but unsuccessfully against the elimination of a strict prohibition of abortions (cf. chapter 6).

Newsjoy. The protesters decried this “anti-Christian press” as a “destructive force that infiltrated the church” and as a supporter of communism, demanding that churches supporting Newsjoy financially halt their funding (Kim, Chin-yŏng 2018, December 18; cf. also Chang, Myŏng-sŏng 2019, January 8). Subsequently, the *National Association of Professors against the Legalization of Homosexuality and Same-Sex-Marriage*¹³ issued a statement condemning Newsjoy’s critical articles on Christian anti-LGBT activists in particular. The professors’ groups stated that Newsjoy “is the newspaper most supportive of homosexuality among domestic media, it has a strong hostility toward anti-homosexual activism and is releasing all kinds of malicious articles” (quoted in Kang, To-hyŏn 2019, January 25). Newsjoy features a section in which it conducts fact checks of “fake news” produced by representatives of the anti-LGBT movement. Viewing this kind of reporting as acts of defamation, several anti-LGBT activists sued Newsjoy. In January 2020, a court ruled that Newsjoy had to pay compensations for reporting “beyond the scope of legitimate media activities of monitoring, critique, and checking” and demanded that the articles in question be deleted (quoted in Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2020, January 20). However, Newsjoy appealed this sentence and subsequently won eight court cases at the appellate court and, in one case, received the recommendation to seek reconciliation with a plaintiff. The Supreme Court confirmed these rulings in August 2021 and thus concluded that anti-LGBT activists and groups have in fact spread false and distorted information (Ku, Kwŏn-hyo 2021, August 30). In March 2020, the gay mens’ organization *Chingusai* announced that Newsjoy would receive the 14th rainbow human rights award for being the only media within the Korean Christian community to actively fight against hatred and discrimination against minorities (Paek, Sang-hyŏn 2020, March 27).

As a church association including liberal Protestant denominations, the NCKK¹⁴ is also a frequent target of conservative Protestant critique. Like Newsjoy, the NCKK has the potential of reaching many church members – threatening the image agitated for by the anti-LGBT camp of the Korean churches standing united against homosexual ‘evils’. Theologically positive perspectives on homosexuality and related subjects directly call into question the conservatives’ worldview and fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. Therefore, the NCKK was met with fierce and partly violent protests when, for example, it published a translated theological book on homosexuality (Pak, Chi-hun 2015, December 17). The NCKK was also criticized when it invited a gay film director who advocates same-sex marriage for a lecture event on anti-discrimination (Sin & Paek 2016, April 29), and when it demanded that the political parties in the newly elected National Assembly quickly pass an anti-discrimination law (KACC 2020, April 23). The latter controversy on NCKK’s advocacy for the anti-discrimination law illustrates the broader socio-political and religious cleavages underlying the contention over LGBT

13 Although the name of this professors’ group suggests differently, homosexuality has never been officially criminalized on the state level in Korea. Only the Military Criminal Law of South Korea includes a provision (article 92–6) punishing sex between men. Historically, however, this provision has not been implemented until recently (cf. chapter 7.2).

14 NCKK’s member denominations include, as of April 2023, for example, the *Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea* (PROK, Kijang), the *Anglican Church of Korea*, the *Lutheran Church in Korea*, but also more conservative ones like the *Korean Orthodox Church*, the *Assemblies of God of Korea*, and the *Presbyterian Church of Korea* (PCK, Tonghap) (NCKK n.d.).

issues. The *Christian Liberty Unification Party*, a minor right-wing Christian political party (cf. chapter 10.5), for example, in a press statement denounced NCKK as a left-wing religious political force:

They [the NCKK] claim they are active for the weak who are faced with discrimination and want to realize justice, but in fact, they habitually shout the political slogans of the Democratic Party on fake equity and fake peace like parrots, thereby advocating the anti-discrimination law which would legalize actions to promote homosexuality and to destroy the church and normal social culture. (Quoted in in Yu, Yöng-dae 2020, April 22)

Rivalry does not only exist in the area of political inclinations, but also among Korean Protestant associations. The leader of the conservative *Christian Council of Korea* (CCK), for instance, joined a rally against the NCKK, decrying its support for the anti-discrimination law (Chi, Yu-sök 2020, April 22). There are also calls for the NCKK, the CCK and other conservative church associations¹⁵ to reunite in order to strengthen Korean Protestantism, but the NCKK's promotion of homosexuality and its alleged support of North Korea are presented as making such an endeavor impossible. Therefore, the KACC argues, it would be better to no longer recognize NCKK as a church association at all (KACC 2016, May 18).

Contention over LGBT issues renders visible the rifts that run deeper than simple disagreements over the theological or ethical assessments of homosexuality. Longstanding conflicts between ideologically, theologically, and politically opposing parts of Korean Protestantism come to the fore here. Anti-LGBT forces strategically use well-established arguments to disavow their internal enemies, such as anti-communism and nationalism, when maintaining that by advocating progressive issues, the NCKK, Newsjoy, and others willfully damage not only the church, but also families and the country as a whole (cf. chapter 7.2). The fault lines, however, do not run merely between progressive and conservative Protestant forces. They are also observable within conservative Protestantism itself, as the next case exemplifies.

Critique, backlash, and strategic accommodation: the case of Bundang Woori Church

On June 5, 2019, a junior pastor of *Bundang Woori Church* (*pundang uri kyohoe*), a missional church located in the city of Söngnam south of Seoul, committed an act he would come to regret afterwards. In a sermon that was televised online but later deleted, he claimed that the obstinate and uncompromising focus on homosexuality shed a negative light on Korean Protestantism. In his view, people engaging in activism against homosexuality lost track of societal trends and could thus be regarded as “*kkondae*”, a derogatory appellation for people with outdated values, which they try to impose on others in a more

15 Conflicts exist within organized conservative Korean Protestantism, too. For example, 20 denominations split from the CCK in 2012 due to disagreement over the election of a new leadership, forming the *Communion of Churches in Korea* (CCIK, *han'guk kyohoe yönhap*) (Paek, Sang-hyön 2017, August 27).

or less aggressive way. Although the junior pastor also voiced his view that from a Biblical perspective homosexuality was a sin, his sermon was met with immediate and fierce backlash from within the church. Protestant anti-LGBT activists denounced him and the senior pastor of Bundang Woori Church as advocates of leftist and anti-Christian ideas, resulting in several official apologies and reaffirmations of the two pastors' strong anti-gay stance. The junior pastor promised he would not preach for the duration of one year after this incident, and the senior pastor announced he would establish a Christian research institute on the topic of homosexuality (Yi, Ŭn-hye 2019, June 11).

This episode illustrates how even moderate attitudes towards LGBT issues are met with fierce resistance from anti-LGBT forces within South Korean Protestantism. Anti-LGBT groups have not only presented the actions of the Bundang Woori Church junior pastor as a threat for the Korean church. Other prominent church actors have also been criticized when they or their entourage are not in alignment with the hegemonic anti-LGBT discourse. For instance, the anti-LGBT group AHCS demanded an apology from the chairman of the *South Kyöngsang Province Christian Council* (*kyöngnam kidokkyo chöngyönhaphoe*) as a reaction to his son's promotion of queer theology via social media (AHCS 2018, July 17). Another peculiar example concerns the leadership of *Chongshin University*, a private Christian university in Seoul belonging to the conservative *Hapdong* denomination, which came under fire from anti-LGBT groups for dismissing a homophobic professor. Students had taken issue with the professor teaching in a bioethics lecture that homosexual acts were against the creation order and harmful to health (Im, Po-hyök 2020, January 28).

The fierce verbal attacks against Bundang Woori Church are surprising, since its senior pastor had actively preached the sinfulness of homosexuality in the past (The Bible-smith Project 2016, May 12). It seems as though the junior pastor's sermon did not come under attack so much for his relatively moderate stance on homosexuality. Rather, the reason for being faced with an immense backlash is the fact that the junior pastor – very much like Newsjoy – openly attacked the anti-LGBT factions of Korean Protestantism. The act of pointing out critical aspects of anti-LGBT activism from within conservative Protestantism poses a particular threat to the intended image of a united church. Therefore, the Protestant anti-LGBT movement immediately and forcefully responded to the junior pastor's announcements. Their response proved effective: with the announcement to create a Christian research institute in order to deal with the problem of homosexuality, the senior pastor publicly demonstrated his willingness to atone for the 'mistakes' committed. In a sense, Bundang Woori Church appears keen to become an overachiever as a means to convincingly prove its firm anti-LGBT attitude. Such a behavior can be called *strategic accommodation*, a kind of "dramatic ingratiation" to (re)gain the favor of certain actors by "fostering the impression that values, aims, and/or conduct are in conformity with, or at least not incongruent with, certain values, traditions, and normative standards within the ambient society" (Snow, 1979: 30, cited in Snow & Beyerlein, 2019: 579).

The threat posed by the junior pastor's sermon is productively used by the anti-LGBT movement. The anti-LGBT actors achieved their goal of forcing Bundang Woori Church to realign with the anti-LGBT mainstream. They set another warning example for all those who may hold similar LGBT-affirmative or just moderate opinions and are pon-

dering whether to act upon them. So Kang-sök, a senior pastor of *New Eden Church*, a mega-church located in the city of Yongin south of Seoul, is both an active member of the Protestant anti-LGBT movement and a frequent contributor to the *Kukmin Daily*. In a column, he analyzed the “exhausting controversy” around Bundang Woori Church and put forward an interesting comparison:

The historian Toynbee said that if a civilization succeeded in responding to an external challenge, such as a harsh natural environment or external invasion, that civilization could continue and develop. If it fails, the civilization disappears behind the stage of history. Interestingly, civilizations that have not been challenged have gone a path of collapse. [...] In this sense, the attack of anti-Christian forces on the Korean church is a good challenge for us. If the Korean church does not accept this challenge but makes compromises, it will surely go extinct. Recently, there was an exhausting controversy over the issue of homosexuality in the Korean church. However, by resisting the opinion that homosexuality is only a mayfly and that this trend has already ended, Korean churches have succeeded in becoming one again. (So, Kang-sök 2019, August 27)

This passage allows for an insight into the logics underlying the opposition against pro-LGBT tendencies within Protestantism. While LGBT-affirmative actions and attitudes are perceived and/or presented as acute threats to the church, families, and to the society as a whole, they also constitute opportunities – opportunities to reiterate anti-LGBT arguments, to reinvigorate and thus mobilize church members, and to recreate an image of a church standing united against inimical groups. The internal enemy thus becomes a productive force for anti-LGBT activism.¹⁶

Whether such opportunities ‘pay off’ for the anti-LGBT forces in the long run remains questionable, though. As I have shown, pro-LGBT actors are increasingly visible and assertive within Korean Protestantism. The continuous and relentless activities of the Protestant anti-LGBT forces certainly played its part in propelling counteractors into existence. To some extent, the threat emanating from anti-LGBT activism creates opportunities for pro-LGBT actors, too, and increases the urgency for resistance. Admittedly, counteraction has been minor and scattered so far, certainly when compared to the excessive anti-LGBT reactions that ensued. There are also many who are intimidated by the ferocious anti-LGBT forces and the effects they yield, such as the reproduction and reinforcement of homophobic attitudes in Christian families. But others refuse to endure the ubiquitous repression, discrimination, and hatred in their churches any longer. They stage rainbow performances, they openly participate in queer events and seek support

16 On the other hand, So Kang-sök is also aware of the dangers of the rifts running through Korean Protestantism in general, and through the anti-LGBT movement in particular. In another column, he comments on diverging views on how to tackle queer festivals: “I truly admire everyone who has been with me to lead the anti-homosexuality movement. However, one should not fall into one’s own righteousness. And just because the views against the Queer Festival are a little different, friends should not criticize or attack each other. We must go together encouragingly. The most important thing is the right perception of homosexuality. This is because when the perception is wrong, the expression can be wrong and the positions can be different” (So, Kang-sök 2019, July 3). For a detailed perspective on the conflicts within the Korean anti-LGBT movement, refer to chapters 8.1 and 10.3.

from external institutions if necessary, making the existence of Christian LGBT people and their allies a visible reality in South Korean Protestantism.

12.4 Conclusion: creating the internal enemy

This chapter has explored the contention between anti and pro-LGBT actors within Korean Protestantism, focusing on the relational, cognitive, and constructivist aspects at work in such interactions. I have suggested that the perception and attribution of threat play important roles in opposing LGBT-affirmative tendencies. The greater the threat, the more active anti-LGBT activism gets. Anti-LGBT actors themselves strategically increase the threat by engaging in extreme allegations such as church destruction, communist collaboration, and imperilment of the nation. Anti-LGBT counteraction is particularly strong when external opponents such as the NHRCK enter the conflict in defense of LGBT rights. In such cases, the anti-LGBT movement often resorts to established narratives and action repertoires. The enlarged threat thus opens up greater opportunities to attack the opposing forces. In other words, if the *internal* enemy, that is, the pro-LGBT activists within Korean Protestantism, is joined by the *external* enemy (cf. Han, Ch'aeyun 2017), ferocious counteraction is considered even more urgent.

Socio-political and church-internal cleavages are deeply rooted in the history of Korean Protestantism. These denominational and ideological rifts break open in the contention over LGBT issues as well. Anti-LGBT actors try to win over whole church communities, thereby creating a religious 'regime' that often acts repressively against LGBT individuals and LGBT-affirmative attitudes. Alongside other action repertoires such as protests and issuing press statements, concrete repressive measures represent a common action form in this context, consisting of punishing pro-LGBT students and declaring pastors heretical. These attempts at delegitimization do not go unchallenged, though. Pro-LGBT actors also receive support from within and outside the church, encouraging them to remain steadfast against endeavors to exclude and denigrate them. Others, however, when faced with fierce backlash, quickly refrain from their moderate attitudes and engage in even more diligent anti-LGBT activities as a result, as the case of Bundang Woori Church reveals.

This chapter demonstrated that several mechanisms like scale shift, certification and decertification, as well as the attribution of threat can be observed in the contentious interactions of pro and anti-LGBT actors within Korean Protestantism. Applying the contentious politics and movement-counter-movement frameworks to the study of religious conflict thus proved fruitful, in particular as it allowed for a new take on the actors involved, such as state-like, repressive authoritative religious bodies. Future research should continue on this avenue and apply this approach to other cases of contention involving religious actors, both in Korea and beyond. This way, one could test if similar mechanisms and action repertoires are observable in further instances of LGBT-related struggles. One should also consider comparing the mechanisms uncovered in this study with those at work in the broader socio-political contention over LGBT issues in Korea. The interactions between anti-LGBT forces and secular state actors in particular,

which this chapter's investigation revealed to be of great significance for anti-LGBT mobilization, should become an object of detailed examination.

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 conservatism, 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 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-

fling, 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.

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Appendix

A.1 List of research interviews

- 1) Pro-LGBT NGO, representative, August 10, 2018.
- 2) Professor of Protestant theology, August 27, 2018
- 3) Pro-LGBT NGO, representative, August 27, 2018.
- 4) Professor of Catholic theology, March 9, 2019.
- 5) Pro-LGBT NGO, representative, March 19, 2019.
- 6) Faculty member of Seoul National University, March 25, 2019.
- 7) Anti-LGBT activist, March 29, 2019.
- 8) Journalist, April 1, 2019.
- 9) Pro-LGBT NGO, interview with two representatives, April 2, 2019.
- 10) Catholic Bishops' Conference Korea, staff member, April 3, 2019
- 11) Person working in the human rights field, April 4, 2019.
- 12) Researcher at a university, April 4, 2019.
- 13) Pro-LGBT religious group, interview with two representatives, April 5, 2019.
- 14) Justice Party, representative, April 09, 2019.
- 15) Pro-LGBT NGO, representative, April 10, 2019.
- 16) Two anti-LGBT activists, April 18, 2019.
- 17) Anti-LGBT activist, also written interview, April 20, 2019.
- 18) Pro-LGBT Protestant pastor, June 5, 2019.
- 19) Professor of Catholic theology, June 7, 2019.
- 20) Researcher, June 10, 2019.
- 21) National Human Rights Commission of Korea, contact via phone and mail, June 11, 2019.
- 22) Anti-LGBT activist, June 16, 2019.
- 23) Anti-LGBT activist, June 20, 2019.
- 24) Anti-LGBT activist, July 4, 2019.
- 25) Representative from a Christian political party, also written interview, July 15, 2019.
- 26) Journalist, July 16, 2019.
- 27) Anti-LGBT activist, July 18, 2019.
- 28) Anti-LGBT activist, July 26, 2019.

- 29) Pro-LGBT NGO, representative, also written interview, July 29, 2019.
- 30) Representative of Buddhist faith, July 30, 2019.
- 31) Anti-LGBT activist, July 30, 2019.
- 32) Anti-LGBT activist, written interview, August 1, 2019.
- 33) Anti-LGBT activist, written interview, August 8, 2019.
- 34) Representative from a Christian political party, August 14, 2019.
- 35) Lawyer, August 14, 2019.
- 36) Member of a regional parliament, August 19, 2019.

A.2 List of (participant) observations

- 1) "Hapshin Christian academy on countermeasures against homosexuality", organizer: Homosexuality Response Committee of Hapshin Presbyterian Church General Assembly, place: Hapdong Theological Seminary, March 18, 2019.
- 2) "Rainbow Activism and the anti-discrimination law", lecture event, March 27, 2019.
- 3) "Rally to condemn the National Human Rights Council of Korea (NHRCK): resolute opposition against the distorted gender equality policy and against the anti-discrimination law", organizers: People's Coalition against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage, National Alliance of Professors against the Legalization of Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage, place: in front of the NHRCK building, April 23, 2019.
- 4) Press conference against the rainbow flag at the United States' embassy and the embassy's support for LGBT, place: in front of the US embassy in Seoul, May 27, 2019.
- 5) "The 12th International Ex-Gay Human Rights Forum", organizer: Coalition for the Evangelization of Sexual Minorities, supervision: HolyLife, May 30, 2019.
- 6) "Holy Festival", organizer: HolyLife, place: Ch'önggyech'ön Plaza, and "2019 Citizens' Rally Against the Homosexual Queer Culture Festival", place: across the street from the Seoul Queer Culture Festival on Seoul Plaza, June 1, 2019.
- 7) "People's gathering against the homosexual queer festival: love is plus festival", place: in front of Töksugung Palace, opposite of Seoul Square where the Seoul Queer Culture Festival takes place on the same day, June 1, 2019.
- 8) "The problems and damage caused by the distorted hate, discrimination and the Basic Human Rights Law", host: Ch'öng Kap-yun, Member of National Assembly, supervision: Emergency Countermeasure Committee against the Homosexual Dictatorship which Includes Hate and Discrimination, place: National Assembly Members' Office Building, July 3, 2019.
- 9) "People's gathering against the wrong attempt to revise the gender equality law of the city of Puch'ön, in front of Puch'ön city hall, July 19, 2019.
- 10) "Rally to condemn the National Human Rights Council of Korea (NHRCK) which attempts to introduce homosexual dictatorship by asserting that there is hate and discrimination [against homosexuals]", organizers: Emergency Countermeasure Committee against the Homosexual Dictatorship which Includes Hate and Discrimination, People's Coalition against Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage, place: in front of the NHRCK building, July 25, 2019.

- 11) Rally against the introduction of education on gender and human rights as a requirement at Yonsei University, organizer: Group of the People Loving Yonsei University, place: at the gate to Yonsei University's Sinch'on campus, August 13, 2019.

A.3 Questionnaire for the survey of participants at the 'National Convention Against the Homosexuality Queer Festival' on 1st June 2019 (English translation)

Survey: National Convention Against the Homosexuality Queer Festival, 2019-06-01

Hello, my name is Hendrik Johannemann and I am doing my PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin in Germany. My thesis is a study that examines social movements in Korea that are related to homosexuality and LGBT issues from a political science perspective, and will be written in English. I think that the opinions of the participants of the 'National Convention Against the Homosexual Queer Festival', which is held today, are important, so may I ask you some questions? This short interview is expected to take about 5 minutes, and all information collected will be kept strictly anonymous. Of course, the collected data will be used only for research purposes. If there are any questions that are difficult to answer, you do not have to answer them.

- 1) How old are you? 1.2) Sex: – male, female
- 2) In which region do you live? – Seoul, Inch'ön/Kyönggi, Kangwön, Taejön/Sejong/Ch'ungch'ön, Taegu/Kyöngbuk, Pusan/Ulsan/Kyöngnam, Cheju, other
- 3) What is your occupation? – Farming/forestry/fishing, self-employed, blue collar, white collar, housewife, student, unemployed, retired, other
- 4) When you look at Korean society and politics, what do you think are the three most important issues?
- 5) Which political party do you mainly support? – Liberty Korea Party, Democratic Party, People's Party, Bareun Party, Justice Party, I do not have any, other
- 6) If you have a religion, which religion and/or denomination do you belong to?
- 7) How often do you attend religious services? – More than once a week, once a week, once a month, only on special occasions, once a year, I almost do not attend services, I have never participated in religious services
- 8) Why do you participate in this event? What is your motivation of participating?
- 9) How did you get to know about this event?
- 10) Are you a member of a group which deals with the issue of homosexuality? If yes, of which group(s) exactly are you a member?
- 11) Have you participated in other events (rallies, forums, lectures, etc.) related to the opposition against homosexuality? If yes, how often approximately? And in which events did you participate? – I have, I haven't – How many times? ...times

A.4 Codesheet for protest event analysis on anti-LGBT activism in South Korea

1. Basic data

1.1 Protest event number (PEN) and date

Input mask	Variable	Values
PEN	PEN	Date of article/press statement and serial number (YYMMDDxxx)
Year of event	YEARN	YY
Month of event	MONTHN	1–12
Day of event	DAYN	1–31

1.2 Basic data

Input mask	Variable	Values
Short title: Who? What? Where? Against what? For what?	TITLE	Alpha-numerical input

1.3 Source

Input mask	Variable	Values
Source	SOURCE	Kukmin Daily 1 Korean Association of Church Communication (KACC) 2

1.4 Main place(s) of protest

Input mask	Variable	Values
Main place(s) of protest	PLACE1 PLACE2	Alpha-numerical input

Province	PROVIN	Seoul 1 Pusan 2 Taegu 3 Inch'ön 4 Kwangju 5 Taejeon 6 Ulsan 7 Sejong 8 Kyönggi 9 Kangwon 10 North Ch'ungch'öng 11 South Ch'ungch'öng 12 North Ch'ölla 13 South Ch'ölla 14 North Kyöngsang 15 South Kyöngsang 16 Cheju 17 Whole South Korea 18 Not specified 0

2. Supporters/organizers

2.1 Number of participants

Input mask	Variable	Values
Number of individual participants; also number of signatories of (online) petitions	NUMBER	Multi-digit number

2.2 Collective participants: social movement organizations (SMOs), groups and networks

Input mask	Variable	Values
Name of SMO, group, network, organization (include the main 5 groups into this, excluding political parties! See 2.3)	GROUPN1 GROUPN2 GROUPN3 GROUPN4 GROUPN5	Alpha-numerical (or Korean, i.e., <i>hangül</i>) input
Code number of groups etc.	GROUPCO1 GROUPCO2 GROUPCO3 GROUPCO4 GROUPCO5	Multi-digit number (see attached list)

Function	GROUPFU1 GROUPFU2 GROUPFU3 GROUPFU4 GROUPFU5	Promoter, participant 1 Organizer (also: writer of statement etc.) 2 Not specified o

2.3 Participants/interlocutors from political parties

Input mask	Variable	Values
Participating politician's name (include the main 2 or, if unclear, the first two mentioned)	PARTPOL1 PARTPOL2	Alpha-numerical input (transcribed names)
Political party the politician belongs to	PARTN1 PARTN2	Hannara/Saenuri/Liberty Korea/ United Future Party 1 Democratic Party 2 Bareun/Bareun Mirae Party 3 Christian Liberal/Christian Liberty Unification Party 4 Kukmin-ŭi tang 5 Korean Patriots/Our Republican Party 6 Our Opened Party 7 Unified Progressive Party 8
Function	PARTFU1 PARTFU2	Promoter, participant 1 Organizer 2 Interlocutor 3 Not specified o

2.4 Number of groups, organizations and parties

Input mask	Variable	Values
Number of organizations, groups, and parties	PARTICALL	Multi-digit number

2.5 Persons mentioned by name

Input mask	Variable	Values
Name of person (include main 3)	PERSONN1 PERSONN2 PERSONN3	Alpha-numerical input (names transcribed in McCune-Reischauer)

Function (belonging to which group, which position there?)	PERSONFU1 PERSONFU2 PERSONFU3	Alpha-numerical input

3. Topic/problem

3.1 Concrete topic/problem

Input mask	Variable	Values
Concrete topic/problem	TOPIC1 TOPIC2	See claimlist (please contact the author for further information)

3.2 Context of the event

3.2.1 Is protest event part of a campaign?

Input mask	Variable	Values
Is protest event part of a campaign?	CAM	Yes 1 No 2
Name of campaign?	CAMN	Alpha-numerical (<i>hangül</i>) input

3.2.2 Does protest event trigger counterprotest?

Input mask	Variable	Values
Does protest event trigger counterprotest?	COUNTA	Yes 1 No 2
If yes, who is/are the counterprotester(s)?	COUNTAN	Alpha-numerical (<i>hangül</i>) input

3.2.3 Is protest event a counterprotest?

Input mask	Variable	Values
Is protest event a counterprotest?	COUNTB	Yes 1 No 2
If yes, against what?	COUNTBN	Alpha-numerical (<i>hangül</i>) input

3.3 Immediate target of protest

Input mask	Variable	Values
Immediate target of protest: name	TARGETN1 TARGETN2	Alpha-numerical input
Immediate target of protest: type of target	TARGETT1 TARGETT2	Public/government institution 1 Political party (politician) 2 Official representative (like mayor) or candidate for a post 3 Trade associations/company 4 Private person 5 Pro-LGBT group 6 Individual church/pastor 7 Church association/denomination 8 Other church/religious organization/person 9 Judiciary branch 10 TV station, media 11 Others 12 University/educational institution 13

4. Action

4.1 Form of action

Input mask	Variable	Values
Form of action	FORM1 FORM2 FORM3	Signatures, petition 1 Press conference, press release 2 Rally, assembly, protest 3 Educational event, forum, seminar 4 Non-verbal, symbolic protest 5 Demonstration march 6 Procedural complaint 7 Litigation 8 Defamation 9 Disturbance, hindrance, boycott 10 Scuffle, brawl 11 Hunger strike 12 Meeting with politician(s) etc. 13 Survey produced by anti-LGBT organization 14 Leaflet, booklet, etc. (distribution) 15 Strategic/emergency/preparatory meeting 16 Sending emails, faxes, messages (to politicians or members) 17 Prayer meeting, worship service 18 Writing online comments 19 Online/TV programs 20 Mission, evangelization 21 Sending questionnaires to politicians or creating an index on them 22 Repressive measure 23 Other 0

4.2 Immediate consequences and consecutive reactions

Input mask	Variable	Values
Injured participants? Arrests? Statements from (political/ administrative) officials?	CONSEQ	Alpha-numeric input

5. Frames

5.1 Diagnostic framing

Input mask	Variable	Values
Diagnostic framing: problem identification and attribution of blame or causality	FRAMDIAG1 FRAMDIAG2 FRAMDIAG3 FRAMDIAG4	Alpha-numeric input
Diagnostic framing: Codes. Inductive coding.	FRAMDCO1 FRAMDCO2 FRAMDCO3 FRAMDCO4	See code list (please contact the author for further information)

5.2 Prognostic framing

Input mask	Variable	Values
Prognostic framing: proposed solution to the identified problem; indication of strategies, tactics, and goals	FRAMPROG1 FRAMPROG2	Alpha-numeric input
Prognostic framing: Codes. Inductive coding.	FRAMPCO1 FRAMPCO2	See code list

5.3 Motivational framing

Input mask	Variable	Values
Motivational framing: indication of a rationale for action	FRAMMOT1 FRAMMOT2	Alpha-numeric input
Motivational framing: Codes. Inductive coding	FRAMMCO1 FRAMMCO2	See code list

5.4 Symbolic framing

Input mask	Variable	Values
Symbolic framing: Code. Indication of symbolic terms, con- cepts, comparisons, reproaches, etc. that are used (e.g. "toxic" law, LGBT "dictatorship", "de- struction" of the nation, church, etc.)	FRAMSYM1 FRAMSYM2	See code list

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