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# Gatekeeper Persuasion and Issue Adoption: Amnesty International and the transnational LGBTQ network

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**Introduction**

Network theory in international relations is becoming an increasingly valuable tool for

understanding how transnational human rights advocacy emerges and develops; how norms

become salient; and how particular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) gain prominence

within established networks. In this paper, I evaluate the emergence, evolution, and efficacy of

the transnational lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) political advocacy

network. Through interviews with key figures at Amnesty International (hereafter Amnesty),

Allied Rainbow Communities or ARC, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights

Committee (IGLHRC)—now OutRight Action International (hereafter OutRight)—and the

International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA), as well as through

archival research, I suggest that the transnational LGBTQ network emerged through contestation

with the human rights gatekeeper, Amnesty, and its US section, AIUSA, in the early 1990s.

Gatekeepers are powerful NGOs that police the boundaries of political expression for a

given issue area, among other functions (Gamson, 1997). The campaign to persuade Amnesty to

adopt LGBTQ rights would drive the movement's evolution from a loosely linked collection of

national and regional organizations engaged in direct action and street protests to a highly

professional network of LGBTQ organizations with a dual focus on movement building in the

Global South and the advancement of LGBTQ human rights through international institutions,

particularly the United Nations. These two roles would lead to different operational languages

and strategies, with one language and strategy applied in dealings with international institutions

and another language and strategy applied to efforts to engender sociopolitical change throughout the Global South.

This paper begins with the history of the modern transnational LGBTQ network, which emerged in the late 1970s in Europe before gaining momentum in the early 1990s. The 1990s served to consolidate the network through international AIDS activism; activism around world conferences for women and human rights; and targeted efforts to persuade the main gatekeeper organizations for human rights—Amnesty and Human Rights Watch (HRW)—to include gays and lesbians in their campaigns. The struggles within Amnesty over the expansion of its mandate to include LGBTQ people as prisoners of conscience parallel ongoing global struggles to spread and institutionalize LGBTQ rights, as local and cultural norms challenge the universality of rights based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

I then address the network's characteristics: its development, strategies, and effectiveness, contextualizing the findings within political network theory. Network theory provides a useful lens through which to view processes of contestation among NGOs and the play of competing key ideas within a network. Such competition between and among actors and norms within the emerging network shapes the nature of activism—its content, scope, patterns, and power dynamics—and creates or identifies sites of authority by concentrating actors and organizations near institutional headquarters, such as New York, Geneva, and Brussels, in the case of LGBTQ rights. A central component of network theory, evaluating the *interaction* of network actors, is especially useful for efforts to assess the power of gatekeeper organizations, as well as limits to that power. As this paper will show, the centrality and agenda-setting power of gatekeeper organizations such as Amnesty are dependent upon the perception of their legitimacy.

The ongoing effort to maintain legitimacy forces gatekeepers to grapple with new ideas and with new actors pursuing their own agendas, or to risk losing their agenda-setting power.

**Methodology**

This study employs standard process-tracing methods, a type of qualitative case research that examines the findings from case study evidence in the context of established hypotheses and research puzzles. This type of examination requires detailed attention to change and continuity over time, allowing the researcher to develop causal inferences through case descriptions and analysis. As such, this methodology requires the articulation of social and political observations at the beginning of the time period to be studied and a detailed elaboration of how these phenomena change or remain the same over time. This is done to evaluate causal mechanisms, hypotheses, constituting factors, alternative explanations, and research problems (Collier, 2011; Mahoney, 2010).

The transnational LGBTQ network was mapped in several ways: First, drawing on the methods of Charli Carpenter, interview subjects were determined on the basis of the top five LGBTQ-specific organizational hits in Google searches for 'international LGBTQ organizations': Allied Rainbow Communities International (ARC); IGLHRC or OutRight; the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization (IGLYO); Interpride; and ILGA (Carpenter, 2007b: 648-9).

Second, I conducted interviews with key actors at these organizations. In these interviews, I asked about the main members of the LGBTQ network, confirming the central nodes or primary points of connection (in this case, NGOs) as ILGA, IGLHRC or OutRight, ARC, and adding another organization, ILGA-Europe, based on responses from these interviews. Interpride and ILGYO were not cited in interviews as a key actor. I also interviewed members

active in the successful effort to expand Amnesty's mandate in the 1990s. Within these organizations, I sought out the founders, current and former executive directors, and, in the case of Amnesty and AIUSA, the leading advocates (staff, executives, board members, and volunteers) who strategized and campaigned internally for change. Altogether, twenty-seven individuals were interviewed for this paper. Of these, twelve were from Amnesty or AIUSA, four were from IGLHRC/OutRight, three were from ILGA (pre-1996) or ILGA-World, four were from ILGA-Europe, and one was from ARC. Three individuals held positions at two organizations: one from both ILGA and Amnesty and two in both IGLHRC and Amnesty. The remaining six interview subjects were from other smaller national, regional, and international organizations, among them IGLYO and InterPride. All interview subjects directly cited are listed in the appendix.

I also used the AIUSA archives at Columbia University's Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research to chart and confirm the process of mandate change at Amnesty, as described in interviews. Further confirmation of the network's structure and the relationship between the main NGOs and smaller NGOs came from a 2008 study by the LGBTQ Movement Advancement Project, which listed IGLHRC, ILGA, ARC, and ILGA-Europe as the top four primary international organizations with which smaller or regional LGBTQ rights groups aim to form partnerships (2008: 14).[1]

It is important to note that this methodology, while highly useful for gleaning insight into processes of social and political change through case studies, also has its limitations. In this study, the scales are tipped toward Western history, experiences, expressions of LGBTQ identities, and conceptualizations of LGBTQ communities and concerns. Most obviously, the search engine Google was used to find "hits" in English, orienting the study toward Western or

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English-speaking organizations. Even the use of the terms 'LGBT' or 'LGBTQ' are Western identifiers, as discussed in this paper, that shape the search results toward Western organizations that utilize this language at the expense of organizations that may use alternative language or other descriptors or identifiers. While interview subjects confirmed or refuted the findings of the initial Internet searches, many early interview subjects were, nonetheless, determined on the basis of these searches as well as from personal and professional contacts.

**The origins of the transnational LGBTQ network**

When the organization that would become ILGA was founded in 1978 by 11 gay organizations in Europe, Australia, and the United States, the gay rights movement was light years away from the closely linked, well-resourced, and highly professional global network that it would become by the end of the century. In fact, it would take another 13 years for gay rights to be adopted by the mainstream human rights movement, a feat accomplished in 1991 when Amnesty included homosexuals in its campaigns for prisoners of conscience, including those who engage in "sexual acts in private between consenting adults" (Amnesty, 1991a; 1991b; AIUSA, 1990b; 1991b). While the term 'homosexual' may seem archaic today, it is because the LGBTQ rights movement can be understood as easily as an exercise in discursive solidarity as a traditional rights movement.

Early transnational movements for homosexuals emerged in Germany in the late 1890s with the aim of reforming legal codes related to sodomy (Ayoub, 2016: 37; Beachy, 2014: xvii; Krouwel and Duyvendak, 2000: 113–114). By mid-century, the Netherlands had replaced Germany as the hub of what was then referred to as 'homophile' activism (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014: 8–9; Ayoub, 2016: 29; Rupp, 2014: 30-35; Tremblay, Paternotte, and Johnson, 2011: 107). This early history is best known for attacks on gays and lesbians, especially in the 1930s, 1940s,

and 1950s, but a vibrant lesbian and gay culture has been documented throughout the 20th century by a number of authors (Beachy, 2014; Chauncey, 1994; Faderman, 1991). The modern gay liberation movement can be traced to the 1960s, when the first large-scale public protests occurred (Chauncey, 1994: 3, 355–356; Kollman and Waites, 2009: 3). The new gay activism spun off from other social movements—antiwar protests, campus-based activism, black activism—as well as out of the second wave of feminism (Altman and Symons, 2016).

In the United States, the 1969 Stonewall riots that followed a police raid on a gay bar in New York City have become the origin story of the modern, Western gay rights movement, although, as mentioned, homosexual rights groups have been active in Europe and the United States since the turn of the 20th century (Chauncey, 1994: 3, 355–356; Kollman and Waites, 2009: 3). As Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Crage discuss, Stonewall became a touchstone for the movement, a "commemorative vehicle" (2006: 724). The bifurcation of gay history (before and after Stonewall) has served the movement well, resonating with activists and providing a shared mythology (Armstrong and Crage, 2016: 724–5).

The movement continued to gain in visibility and radicalism over the 1970s and 1980s throughout the United States and Europe, through two trajectories that hardly seemed organically connected: a lesbian movement that was linked to radical feminism and the creation of separate spaces for women, and a gay male movement that was more urban and focused on sexual freedom and expression (Faderman, 1991). This division among gay male and lesbian activists would repeat itself at the international level. The two movements would converge in the United States during the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s, and a shared queer identity was forged, aided in part by the opposition campaigns that were waged against them collectively by groups such as Save Our Children, the Eagle Forum, and Focus on the Family, as well as other

transnational anti-gay organizations (Faderman, 1991; Mertus, 2007: 1054; Weiss, 2013: 164). The term "homosexual" and the reclaimed "gay" would define the movement early on, to be replaced eventually by "gay and lesbian" or "lesbian and gay," a political re-ordering that brought attention to the invisibility of women in the movement. 'Gay and lesbian' would expand to include bisexual and transgender (previously referred to as transsexual, transvestite, or cross-dressing) by the mid-1990s, with some groups adding an "I" for intersex by 2006 or a "Q" for queer or questioning (Stryker, 2009: 137). Other terms, like 'sexual minorities,' would gain rapid popularity over the next decade before losing favor just as rapidly. Health workers, especially, found terms that stress behavior over identity particularly useful, such as MSM (men who have sex with men) or WSW (women who have sex with women) (Miller, 2014). Sexual orientation and gender identity and its acronym SOGI[2] would become the term institutionalized at the United Nations and other international institutions, where organizations working on SOGI issues connected with others focused on women's rights, health issues, and issues of identity. This process of naming was inherently political. Through the use of an inclusive or exclusive acronym, NGOs dedicated to LGBTQ rights were drawing the circle, creating insiders and outsiders, delineating between those worthy of protection and those who were not. They were also, importantly, defining individuals and assigning a singular identity based on one quality of their personhood, their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The discursive process of identifying, naming, and defining LGBTQ people is not simply a shift in language, but an exercise in interpellation.

*UN activism*

At the international level, mostly male gay groups and lesbian activist groups petitioned the United Nations to adopt LGBTQ rights and protections through different organs without

much coordination or even interaction with one another until the mid-1990s (Sweibel, 2009).

There remains a division of labor at the United Nations, with IGLHRC (now OutRight) directing

its advocacy to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),

the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Human Rights Committee, and occasionally to

the Human Rights Council. Meanwhile, ILGA-Europe works with European Union (EU)

institutions, and ILGA and ARC focus on the Human Rights Council and shadow reports in the

Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, when all UN member states undergo a review of their

state practices and their compliance with international human rights law and norms. During the

UPR, NGOs are given the opportunity to draft shadow reports to provide information on a state's

human rights record and practices that may contradict the official state report. ARC, OutRight,

and ILGA assist local NGOs in this process. Although this division of labor is no longer defined

by sex, a legal and normative territoriality remains. These organizations come together at the

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in human rights forums in Geneva and New York,

where they have supported one another and other LGBTQ groups through collective campaigns

(Mollman, 2014; Sabbadini, 2014; Stern, 2014).

In Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's groundbreaking book, *Activists Beyond*

*Borders*, transnational advocacy networks (TANs) are defined as "networks of activists,

distinguishable largely by the centrality of principled ideas or values in motivating their

formation" (1998, 1). Yet not all NGOs have equal influence to shape the political salience of

human rights issues (Wong, 2012: 3). Gatekeepers, or those powerful NGOs whose "reputations

for credibility and clout, reputations earned through years of work in a field" usually "enjoy

access to other NGOs, journalists, and government officials" (Bob, 2004: 18). The LGBTQ TAN

recognizable today has six major nodes linked to thousands of other regional and national

LGBTQ organizations around the world. It consists of two human rights gatekeepers, Amnesty and HRW, and four LGBTQ brokers: ARC, ILGA, OutRight, and ILGA-Europe. The term 'broker,' found in both political science and anthropology studies, is used to emphasize these organizations' role as intermediaries between international institutions and smaller regional or national organizations. Ryan Thoreson has theorized that brokers function "at the 'interfaces' of different world-views and knowledge systems" (2014: 10–11). Drawing on the work of Sidney Tarrow, Philip Ayoub argues that brokers "mediate between often-divergent new international norms and domestic norms….by framing the international elements of the norm—in a domestically familiar discourse" (Ayoub, 2016, 34). Brokers thus facilitate connections between ideas and activists within a TAN, functioning across borders.

As brokers, ARC, OutRight, and ILGA limit or offer access to UN organs and treaty bodies, as well as promote individual cases with Amnesty and other general human rights organizations. ILGA-Europe works predominantly in the European system, with the EU and the Council of Europe, and only on occasion coordinates with European actors to come to the Human Rights Council (du Plessis, 2015). While brokers like OutRight and gatekeepers like Amnesty have similar features and functions—providing a bridge or serving as intermediaries between different actors, as well as navigating and effectively translating across cultural borders—they serve different purposes. General human rights gatekeepers like Amnesty and HRW limit or expand the concept of human rights and with it, the value of legitimacy, whereas LGBTQ-specific gatekeepers hold the keys to UN access. Brokers are the voice of the movement seeking recognition; they are critical members of the network, not outsiders supporting the movement.

**The Campaign against Amnesty**

The story of the origin and growth of the global LGBTQ network begins with a single organization—Amnesty—and ends with the eventual framing of LGBTQ rights as human rights. Yet the struggle did not begin or end in 1991, when Amnesty included as prisoners of conscience homosexuals imprisoned for private acts among consenting adults. LGBTQ organizations campaigned for years before Amnesty expanded its mandate, and they continued to struggle with Amnesty afterward to include protections for LGBTQ people in its human rights advocacy. In fact, the perception that Amnesty was overtly resistant to incorporating LGBTQ human rights into its mandate was the central impetus for the founding of IGLHRC, and Amnesty's perceived indifference in the face of human rights violations against LGBTQ individuals was a driving force behind the expansion of the nascent network in the 1990s.

Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, ILGA focused on two key targets: Amnesty's lack of attention to lesbian and gay rights, and changes in European law through two cases of members working through their national judicial systems: Jeff Dudgeon in his case against the United Kingdom and David Norris' case against the Republic of Ireland. Both cases involved sodomy laws in their respective states and would go on to be adjudicated in the men's favor by the European Court of Human Rights in 1981 and 1988, respectively. In addition to sodomy laws, the organization focused on asylum and immigration issues, research on "transsexuals and transvestites," and campaigns to change the World Health Organization's classification of homosexuality as a disease (ILGA, 2016a; Sabbadini, 2014). ILGA also tried to gain consultative status with ECOSOC, viewing this accreditation as a valuable point of entry to the United Nations and desiring the legitimacy that such status would confer (ILGA, 2016; Sabbadini, 2014). Indeed, consultative status at ECOSOC enables NGOs to attend meetings, make presentations to governments, and provide written statements on areas within their

expertise. Although efforts to overturn sodomy laws and actions at the United Nations were significant, it was ILGA's focus on Amnesty and its efforts to broaden Amnesty's mandate to include protections for lesbians and gay men that lay the foundation for a transnational network.

*Background on Amnesty*

Amnesty was founded in 1961 in the United Kingdom, and national sections of the organization were established shortly afterward. Its original mandate was to free prisoners of conscience, defined as individuals imprisoned because of their political or religious beliefs who had not advocated for violence, although the mandate would expand rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s to include opposition to torture, the death penalty, extrajudicial executions, and disappearances, and to demand access to fair trials, among other expansions of the prisoners of conscience category. Today, Amnesty boasts national sections in 80 countries and more than seven million activists. The most powerful sections are those with the highest membership numbers and monetary contributions, with AIUSA and the United Kingdom section (AIUK) ranked highly in both. Every Amnesty section has an annual general meeting (or AGM) where national resolutions are put forth by individual groups, and those that are successful are brought to the International Council Meeting (ICM), now held every other year. Resolutions that pass the ICM become Amnesty policy, implemented by the International Executive Council. In 1979, Amnesty passed a resolution at the ICM allowing individuals who were imprisoned because they had advocated on behalf of homosexual rights to be included in campaigns for prisoners of conscience, following an official review of its mandate (Cox, 2014). Importantly, those who were imprisoned for homosexual acts were not considered prisoners of conscience until 1991.

Between 1979 and 1991, a variety of resolutions were brought to the ICM on issues pertaining to homosexuality and sexual orientation, and at least two studies (in addition to the

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mandate review) were commissioned on the issues (Amnesty, 1982c; 1982d; 1982e; AIUSA, 1987). At debate were three possible categories of changes: one, Amnesty could continue its policy of advocating for those imprisoned for defending "homosexual equality" or those ostensibly imprisoned for homosexual behavior, but actually imprisoned because of their ideas or beliefs. Two, in addition to category one, Amnesty could extend its protection of prisoners of conscience to include those imprisoned for their sexual orientation, but not as a result of "overt sexual behavior," namely, participating in specific, illegal "homosexual acts" (Amnesty, 1982f). Third, Amnesty could include categories one and two and additionally protect those who engage in "overt sexual behavior" (Amnesty, 1982f; 1982g; AIUSA, 1982a; 1982c).

Despite support by a variety of Amnesty sections, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the third category was widely rejected until 1991. Support for the second category of prisoners, those imprisoned for their sexual orientation but not for "overt sexual acts," was mixed; some, mainly the US section, argued that these prisoners were already protected under the 1979 resolution, while others argued that they were not (Amnesty, 1982a; 1982c; AIUSA, 1982a). No cases of category two prisoners were adopted that would have clarified this policy, and the conservative conclusion is that only category one prisoners were protected from 1979 until 1991, when category three prisoners were accepted by resolution (but not in practice, as will be discussed). While the details are convoluted due to the many voices and positions on homosexuality within Amnesty, the debates demonstrate the many and heated discussions within the organization throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, a time when Amnesty has been characterized as deaf to LGBTQ concerns. The debates explored the contradiction of accepting as prisoners of conscience those who advocated for homosexuality, but not those imprisoned because they identified as homosexual or engaged in homosexual acts.

Amnesty was targeted by ILGA (and later, by IGLHRC) because it was widely seen as the principal organization within the burgeoning human rights movement. Within Amnesty, groups supporting protections for gay and lesbian individuals formed during a multi-year mandate review process in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when a Mandate Review Committee assessed the costs and opportunities facing Amnesty if it were to expand the mandate (AIUSA, 1989a; 1989b). Although the committee would look at numerous possible changes, the pressure from these sections to include protections for people imprisoned for homosexual acts was the impetus for the review (AIUSA and Gossman, 1990). The first gay and lesbian group in AIUSA was formed in Boston in 1989 (AIUSA, 1992f). Shortly afterward, a group of volunteers and staff, including Sofia Gruskin, Cary Johnson, Alice Miller, Cynthia Rothschild, Meg Sattherwaite, and Cosette Thompson, established the HIV/HOMO Task Force to promote gay and lesbian issues at Amnesty during a time when multiple resolutions were being proposed on both HIV/AIDS and homosexuality (AIUSA, 1990a; 1992f; Miller, 2014). The task force would network widely within Amnesty: with staff, national sections, volunteers, and the International Secretariat (IS) in London, the central office responsible for research, fundraising, and coordination on Amnesty's global human rights agenda. It compiled information for the resolutions at the AGMs and for the 1991 ICM. The 1991 resolution was, importantly, a semi-covert change in policy that was not officially included in the written mandate. This compromise was brokered to avoid negatively affecting human rights work in the Global South (AIUSA, 1991a). Sexual orientation would not be added as a protected category to the organization's written mandate until 1999.

*IGLHRC*

One of the tactics of these early AIUSA groups was to organize panels in a variety of forums, including AGMs, to educate the membership about gay and lesbian issues. Among those asked to speak was Julie Dorf, an activist who had conducted research on gay and lesbian activism in Russia (Dorf, 2014; Thompson, 2014). Frustrated by the glacial pace of change at Amnesty, Dorf would found her own organization in 1990, IGLHRC (later OutRight), to promote the kind of movement she felt lacking in the international system. As one of the first transnational lesbian and gay human rights organizations, IGLHRC's name was designed to lend credence to the claims that there was a cohesive international movement (there was not) and that gay and lesbian rights were indeed human rights (although they had not been adopted as such at the time by either gatekeeper, Amnesty or HRW) (Thoreson, 2014: 29). Such claims to internationalism would become common among early gay and lesbian rights groups, as they sought to frame their efforts within larger equality and liberation movements (Kollman and Waites, 2009: 2).

In these early years, IGLHRC was mainly an "activist collective" that derived its strength from the passion of its members and borrowed its tactics from the direct action groups from which its members were drawn (Thoreson, 2014: 31). The early activists of IGLHRC were described as "ragtag," for example, by Dorf, and many were also part of other queer groups and movements, like the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (or ACT UP), Queer Nation, and the Lesbian Avengers (2014). This was a time "when you could put something out the night before on the [Queer Nation] hotline, and 50 people would show up to demonstrate the next morning" (Dorf, 2014). IGLHRC's early work focused on gathering information and fostering relationships with activists abroad to assist with asylum cases, and on organizing letter-writing

campaigns and street demonstrations (Thoreson, 2014*: 32–3, 37). As its reputation grew, so did

its links with growing numbers of activists that formed the basis of the transnational network.

IGLHRC made a name for itself with its campaign against Amnesty and specifically, its

targeting of AIUSA, a strategy that particularly affected the members of the HIV/HOMO Task

Force. IGLHRC organized a boycott of Amnesty by former members, protests outside key

Amnesty locations, and a multiyear public shaming campaign (Dorf, 2014). IGLHRC's

campaign "simultaneously showcase[d] their claims against the government and create[d] a

certain space for them as the next frontier," according to Miller, a member of the Task Force

(2014). Miller stated:

> …it was a stroke of genius, in terms of transnational organizing. You can go
> anywhere in the world and talk to gay and lesbian activists who are over a certain age,
> and they all knew that Amnesty didn't have a position (2014).

In interviews, more than one activist claimed that the Amnesty campaign essentially put

IGLHRC "on the map," and paved the way for a transnational LGBTQ network. "It was," Miller

continues:

> a very interesting strategic move because campaigning on Amnesty transnationalized the
> issues as fast, if not faster, because Amnesty members responded all over the country, all
> over the world….and then they turned the campaign to the UN and used transnational
> networks to pressure governments (2014).

IGLHRC's Amnesty campaign thus expedited the development of the global LGBTQ network in

ways that a traditional campaign against state policy likely would not have. Rothschild stated, "It

was really smart, right? You go after the big guy. …you get some press on it" (2015). Despite

some backlash within Amnesty against IGLHRC's tactics, there was (and is) an underlying

respect for Dorf and her work and a shared understanding of the campaign as a game-changer in

international LGBTQ advocacy.

*Amnesty after the mandate change*

A resolution at the 1992 AGM established Amnesty International Members for Lesbian and Gay Concerns or AIMLGC (formerly, the HOMO part of the HIV/HOMO Task Force) as an official membership network within AIUSA that was responsible for membership education, policy initiatives, and resolutions at the AGMs (AIUSA, 1992g).[3] This was a heady time for gay and lesbian activists at Amnesty. Rothschild remembers:

> …we were super strategic about where we would do our education work; the working of every resolution we put forward; the other networks and the other programs within Amnesty that we would try to integrate into; the staff who we worked with …it was pretty deep strategic work because we knew…we were part of a long-term effort (2015).

Nonetheless, the path from the 1991 resolution establishing sexual orientation as a protected category to the 1999 decision to include it explicitly in the text of the mandate was not without obstacles. Some of the most passionate disagreements between interview subjects revolved around who within Amnesty was responsible for the dearth of cases on persecuted individuals based on sexual orientation or activity (Thompson, 2014; Bonowitz, 2015; Gruskin, 2015; Halperin, 2015). AIUSA, again, took the lead in challenging the IS for not conducting the research necessary for actionable cases. Members of AIMLGC at times actually undertook the research themselves to produce the handful of cases taken up in the 1990s (AIUSA, 1997a; 1997b, 1997c). It is possible that the scarcity of these cases was partly the result of Amnesty's strict commitment to the veracity of sources. It takes years to establish the type of ground-level connections and trust needed to obtain accurate, verifiable information (AIUSA 1997a; Thompson, 2014). The IS also declined to pay for a "theme report" due to claims of a lack of resources (Amnesty, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c). AIUSA would produce its own report in 1994 on lesbian and gay persecution, as discussed below. Regardless of these developments, IGLHRC, especially, used the paucity of cases to continue its Amnesty campaign throughout the 1990s.

These changes at Amnesty took place within a tectonic shift in transnational activism in the 1990s. The end of the Cold War created an opening for Amnesty and other transnational organizations for a more prominent role in shaping human rights law and policy through closer engagement at the United Nations and other intergovernmental institutions as geopolitical and security concerns receded (Martens, 2004). Relatedly, a host of new opportunities at the United Nations presented themselves for brokers as well, including successful complaints before the UN Human Rights Committee and NGO observer status for ILGA, both discussed below.

Within Amnesty, LGBTQ activists continued their advocacy. By 1999, an international steering committee on LGBTQ issues had been established at the IS, the International LGBTQ Coordinating Team (ILGBTQ), made up of people from many national sections (Rothschild, 2015). The committee was tasked with elevating LGBTQ causes throughout Amnesty, pushing for policy change and for membership mobilization (Rothschild, 2015). Rothschild would serve on all three entities (HIV/HOMO, AIMLGC, and ILGBTQ). ILGBTQ was a small group of about seven members, but its work was global in scope.

**A Nascent Network**

Former Amnesty members were a key source of early activists for IGLHRC, which thrived in the years following the Amnesty campaign (Dorf, 2014). IGLHRC expanded its areas of concern largely due to the expertise of its early staff in Eastern Europe and Latin America (Thoreson, 2014: 53). However, it only began to engage directly with international institutions after the legal victory in *Toonen v. Australia* (1994), when the UN Human Rights Committee found that Tasmanian sodomy laws violate a right to privacy codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, one of the principal international human rights treaties. The young organization found its footing in the preparation for the UN's Fourth World

Conference on Women (Dorf, 2014), work that would largely shape its institutional relationship with the United Nations. Helping national NGOs to prepare shadow reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), in particular, is a core function of the organization (Mollman, 2014; Stern, 2014).

Meanwhile, ILGA continued to focus in the early 1990s on Amnesty and the United Nations (AIUSA, 1992a; 1992d). In 1993, it obtained consultative status with ECOSOC, a status that would be suspended in 1994 following an anti-pedophilia campaign led by the United States and former US Senator Jesse Helms. IGLHRC was the acting secretariat at ILGA that year,[4] and served as the global spokesperson of ILGA during the controversy. Largely focused on the sexuality of children, intergenerational relationships, and consent laws, the controversy brought both groups a wider audience, but also negative attention (Dorf, 2014; Sabbidini, 2014).

AIUSA would launch its first gay, lesbian, and bisexual campaign in 1994, called Breaking the Silence (AIUSA, 1992g; 1994c). The multifaceted campaign involved the publication of a report on gay, lesbian, and bisexual human rights; a six-month grassroots initiative; a campaign against sodomy laws in five US states; and would culminate in a "global" march on the United Nations on the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots (AIUSA, 1994a; 1994b; 1995). ILGA would co-sponsor the march, and a number of other LGBTQ organizations participated. The collaboration also marked a discursive change in ILGA campaigns. Even though ILGA had been pressing Amnesty on LGBTQ issues for years, it would embrace the human rights frame later than most organizations, only officially adopting it in 1995 (ILGA, 2016). Other LGBTQ groups, IGLHRC included, began in the early 1990s to apply the human rights frame, which came to define the discourse on LGBTQ issues. (Kollman and Waites, 2009: 2).

As discussed, ILGA and IGLHRC continued to apply pressure on Amnesty throughout the 1990s in response to Amnesty's lack of research on human rights violations against LGBTQ individuals and the corresponding lack of LGBTQ prisoner of conscience cases (AIUSA, 1992a; 1992c; 1995; 1996; 1997b; 1997c). AIUSA would develop the first full-time staffed initiative on LGBTQ rights in 1998, called OUTfront, funded by a grant obtained by AIMLGC (Berlo, 1998; AIUSA, 1999b; Rothschild, 2015). AIMLGC more or less disbanded at this point, but many members continued to serve as part of an unofficial membership advisory committee (Rothschild, 2015). Within Amnesty, AIUSA, AIUK, and other sections were calling for the organization to clearly and explicitly broaden its mandate to include sexual orientation as a category of prisoners of conscience and to increase the number of LGBTQ cases (Bonowitz, 2015). Finally, at the 1999 ICM, 'sexual orientation' was officially added to the mandate (Amnesty, 1999a; 1999b; AIUK, 1998; AIUSA, 1999a).[5]

**The Network Matures**

By 2000, IGLHRC was a fixture at the United Nations and other international institutions (Dorf, 2014; Thoreson, 2014: 40–41). In 2004, the organization was moved from San Francisco to New York by its new director, famed lesbian activist Paula Ettelbrick, to be closer to the United Nations. Over time, IGLHRC increased its international staff, a move largely driven by Ettlebrick, providing the organization with the legitimacy it needed to speak at the United Nations on behalf of global LGBTQ rights (Thoreson, 2014: 44). While continuing its direct action work, it partnered with other groups like HRW and ILGA-Europe to run trainings and workshops in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, and supported smaller NGOs with shadow reports to the CEDAW Committee (Stern, 2014; Thoreson, 2014: 46, 191).

IGLHRC thus became an important broker within the network, a highly professional and central hub with offices in New York, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, and Manila (Thoreson, 2014: 29).

ILGA-Europe, created by the regionalization of ILGA in 1996,[6] was able to capitalize on two important political opportunities in Europe: the publication of the 1994 Roth Report, and the passage of protections against discrimination for LGBTQ people in the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam. First, the Roth Report,[7] adopted by the European Parliament and named for its author Claudia Roth, German Green Member of the European Parliament, called for legal equality for lesbians and gay men and an end to discrimination by European institutions. The second development was the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which included protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The treaty amended existing treaties of the EU and European Communities and devolved certain powers from national governments to the EU [8] (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014: 3, 9). European LGBTQ activists thus succeeded in legitimating claims for rights within a larger European vision (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2011: 7; Kollman, 2011:114).

ARC arrived late on the international stage in 2003 to fill gaps the founders perceived in international activism (Vance, 2016; ARC, 2016). ARC identifies its primary responsibilities as "strengthening global networks" by supporting smaller, national NGOs and "enhancing access to UN mechanisms" (ARC, 2016). Based in Canada and now in Geneva as well, it is well placed to engage UN human rights institutions. ARC works to advance LGBTQ human rights; document human rights violations against LGBTQ people; and facilitate partnerships between international and domestic organizations, as well as between the United Nations and other international LGBTQ organizations (ARC, 2016). One of its key activities is to help national LGBTQ organizations prepare shadow reports for the UN Human Rights Council's UPR mechanism.

One of ARC's first major actions was to partner with other actors to support the Brazil Resolution, a draft UN resolution against discrimination based on sexual orientation that was brought before the Human Rights Commission in 2003 and tabled for three years in a row (Vance, 2016). A number of similar resolutions have been raised at the Human Rights Council in the intervening years, some addressing gender identity as well as sexual orientation. In 2006, ARC initiated and joined with other LGBTQ rights groups, including IGLHRC and ILGA and former Amnesty activist Miller, to draft the Yogykarta Principles, designed to guide both governments and NGOs in interpreting the application of existing human rights law to sexual orientation and gender identity (Vance, 2016). These principles, importantly, "reveal a trend toward utilizing nonstate actors to impose international law and norms upon unwilling, or at least resistant, nations" (Mittelstaedt, 2008: 366).

ARC's private SOGI listserv connects LGBTQ activists around the globe through a public forum. The listserv enables actors in the Global South to gain the attention of larger actors in the North (Thoreson, 2014: 132), and it allows gatekeepers like IGLHRC to communicate with smaller organizations. Like ILGA, ARC works to help mostly national and regional organizations achieve ECOSOC accreditation. Over time, the organization has moved from smaller to larger projects, aiding international coordination and advocacy (ARC, 2016).

As Dorf, Rothschild, and Miller suggest, international conferences have been another means of connection for actors in the network (Altman, 1996; Dorf, 2014; Miller, 2014; Rothschild, 2015). For Dorf, many of these relationships began during international AIDS conferences and related conferences on MSM. Dorf argues that, "the epidemic…was…an initial way that gay people both got leadership, but also got money to organize, and certainly got money to travel to attend a conference" (2014). These venues thus became increasingly valuable for

bringing together LGBTQ actors and organizations. Miller further cites AIDS activism as central

to the internationalization of these issues (2014). For Gruskin, the AIDS conferences were less

about transnational organizing: "We were listening to each other, but there was nothing we were

trying to do together." She suggests instead that mobilizing around lesbian, gay, and bisexual

issues took place at international women's health conferences (2014). Yet the AIDS crisis, while

galvanizing networking and organization between LGBTQ actors and groups, also managed to

exacerbate existing gender divisions. On the one hand, the crisis drove organizing and provided

resources for gay activism which "could be safely distanced by organizing around HIV

information and prevention" (Altman and Symon, 2016: 45). Yet Dennis Altman and Jonathan

Symons argue that a focus on HIV/AIDS made lesbian issues in the Global South even less

visible, since lesbians were not the direct beneficiaries of these programs and since valuable

resources, scarce to begin with, were diverted from their advocacy (2016: 45).

In contrast to Amnesty, the other human rights gatekeeper, HRW, is a highly centralized

organization. HRW came to LGBTQ rights later than Amnesty, although the process was much

smoother. One activist stated:

> Human Rights Watch wasn't vulnerable in the same way Amnesty was, because Amnesty
> was an international, participatory, transparent, so to speak, NGO, which [HRW] never
> was. It was US-based, elite, board-focused, and highly nontransparent. IGLHRC and
> HRW formed an alliance which protected [HRW].

Dorf's account is different: "I went in [to HRW's headquarters] after the Amnesty experience all

armed to have a fight and a difficult first meeting." Yet they were, Dorf argues, "completely

open," and drafted a new internal policy on LGBTQ issues during the meeting which was passed

at the next executive committee meeting (2014). IGLHRC would form an effective working

relationship with HRW, even using its New York office as a "satellite office" (Thoreson, 2014:

36). By 2003, HRW had its own LGBTQ program, and had even hired the New York Director of

IGLHRC, Scott Long, to run the program (Mertus, 2007: 1046–7). IGLHRC's work at the United Nations would extend beyond shadow reports over the years to include lobbying the UN General Assembly to protect LGBTQ individuals from extrajudicial and arbitrary executions and to gain consultative status with ECOSOC (Dorf, 2014; Stern, 2014; Thoreson, 2014: 50).

ILGA would shift its attention back to ECOSOC in early 2000s, supporting 10 LGBTQ organizations in their application for consultative status, IGLHRC and ILGA-Europe among them (ILGA, 2016b). In 2006, it would collaborate with other organizations to draft the Yogykarta Principles. That same year, three organizations aided by ILGA gained consultative status with ECOSOC, including ILGA-Europe (ILGA, 2016a). The next year, ILGA would encourage another six organizations to apply; two of these would gain consultative status, and even more organizations supported by ILGA would gain consultative status over the next seven years. In 2010, IGLHRC received consultative status, and in 2011, ILGA itself would finally get its consultative status reinstated. In 2014, ARC was granted consultative status.

*AIUSA today*

AIUSA would undergo major changes in the mid-2000s that many felt were detrimental to LGBTQ activism. In part due to budget cuts and in part due to efforts to mainstream LGBTQ issues within other AIUSA programs, the OUTfront program was ended, and with it, more than two decades of LGBTQ-specific activism within Amnesty. Part of this restructuring can be attributed to the success of the HIV/HOMO Task Force, AIMLGC, and LGBTQ activists in obviating the need for an LGBTQ-specific rights program within the organization. But the change was still largely seen as a mistake by former and current LGBTQ Amnesty activists. Rothschild stated:

> It was kind of heartbreaking, but I don't think we knew, even as it was happening, how
> things would sort of roll out in the weakening…of that work. So I don't think it was

intentional. It certainly wasn't out of a specific effort to undermine the work…All of the work we had put into, with such care, building this LGBTQ work, sort of stone by stone, at least within the United States—it's not that it disappeared, but…there were management decisions that were so far beyond… the nuanced questions of sexuality and human rights work, and they had such dramatic impact on what we could do. And it was devastating (2015).

Over 55 years of activism, Amnesty's mission has grown exponentially. No longer the lone gatekeeper of human rights, Amnesty has struggled to maintain its position, seeking to shore up its legitimacy by adopting an increasing number and a steadily widening range of rights issues. This paper details but one of the many issue areas that human rights activists petitioned for within the organization.

**Findings**

In studies of political network theory, the aim is not to make sense of random clusterings of innovations across a horizontal plane, but rather to navigate and assess a field crowded with social movements, charismatic actors, NGOs, new ideas, and expressions of traditional state and institutional power. It is therefore necessary to examine not only the political opportunity structure, but the attributes and organizational politics of groups and networks, and the actions, decisions, and agency of individual actors. This section examines the transnational LGBTQ network's characteristics, emergence, development, strategies, and effectiveness.

*Network characteristics*

In network theory language, the LGBTQ network is a scale-free network, whereby power is concentrated in the central nodes or NGOs (Wong, 2012: 69–70). Such a network is efficient at coordination, information sharing, and agenda-setting, but is vulnerable to failure since it relies on the central nodes or brokers to keep it together (Wong, 2012: 71–74). According to the LGBTQ Movement Advancement Project, almost 90 percent of LGBTQ organizations and mainstream LGBTQ human rights programs (such as Amnesty's) were launched after 1990

(2008: 9). The network's relative youth and lack of institutionalization thus seem to present a serious liability.

In such a network, new NGOs have a "preferential attachment" to the more powerful central nodes like the LGBTQ brokers (Wong, 2012: 71). David Lake and Wendy Wong argue that networks operate along three dimensions that are used to assess strength, "efficiency, and robustness": the number of nodes, frequency of interactions (or density between nodes), and other patterns of connection between nodes (2009: 129). Each LGBTQ broker works with numerous smaller NGOs, but brokers tend not to wage campaigns in the same geographic areas, creating a pattern of relationships with little overlap. Andre duPlessis, ILGA's UN Programme and Advocacy Manager, suggests that ILGA and IGLHRC increasingly operate in different places (ILGA in Geneva and IGLHRC in New York), but that they are not formally dividing turf on LGBTQ issues (2015). Key people in both organizations are also in regular communication. The lack of overlap points to the network's high reliance on its central nodes, thereby increasing its vulnerability to "catastrophic" failure (Wong and Lake, 2009: 130).

Thousands of local and regional NGOs use the services and resources of a handful of LGBTQ brokers that, altogether, have less than 45 full-time, paid employees, with more than one third of these focusing exclusively on Europe (as part of ILGA-Europe).[9] Confirming many of the assumptions of transnational scholars, Philip Ayoub has argued that for states that joined the European Union more recently (in the 21st century), the embeddedness of state LGBTQ organizations within the TAN has been key to the adoption of LGBTQ rights legislation and policy at the state or domestic level (Ayoub, 2014: 1). These brokered channels—which were forged in the 1990s through the campaign against Amnesty and through new opportunities for engagement and influence (as well as new battles) at the United Nations and within Europe—

were a crucial part of the modern European LGBTQ rights movement. These channels work by shaping the discourse around LGBTQ rights, and by bringing visibility to new actors, issues, and norms, essentially by making "government and societies see and interact with their ideas" (Ayoub, 2016: 4, 10).

As a global federation, ILGA also faces different issues than IGLHRC. Historically, ILGA has largely seen itself as a collection of its members, and as a representative for their concerns and priorities. As debates over LGBTQ issues have become more salient in international forums, however, the organization is beginning to experiment with selective, strategic efforts at promoting rights and protections (du Plessis 2015). Rather than facilitating access to every major treaty body relevant to LGBTIQ activism, the organization might become more selective in terms of targets, focusing only on a few treaty bodies with whom they believe they will have the greatest success (du Plessis, 2015).

Within the network, there is a great deal of interaction among the four brokers, with IGLHRC and ARC active in ILGA's federation and ARC, IGLHRC, ILGA, and ILGA-Europe working together and issuing joint statements at the United Nations over the last decade. These organizations have supported one another (as well as smaller NGOs) in their respective bids for consultative status with ECOSOC. Moreover, with IGLHRC in New York and ARC and ILGA in Geneva, cooperation has developed based on convenience of location (Mollman, 2014; Sabbadini, 2014). In Geneva, ARC and ILGA often coordinate on work with various UN organs, while IGLHRC focuses more on New York-based UN activities (Sabbadini, 2014). That being said, efforts at greater integration have been promising. A 2015 meeting with all four brokers and two gatekeepers took place in Geneva in 2015. The meeting included other NGOs, such as

International Service for Human Rights, COC Netherlands, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL), and OII Australia (du Plessis, 2015).

*Network emergence*

If we accept Lake and Wong's assertion that norms emerge from networks, then network emergence is an important puzzle in the study of international norms (2009: 128). The transnational LGBTQ network was built through the vision, dedication, and hard work of individuals; the confluence and coordination of activists' objectives; the utility of networking; the discursive construction of actors and goals; the choice of campaigns and their effectiveness; and the successful persuasion of gatekeepers. The embryonic network of IGLHRC and ILGA and their membership emerged not so much through coordination, but through contestation, through the winning strategy of challenging the principal human rights gatekeeper, and thereby raising the salience of LGBTQ issues and reordering the advocacy agenda (as well as through the choice of the human rights frame). Thompson, however, argues that the external pressure, from IGLHRC especially, slowed the pace of change at Amnesty and, in some ways, created suspicion and even resentment toward any mandate change related to lesbian and gay issues. Thompson states:

> It is completely against the grain of Amnesty's culture and policy to cave in to pressure, to change this policy because of the pressure of outside organizations. We have a decision-making process, which is our annual general meetings and international meetings. We do not make those policy change decisions based on lobbying from anyone, even if we respect them (2014).

Other activists, especially Sofia Gruskin, Alice Miller, and Cynthia Rothschild, give credit to IGLHRC, but question the degree to which pressure from the organization catalyzed change. These activists, and others within AIMLGC, including Meg Satterthwaite, took turns serving on

the AIUSA Board of Directors, always making sure that someone was present to advocate for lesbian and gay issues (Gruskin, 2014). Rothschild has argued:

> In that period of the early '90s, it's true that IGLHRC was [putting pressure on Amnesty] and I do think that that played a role in creating that shift, but I have to say, from the vantage point where I sat, that can't be taken alone, because that's maybe...25 percent of the story. From my vantage point, the 75 percent of the story is the…networking within Amnesty, that took place in so many different spaces (2015).

Despite the lack of consensus regarding the impact of the Amnesty campaign, the contestation between gay and lesbian activists and the human rights gatekeeper—waged during the peak of AIDS activism—served as a creation myth for these organizations and for the network itself. That both IGLHRC and ILGA claim success for Amnesty's adoption of LGBTQ issues prominently in their promotional material speaks to the power of this narrative. The emergence of the LGBTQ network and the campaign within and against Amnesty suggests a need, voiced by Carpenter, for "a theory about how TAN gatekeepers select potential new issues," in addition to "how minor players within a network can leverage different types of power to influence gatekeeper adoption decisions" (2007a: 114). Amnesty came to accept as untenable the adoption of some 'identity' groups but not others, and yielded to pressure by internal and external stakeholders.

The benefits of gatekeeper advocacy are many. Clifford Bob argues that NGOs gain legitimacy, *raison d'etre*, momentum, prestige, and symbolic support from gatekeepers (2004: 15). As such, Amnesty's adoption of homosexual prisoners of conscience and LGBTQ rights conferred the legitimacy of human rights on LGBTQ people and issues (Bob, 2014; Carpenter, 2007a: 102–103; Lake and Wong, 2009; Wong, 2012). The human rights frame was especially attractive to LGBTQ activists in the early 1990s. The central issues facing the community—the

AIDS crisis, sodomy laws, and hate crimes—were a good fit with the human rights language of health, privacy, and nondiscrimination.

Yet the LGBTQ human rights frame has been both beneficial and problematic for groups in the Global South (AIUSA and Gossman, 1990). While it empowers those that identify as LGBTQ, it can ignore or displace different expressions or manifestations of sexuality and can be used as a weapon in a "cultural cold war" (Altman, 1996; Altman and Symons, 2016: 11). As transnational LGBTQ organizations began to partner with local organizations in the Global South, scholars began to notice a phenomenon called 'global queering,' whereby Western ideas of sexuality and gender identity diffused through the Global South, facilitated by other mechanisms of globalization, such as advances in information technology (Altman, 1996; Kollman and Waites, 2009: 13, Long, 2009; Seckinelgin, 2009). Within this discourse, sexual orientation and gender identity are constructed as a core component of personhood, one with "master status" to shape and govern "a person's entire life" (Altman and Symons, 2016: 19).

A master status of sexual orientation and gender identity was functional as well as discursive. While organizations in the Global South won access to power through their partnership with brokers, mainly in the form of guidance and help in navigating UN organs and treaty bodies, the brokers received legitimacy and information in turn. Amnesty would not participate in these exchanges. While IGLHRC and other NGOs offered to build Amnesty's research capacity by sharing their findings, Amnesty's position was that it could not risk its reputation for objectivity, one built on scrupulously conducted research with long-cultivated and carefully vetted sources, by relying on other NGOs.

*Network evolution*

Over time, the transnational LGBTQ network would evolve in four distinct and inter-related ways. First, it would shift from a civil rights frame in the 1960s and 1970s to a human rights frame, in sync with a broader shift by other transnational organizations toward human rights in the 1980s and 1990s (Kollman and Waites, 2009: 4; Mertus, 2009). As discussed, IGLHRC planted its flag in human rights as early as 1990; ILGA would adopt the frame in 1995. This approach, however, has had its costs, as international human rights law often claims the family—widely understood as the conventional heterosexual family—as its central unit, an understanding that plainly excludes LGBTQ relationships and family structures.[10]

Second, the movement would evolve from a handful of isolated national groups campaigning for change within their home state to a large, well resourced global network of thousands of groups that target international institutions through the LGBTQ brokers. The use of a civil rights frame made sense for a movement focused on domestic change, but as the movement assumed a transnational identity, it needed to contextualize its demands within international human rights law (Mertus, 2007).

Third, LGBTQ groups, most notably in the West, went from being direct action campaigners and street protesters in the 1980s and early 1990s to highly professional and bureaucratic organizations that support local groups while engaging with international organizations (Altman and Symons, 2016: 76; Berstein, 2011: 202; Lang, 2014: 62; Paternotte, 2015: 390). Whereas IGLHRC was once, in its founder's words, a "ragtag" group of activists, today it sponsors LGBTQ campaigns and movements around the world while promoting LGBTQ rights at the United Nations and in other international forums.

Fourth, the network focuses to a large extent on international institutions (particularly the United Nations) and on individual states. The Western state, especially, is now often seen as an

ally that can be relied on to enact and protect LGBTQ rights and use its influence to advocate for

LGBTQ rights internationally (Tremblay et al., 2011: 7; Berstein, 2011: 200). The United

Nations may seem a logical choice as a site of LGBTQ activism, but given the network's

relatively few and only fairly recent successes in UN forums, it is far from an obvious target.

According to Larry Cox, former executive director of AIUSA, the professionalization of human

rights movements was coterminous with work at the United Nations. He argues that as a

professional human rights organization:

> you had to have expertise. You were expected to know how the UN worked. You were
> expected to be a lawyer…International law became increasingly important. And the
> mobilization part [direct action]…suffered and has suffered (2014).

After the *Toonen* case, LGBTQ activists began to see the potential in UN advocacy. OutRight

(formerly IGLHRC) helps actors engage with the CEDAW treaty body, among other organs and

committees, drafting shadow reports to counter or expand upon state reporting and bringing

individuals persecuted by states to speak at the United Nations. This shift to advocacy and

engagement at the United Nations was also reflected in the physical move or clustering of many

of the brokers to the UN human rights power centers of New York and Geneva.

*Network strategy*

The growth of the network into a global, professional organizational cluster with a focus

on movement building in the Global South and institutional change at the United Nations and

individual states brought about comparable changes in strategy. Network actors still employ the

boomerang theory at the international level, whereby brokers take up campaigns initiated by

actors in the Global South and put pressure on states to change their policies and practices.

Brokers pursue changes in law and policy and help smaller organizations to engage with the

United Nations through treaty bodies and the UPR process, and to win consultative status with ECOSOC.

At the domestic level, network actors are guided by local NGOs, norms, and culture. Legal change and aggressive efforts to advance LGBTQ rights are strategies that often fail to work in states where elites shore up support through homophobic action and in places where the perception of Western intervention is resented (Altman and Symons, 2016; Bosia, 2013; Mittelstaedt, 2008: 358, 377; Thoreson, 2014: 138). Network actors, accordingly, simultaneously adapt their language and objectives for the particular audience (Thoreson, 2014: 210). This two-level game tries to move the international community toward legal norms and protections for LGBTQ individuals within the existing human rights canon as well as create new international law and norms specific to LGBTQ individuals and communities. At the same time, it tries to support local actors to nudge their communities toward greater tolerance, sexual rights, and healthy behavior. This tiered strategy assigns an important role to the gatekeepers (Amnesty and HRW), one that continually reinforces the message in public forums that LGBTQ rights are human rights. Through support for LGBTQ NGOs at the NGO Committee of ECOSOC, Amnesty, for example, validates LGBTQ claims.

This two-level strategy has led to distinct operational languages: an international language that utilizes the SOGI acronym at the United Nations and the LGBTQ acronym (or some iteration of it) among other activists. LGBTQ brokers thus use the language preferred at the United Nations and in other international institutions to drive processes of law and policy change. At the domestic level, these organizations tread carefully, allowing individuals and local actors to define themselves, their objectives, and their identity.

*Network effectiveness*

While it is common to assess the extent of human rights change through the creation, adoption, and implementation of international law, the global LGBTQ network has sought other measures of success. This is consistent with Wong's claim that legalization is not a "proxy for political salience and international norms," in part because it values breadth over depth of normative change (Wong, 2012: 30–33). As such, the Yogykarta Principles do not create new international law; instead, they demonstrate how existing international law applies to sexual orientation and gender identity (Thoreson, 2009: 325). The contextualization of Yogykarta within existing law is a vital strategy. LGBTQ activists have been engaged with UN institutions for more than two decades, with little to show for it in terms of new international law. As such, a piecemeal approach, one that works through treaty bodies individually as well as through human rights charter organs, is widely seen as the most effective way to advance the cause. Roseman and Miller call the results of this legal approach "soft law," attributing to it a "constructive power" through its inclusion in legal texts and impact on state practice. (2011: 341). While the ultimate goal of Yogykarta is the development of hard law, the principles are a critical tool for the development of soft law on LGBTQ issues (Roseman and Miller, 2011: 338). Because of these difficulties, NGOs aim to foster new norms rather than create new law. OutRight participates in human rights forums by introducing and debating LGBTQ issues, ensuring their salience, and normalizing them over time. By supporting movements in the Global South and bringing activists to speak at the United Nations, OutRight aims to de-stigmatize and to mainstream LGBTQ issues and rights.

The key organizations within the LGBTQ network have joined forces on many projects that can be considered successful, including the securing of consultative status with ECOSOC for a number of LGBTQ organizations; the 2000 UN General Assembly statement on extrajudicial

executions; the 2000 ECOSOC comment on the right to health; on overcoming the 2010

challenge to sexual orientation as a protected category in the statement on extrajudicial

executions; the expansion of the statement on extrajudicial executions to include gender identity;

and the mobilization of widespread opposition to Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality bill (Miller,

2014; Thoreson, 2014: 147–8). Moreover, the ongoing application of the Yogykarta Principles is

a campaign in progress, as the growing number of references to the principles in UN treaty-based

bodies demonstrates. The lack of progress in the charter-based bodies continues, however, to be

a major hurdle for the development of hard law protecting LGBTQ individuals.[11]

*Gatekeeper activism*

While transnational activism for LGBTQ rights did not begin with the campaign against

Amnesty, the campaign—set against a backdrop of the rise of human rights issues in

international affairs and related changes in human rights advocacy—laid the groundwork for the

modern transnational network. First, after the end of the Cold War, Amnesty repositioned to take

advantage of new opportunities at the United Nations, assuming a larger role in drafting treaties,

and in briefings and consultations (Marten, 2004: 1065–66). This shift was part of a larger NGO

turn toward the United Nations and other international institutions as geopolitical and security

concerns decreased and NGOs found increasing opportunities for influence (Marten, 2004:

1067). Relatedly, human rights concerns rose to prominence during this time, becoming a

priority for the United Nations and an integral part of UN operations in the 1990s (Marten, 2004:

1068), a process that continues today. Second, this political reordering had a further impact on

the LGBTQ brokers, which likewise sought inclusion in the human rights regime, as they too

turned increasingly toward the United Nations and other international and regional institutions.

These changes were further facilitated by the development of individual complaint mechanisms

of international human rights treaties in the 1980s, offering a path to redress of human rights violations through international law (Altman and Symons, 2016: 77; Harrington, 2012).

Third, and most importantly, LGBTQ activists utilized Amnesty's own tactics of naming and shaming *against it* in an effort to persuade the organization to adopt homosexuals as prisoners of conscience and to advocate for LGBTQ human rights. The impact of the campaign was amplified, both within Amnesty and on the mobilization of a transnational network, because of the rich links and high level of engagement between Amnesty and the human rights organs, missions, and treaty bodies at the United Nations. Amnesty's elevated profile in the 1990s and its importance in international affairs, rather than shielding the organization from scrutiny, only served to heighten its vulnerability to the charges leveled by ILGA and IGLHRC. These organizations successfully constructed a narrative whereby Amnesty was neglecting a persecuted minority (naming), and this neglect was framed in direct contradiction to Amnesty's mission to promote universal human rights (shaming). Indeed, the very tactics developed, honed, and deployed by Amnesty to demand change around the world were used both externally and internally to press Amnesty to change its own mandate and policies. This innovative—and auspiciously timed— campaign, along with the growing acceptance of LGBTQ people and issues in Western states, meant that for Amnesty to continue to have legitimacy and to be influential within the human rights regime —to remain a gatekeeper—it needed to expand its mandate.

**Conclusion**

The successful persuasion of Amnesty to adopt LGBTQ rights is a rich vein to mine for network theorists. The case has demonstrated how the tactics of naming and shaming were utilized by early network actors to mobilize and build a transnational activist community that is now

embedded at the United Nations and in a variety of regional forums around the world. The ongoing need for network gatekeepers to maintain their legitimacy (and thus their status) forces engagement with new ideas and new actors at the gate. A further and final irony is that the ongoing process of mandate expansion at Amnesty—its effort to remain relevant and to carry out its mission of universal human rights—has spread the organization so thin that it may lack the necessary infrastructure, especially in terms of research capabilities, for effective advocacy, and risks the ability to act on the breadth and range of human rights issues to which it has committed.

**Endnotes**

[1] Other smaller nodes that were also mentioned in one or two interviews include: the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Sexual Rights Initiative, COC Netherlands, and the Council for Global Equality.

[2] More recent additions result in SOGIE or SOGII, with the added "E" for gender expression and the added "I" for intersex.

[3] The HIV part of the HIV/HOMO Task Force would migrate eventually to the Health Professional Network, and the HOMO part would become AIMLGC (AIUSA, 1992b; 1992e; 1992f; 1992g).

[4] In the 1980s and 1990s, ILGA members took turns taking on various roles, including the acting directorship.

[5] Technically, the 1999 ICM in Decision 4 states only that the Mandate Review "will include an appraisal of adding the category of 'sexual orientation'… in any such clause, if other identity attributes (such as ethnic origin) are listed" (Amnesty, 1999b). Nonetheless, 'sexual orientation' would eventually be included in the mandate as a result of this decision.

[6] During the mid-1990s, ILGA would break into regional organizations, loosely collected into a world federation based in Geneva, in order to be more "truly international" (Paternotte, 2015: 394). These regions would eventually include ILGA-Asia; ILGA-Europe; ILGA Latin America and Caribbean; ILGA North America; ILGA Oceania; and Pan-Africa ILGA. ILGA currently boasts 1,200 organizations within its federation. The most powerful regional organization is ILGA-Europe, with headquarters in Brussels, which receives funding from the European Commission and support from European "friendly elites" (Swiebel, 2009: 20).

[7] Published as the "Equal Rights for Homosexuals and Lesbians in the EC."

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[8] Article 13.

[9] This number is drawn from interviews and organization websites (du Plessis, 2015): ARC: 5; ILGA: 5; ILGA-Europe: 20; and OUTRight: 15. The LGBTQ Map Advancement project put the number of employees much lower in 2008 (at 35): ARC: 2; ILGA: 4; ILGA-Europe: 10; and IGLHRC: 19 (2008).

[10] See Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Article 10 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; Article 17 of the American Convention on Human Rights; and Article 18 of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

[11] See Roseman and Miller (2011) for a more detailed discussion of the charter- and treaty-based bodies and sexual rights.

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**Appendix: Cited interviews**

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