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14 Gay and Lesbian Movements beyond Borders?

National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement

We begin in this concluding chapter by summarizing the empirical results of this book, particularly taking into consideration those elements that all authors deal with in their country chapters. Since parallels in the development of gay and lesbian movements are striking, at least at first glance, we start by outlining similarities across countries. Closer scrutiny shows, however, that these similarities are sometimes misleading. and superficial analogies may hide fundamental disparities. In the second part of this chapter, we therefore try to explain both the cross-national similarities and the differences in the development of gay and lesbian movements. By comparing countries that are comparable in many aspects but divergent in others, we are able to present an "opportunities model" of movement emergence and development. By distinguishing between essential prerequisites as well as facilitative or accommodating conditions presented in the rich empirical material of this book, we deduce some fundamental principles underpinning the development of gay and lesbian movements.

A clear trajectory of factors can be distilled from the different national contexts. As a basic prerequisite for the emergence of a lesbian and gay organization, individuals must be able to find a social space where they can develop lesbian and gay identities, and they must be able to construct a rudimentary organization beyond private circles of friends. Once this space is carved out, lesbians and gays can start making political demands. This politicization of the social group seems to be facilitated, rather than hampered, when political repression is evident but not too strong. Several chapters show that the authorities' reaction to this politicization is crucial for the subsequent development of the movement. Movement leaders can seize opportunities only if and when they are available. It is evident, however, that the type and scope of political organization in different countries is very much influenced by developments elsewhere in the world. A

process of transnational diffusion is discernible; all around the world gay and lesbian movements influence and learn from each other.

Still, we cannot speak of the gay and lesbian movement in the singular. Movements are strongly affected by local, national, or regional political and social structures; all movements show a clear national or regional imprint, reflecting a national "paradigm."

SIMILARITIES AMONG GAY AND LESBIAN MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Compared with other social movements, "identity" movements, such as the homosexual movement, seem to be less influenced by national political opportunities and therefore might be expected to be more similar across countries (Duyvendak 1995). At first sight, similarities are indeed striking in both the phases of movement development and the issues that are politicized by the movement. In this part of the chapter, we deal with these similarities, particularly concerning issues, action patterns, strategies, and organized events; the development of social movement organizations; and, last but not least, the question of gender differences in movements

First we found similarities in issue emphasis among movements all over the world. Since homosexual men and women suffer from discrimination virtually everywhere, it is not surprising that many of the topics their movements have dealt with in the last decades are fairly similar among countries. Everywhere movements pursue a double strategy of both fighting discrimination and establishing public spaces of their own. At the initial stage in the struggle against homophobia, laws prohibiting homosexual behavior in public and private are the main topic, often in combination with demands for legal recognition of the movement organization pursuing this goal. In the next phase, movements combat discrimination in other fields; they challenge unequal treatment in all areas, from the armed forces to the household. In the most recent phase of this antidiscrimination strategy—typical of northwestern Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia-movements have directed their demands to the heart of heteronormative society: marriage should be opened for gay and lesbian couples and adoption no longer the exclusive privilege of heterosexuals.

The second strategy aims at establishing a space, in social terms as well as in terms of an actual physical area where homosexuals can meet. Depending on the phase of emancipation, this space strategy is directed either toward the creation of a place to hide from the homophobic outside world or toward a struggle for a free cultural place, a place to meet with

politics of suppression that swirled around AIDS, primarily in the mid-1980s, called for a more united defense.

Cross-National Differences among Lesbian AND GAY MOVEMENTS

The similarities in activities, styles, symbols, institutions, language, and so on observed above do not imply that the identities are the same. In particular, there are impressive differences in the way people experience their identities as being, or not being, politicized. The distinction between countries of British heritage with well-developed "communities" and northern European countries where movement and subculture are more separated is relevant here. There is perhaps more of a continuum between personal identity and community politics in the countries of British heritage, whereas the northern European countries are characterized by a split between a rather apolitical culture and formalized movement. Nonpoliticized identities and nonpolitical social interaction dominate in the Eastern European context, as well as in other parts of the world outside the Western hemisphere, where desire is not framed in terms of political interests.

An in-depth look at the country chapters shows that, in fact, it is not so much that movements look alike; it is more that cultural expressions resemble each other, perhaps through the borrowing or adoption of rhetoric from movements in other countries. In addition, even these similar cultural practices have quite different meanings in the various countries and in different settings within these countries. The worldwide use of similar symbols, language, dress styles, and so on shows commonalisties among countries, but these apparent commonalities must not blind us to differences that exist in the meanings of these practices. Countryspecific elements remain important, much more than is acknowledged by the postmodern rhetoric that celebrates globalization instead of emphasizing the local meanings of global tendencies. There are, for instance, surprising differences in strength among movements in countries with rather comparable subcultures (the United States, Canada, Australia) that illustrate the relevance of local parameters of global tendencies. Moreover, movements may change substantially in a single country over time, while the culture remains more or less unchanged during the same period (Britain, the Netherlands, France).

One of the more important findings in this study is that the trajectories and phases of the development of postwar gay and lesbian movements in Western capitalist countries (at least those that did not experience a democratic breakdown after World War II) are very similar: moderate move-

ments in the 1950s, radicalization in the late 1960s and early 1970s, response to AIDS in 1980s, and broad, diversified movements in the 1990s. These superficial similarities camouflage underlying differences as well. In the first place, the development of movements of homosexual people around the world shows that the order given above follows neither a logical nor a necessary sequence. In addition, in many countries progress and backlash alternate. Moreover, the same phenomenon, for instance AIDS, causes strikingly different reactions in rather comparable countries. Whereas in many Western, capitalist countries a new more militant response—AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), Outrage, AIDS Action Now-occurred around AIDS, in the Netherlands and some other European countries, radical organizations did not achieve a significant following. These differences show the limitations of an evolutionary model of movement development.

COUNTRY PARADIGMS AND NATIONAL IMPRINTS

Almost all of the authors in this volume show how national characteristics mold movements both in their aims and strategies: in Canada the struggle for autonomy in Quebec, in France the republican idea of universalism, in the Netherlands the heritage of pillarization, in the United States the quasi-ethnic community concept, in Japan the hegemonic traditional and conformist culture, in South Africa the fundamental right of nondiscrimination, in other postauthoritarian countries the democratic right of equal treatment, and so on. These contexts shape the country-specific path along which the gay and lesbian movement may progress. "The contemporary gay and lesbian movement has its own historical trajectory in each country," as Dennis Altman (1997:4) aptly put it. The gay and lesbian movement is not only dependent on the solidarity of social movements and other allies; it also has to "fit" into the emancipation model used by other groups in society and recognized by authorities as valid and justified. The way to a brighter future is carved out by the struggle in the past. In some countries gay and lesbian movements are "forced" to present themselves in terms of a cultural minority, in others as part of a broad movement for human rights and equality. All this depends on the country-specific political and cultural frames dominant in society and politics. Therefore, the main conclusion to be drawn from the country chapters is that national political and cultural characteristics play a crucial role in the development of national lesbian and gay movements. The next question then becomes Which characteristics are decisive for the emergence and development of lesbian and gay movements?

ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES AND FACILITATIVE FACTORS

At the beginning of this book, the question of how to understand the development of an identity-based, "subcultural" movement was raised. In this concluding chapter, we refer to the different theoretical approaches to social movements dealt with herein: the difference between instrumental and identity movements used in the political process approach (see Duyvendak 1995, Kriesi et al. 1995), the effects of repression and facilitation on such movements, the relevance of chances of success, and so on We have opted for a rather eclectic approach to understand movement development, taking into consideration the economic, cultural, and social contexts; the national political context; and the international context. Under these three headings we deal with aspects that prove to be relevant in the different national contexts. The country chapters lead to the conclusion that there are certain conditions (discussed in the next section of this chapter) that must be fulfilled for a gay and lesbian movement to emerge In addition the contributors to this volume point to factors that prove vital for the development of the movement, yet these conditions differ considerably from country to country. In instances where these factors are not present or are weak, movements may still come about by finding strategies to overcome these deficiencies.

PREREQUISITES IN THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Whether or not a gay and lesbian movement develops depends on many factors. Some social factors influence the opportunities of a movement directly; some factors affect the opinions and attitudes of the public and thereby influence politics and, indirectly, movement opportunities. The very idea of a movement by homosexual people becomes imaginable only if people have sexual identities (Adam 1995). In other words, some cultural, social, and economic prerequisites have to be in place before other factors, such as political factors, become pertinent.

Meanings of Sexuality and Sexual Identity

There are enormous differences among countries in the meanings of sexuality and in the possibility of sexual identity in specific societies. Sexual identity, in the sense of a popular recognition or sense of commonality among people who share a sexual and affectional orientation, is a precondition for a gay and lesbian movement to develop, even if one of the aims of the movement is the deconstruction of these identities (see Gamson 1995:2). "Once homosexuality is transformed into a people, the idea of a gay movement found its place" (Adam 1995). In most of the coun-

tries researched, sexual identities in the modern sense of the word seem to exist today, though there remain impressive differences in the meanings of sexual identities in, for instance, Japan, Brazil, and the Netherlands. As well, all of these identity categories remain in flux, subject to continual negotiation and revision across generations and historical time. "Homophile," "gay," "lesbian," and "queer" all imply a different politics and sense of self. Whereas a modern "gay" and "lesbian" identity seems to be the most "unproblematic" basis for the construction of a social movement, other types of identities, other ways of experiencing sexuality, seem to be less conducive contexts for movement organization.

Sex/Gender Systems

Partly related to the issue of sexual identity are the various meanings of the sex/gender systems in the countries researched. Where gavs are defined as passive or discredited men, they may not be permitted a place in civil society; where lesbians are not seen to exist, they can scarcely occupy a position as political actors. The chapters show that movements are somewhat weaker in countries where homosexual preference is constructed through the lens of gender (Brazil and Franco-era Spain). Patriarchal logic may reserve public and political agency for men, depriving all women and those men considered to be effeminate of civic participation. Activo men, in a gender-defined system of homosexuality, may escape a label and a sexual identity, thereby preserving their privileges as adult men. Activos are therefore not likely to feel a commonality with pasivos, any more than straight men do with feminists, thereby inhibiting solidarity and political organization among homosexually inclined men.

Development of Civil Society

One constructive factor for social movements is the national civic culture. As indicated in the Chapter 1 of this book, gay and lesbian movements are stronger and better organized where there are public, institutionally complex gay and lesbian communities (Kriesi and Duyvendak 1995: 3-25). Where gay and lesbian life is confined to "underground" or illicit niches, or private friendship networks, if movement organization can emerge at all, it is only under the cloak of scientific or cultural activity, such as the Wissenschaftlich-Humanitäres Komitee before the Second World War in Germany and the Netherlands or the Shakespeare Club, Arcadie, and several organizations in the 1950s and early 1960s. These groups are limited to a defensive posture in a hostile social climate and therefore have little ability to mobilize any kind of mass movement. Excluded from the mass media and silenced in

the public sphere as "obscene" or as an affront to "public morals" these embryonic groups have few means of communicating with their potential constituency.

The country chapters reveal other differences pertinent to mobilization, with the recruitability of gays and lesbians in different cultural contexts varying from very limited to impressive. First, under certain circumstances the commercial infrastructure and political movement form one "community" (which implies that there is a manifest potential in the subculture that can be mobilized); under other circumstances there is a split between a depoliticized, commercialized "subculture" and an often professionalized movement subsidized by local or national governments. Second, accessibility and visibility are vital to the recruitment and mobilizing potential of the movement. This potential is dependent on whether the (sub)culture is mixed or more exclusively homosocial, very much sex oriented or consisting of various social and cultural institutions, and concentrated in the larger cities or well dispersed throughout the country. And finally, it is also important whether the organization is legal or illegal.

There is no linear link between the makeup of a community and mobilization potential. The chapters show fundamental differences in the functioning of civil society and, consequently, in the space for gays and lesbians to organize, according to the characteristics of national political cultures and practices. An important aspect is the density of civil society in general—that is, the overall profusion of social organizations and associations (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nannetti 1993). In most of the advanced capitalist countries, civil society relies on a social fabric of trust and active cooperation on numerous levels. Where civil society has been largely eradicated by a totalitarian system, such as in the East European cases, widespread public distrust hinders the emergence of collective action. A high level of civic engagement creates more opportunities to master the political skills necessary for social organization and protest against repression and discrimination. A dense civic culture also creates the possibility for cross-cutting memberships among different organizations, making coalition building easier. Countries with a dense civil society are also more likely to be responsive to political claims by minority groups. The manner in which a society deals with minorities in general proves to be vital for the emergence and mobilization potential of lesbian and gay movements. In countries like Japan, where a homogeneous religious and political culture is dominant, "deviants" and minorities have considerable difficulty in finding a place for themselves on the public agenda. In immigrant countries or traditionally heterogeneous societies, such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands, there exists a certain extent of respect and tolerance for political demands from minority groups and cultures.

Organized Religion

The relation between organized religion and the state is of great significance to the rise of a gay and lesbian movement. Institutionalized religion plays a major role in policing public culture in many societies. When the church exerts state power through a dominant religious party and its ancillary organizations, the liberation of gays and lesbians is severely hampered. In the southern, eastern, and central regions of Europe and parts of Latin America, where politics and society remain heavily influenced by Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches, the level of acceptance of homosexuality tends to be considerably lower. The Roman Catholic Church contributes to this intolerance in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland. Of course, the Catholic countries differ among themselves. In Italy, for example, the Communist (and its successor Party of the Democratic Left) counterculture provides an alternative for oppositional political organization outside the dominance of Catholicism. In Spain, the democratic fevor that emerged after the death of Franco diminished the power of the church, which had been guaranteed by dictatorship. And in Portugal, gav and lesbian community groups, movement organizations, and cultural expression burst forth in the mid-1990s. The legacy of revolution in Mexico and popular movements in Brazil have created secular spaces in civil society. The space that was opened for civil society in Sandinista Nicaragua (when the first gay and lesbian groups came about) gave way to a more repressive state when the conservative business-church alliance resumed power in 1990.

The Orthodox Church in Russia and Romania is even more homophobic. In countries where the influence of the church is not so strong, the general attitude of the population is more tolerant. In the Czech Republic, where 60 percent of the population does not adhere to a religion, public opinion on homosexuality has shifted significantly toward acceptance, between 1988 and 1993 and particularly since the fall of the Communist regime. In Romania and Poland, where church attendance is very high, the population remains highly intolerant of homosexuality (Ester, Halman, and de Moor 1993; Prochazka 1994).

Another example of the specific interrelation of national political power structures and organized religion is, for example, the evangelical Protestants in the United States, who are the most consistent opponents of gay and lesbian liberation. Elsewhere, Protestants adopted a more liberal and tolerant stance toward homosexuality, dependent on their relative political strength.

We may conclude, however, that in countries where organized religion plays a lesser role, gay and lesbian emancipation has progressed more. Canada, for instance, is less fundamentally religious than are many other. countries: this and its heterogeneous culture foster a more tolerant social climate, despite the fact that English Canadians share a similar cultural heritage with their counterparts in the United States. And the Netherlands, having the lowest level of religious affiliation, is one of the most tolerant countries of the world with respect to gay and lesbian rights (Inglehart 1990).

The Capitalist World System

Another important—perhaps the most basic—condition for the emergence and development of a homosexual movement concerns the position of a country in the capitalist world system. As elaborated in Chapter 1. the historical development of capitalism is characterized by market societv's subordination of traditional ties with families and the local community. This development, often summarized under broad labels like industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of individualism, provided homosexually interested people with opportunities to distance themselves from the control of their families of origin and to move into more urban settings, offering new possibilities for coming into contact with unattached people and space for the formation of gay and lesbian communities. In cities homosexual men and women discover that they are not alone, and they may become part of a "critical mass," empowering them both in their private lives and in politics.

Not all countries reviewed in this book experience capitalism in the same way, and a fully developed market society does not always result in the same type of social relations (see, for instance, Japan). Being a peripheral or core country in the capitalist system determines the wealth of nations and the opportunity to develop the public services of a welfare state. In addition to wealth, the organization and representation of the different social groups at the political level is important for the type and extent of welfare statism. The relation between the welfare state and the development of a gay and lesbian movement is complex. Welfare state regimes differ on various levels that determine the degree and scope of social security provided by the system.

First, welfare regimes differ with respect to the degree of decommodification or "the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially accepted standard of living independently of market participation" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 37). This decommodification is important, as it largely determines which and how many people are in a position to do voluntary work. Also, a certain degree of social security means that individuals can take the risk of losing their jobs when they "come out." This is also related to the second dimension, the dominant institution that guarantees social security, either the state, the market, or the family. In countries where the state provides universal and equal social rights (such as Scandinavia), governments familiarize people with social rights (housing, education, health) and may decrease their dependence on patriarchal structures for their income. In this type of welfare state, authorities become acquainted with negotiating and facilitating organized interests, generating a positive political culture for social movements. In more liberal welfare states, where social security is distributed mainly through the free market, provisions are usually very modest and dependent on labor market performance. Japan and the United States are cases in which the welfare state regime and capitalist production are closely associated, as social security is primarily arranged through private enterprises. Conservative welfare state regimes are oriented mainly toward protecting and privileging the traditional family. This results in status reproduction and dependency on the traditional familial economic structure. As the contributors to this book have shown, the conservative welfare state regime is less conducive to the development of a lesbian and gay movement. Movements, then, are related to the development and type of welfare state in capitalist democracies.

The 1950s were characterized in Western Europe and North America by a rapid process of state building, where governments took a hand in the management and regulation of economic growth, following the formula developed in the aftermath of the Great Depression and through wartime production. The 1950s were also characterized by the Cold War and "moral restoration," where states continued to invest in military hardware and to search for (and sometimes imagine) "enemies" both at home and abroad. This reconstruction of patriarchy entailed shifting employed women "back" into the domestic sphere and overtly suppressing gay and lesbian life.

In the 1960s, the "golden days" for socialist and social democratic parties, expansion of the welfare state and its related issues of redistribution had great appeal, particularly in Western Europe. The transformation of the economic and social structure of most Western societies was accompanied by more liberal attitudes toward moral issues. Gay and lesbian groups, along with a wide range of New Left movement organizations, rose to challenge social inequality and state repression both domestically and internationally.

In contrast, the late 1970s and early 1980s brought economic stagnation and fiscal crises in many parts of the world. Market philosophy reasserted its dominance, both in economics and in politics. In those

countries in which the gay and lesbian movement was backed by government subsidies and other means of support, the economic crisis undermined this facilitation. The movements in many countries of the developed capitalist world therefore fell back on an "economic" strategy (the power of the gay consumer), and commercial subcultures became the exclusive backbone of political mobilization.

As theorists from Karl Marx to Karl Polanyi have observed, the expanding marketplace cleared away all sorts of traditional social formations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, undercutting the once formidable powers of aristocracies, established churches, and agrarian kinship forms. The outcome was national populations that were bereft of traditional supports and rights but also faced with new freedoms and opportunities. For national minorities, women, Jews, and homosexual people, escape from subordination and the prospect of equal citizenship now seemed possible. In the late twentieth century, the resurgence of market dominance once again threatens to pull away a wide range of social supports and rights, this time guaranteed by the welfare state and including among its beneficiaries a series of vulnerable populations.

With Reaganism and Thatcherism, state and economic elites sought to "harvest" popular insecurity for their program of neoliberal economic restructuring and for the reconstruction of a conservative hegemony. Homophobia was again conscripted as an ideological weapon. Anna Marie Smith's (1994) New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality follows on Stuart Hall's (1988) analysis of Thatcherism to demonstrate how the British elite wielded race and sexuality to try to mobilize people around an agenda of ethnic purification, family values, fundamentalism, and moral discipline. Along with the "specter" of the black immigrant, "queerness became one of the enemy elements which supported the phantasmatic construction of the family as the antagonism-free centre of the British nation" (Smith 1994: 196).

From a sociohistorical viewpoint, then, antihomosexual forces are part of a larger cultural conflict over tradition, family, and social status. One side of the conflict reads "homosexuality" as an assertion of personal autonomy in the erotic sphere; the other reads it as a sign of the abandonment of responsibility for the well-being of the family. The assertion of sexual and affectional preferences partakes of a larger disestablishment of church- and state-regulated family forms. Like the wars over religious and political orthodoxy that preceded it, the battle over homosexuality is part of the war between the enforcement of a single orthodoxy in family formation and an agenda of personal choice among plural options in personal relationships. For conservatives, homosexuality threatens to dismantle a "haven in a heartless world"; their critics point out that a great

many people have already been "voting with their feet" by leaving families whose realities are abusive, repressive, or dissatisfying in favor of "havens" of their own making. "Homosexuality" has once again been freighted with a world of meanings that are not intrinsic to same-sex bonding but that give it both meaning and form inside the societies of which it is a part.

Boundaries of Public and Private

Related to many of the issues mentioned above is the degree to which sexuality and sexual identities are considered private or public. The chapters in this volume show that constructing community and experiencing collective sentiments are easier in countries in which sexuality is not absolutely privatized. The more visible and present is the gay and lesbian culture, the smaller is the step toward organizing collectively. Whereas in Japan and the Latin countries people can do a lot in private as long as they. do not speak about it in public, in the truth-demanding Puritan countries. people are expected to confess what they do and, thus, what they are (thereby creating a foundation for collective identities). The chapter on Eastern Europe shows, however, that a minimum space free from state intervention and control is crucial for individuals to experience and live their homosexuality. In Eastern Europe decades of intervention and regulation of almost all aspects of an individual's personal affairs by the totalitarian regimes, extended state intervention to its absolute limits and minimized the private realm. This state control seems to have been somewhat less rigid in authoritarian systems such as Francoist Spain and during the military regimes in Brazil and Argentina. In these countries a minimal private sphere (and during the Brazilian Carnaval, even a public space) was retained. This proved crucial for the emergence of a lesbian and gay movement once there was a social and political opening.

Cultural Representations

A related, but nonetheless separate, topic is the way that culture and politics are conceptualized. In countries in which culture is relatively autonomous, homosexuality may flourish in the arts (as in France) without affecting politics and opportunities for gays and lesbians. In other countries, cultural expressions of homosexuality become immediately politicized. From the perspective of the gay and lesbian movement, the politiciation may stimulate mobilization, whereas a great divide between culture and politics may do little for its development.

Only a few of the contributors to this volume deal in depth with cultural products. The image of homosexuality in movies, books, theater, and popular music, as well as in newspapers and on television programs,

is sure to affect public attitudes and the larger social and political climate for gay and lesbian people. In many countries in the 1970s, television programs appeared dedicated to homosexuality as a problem, and this public visibility fostered some mobilization by gays and lesbians. Moreover in the 1980s and 1990s, the mainstream and gay and lesbian press played an important role in the mass mobilization of gays and lesbians in northwestern Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. In this respect it is important whether the media, particularly television, is primarily under state control (as in Eastern Europe), a public service (as in France and the United Kingdom), or largely in the hands of commercial private enterprises (as in Brazil). Commercial broadcasting companies are more apt to portray, even if in a sensationalist manner, deviant patterns of social behavior, whereas state-controlled television tends to "educate" the general public. Publicly owned television in some countries, however. has provided a platform for minorities to present themselves and thereby increase their visibility. This aspect should be viewed from a dynamic perspective, in order to better understand the gay and lesbian movement, since the role of cultural products in general, and the press in particular, shifted in the course of the emancipation process. The chapters in this book show these differences across countries. The moment the gay and lesbian movement gains a degree of political legitimacy, the attention paid to gay and lesbian issues by the press increases significantly, reinforcing the emancipation process. In more repressive countries (such as Eastern Europe and other countries under dictatorships such as Françoist Spain), however, the press tries to silence gay and lesbian voices.

Sibling Movements

The contributors show that other, related social emancipation movements play an important role in the creation of an environment more conducive to the development of the gay and lesbian movement. In particular, the civil rights, women's, and student movements are significant. Countries lacking these movements lag behind in the development of gay and lesbian movements.

Science and Scholarship

For a long time, in almost all countries, both the natural and social sciences have had a negative influence on homosexuality. This is one of the reasons that, at least in some countries, science as such became a site for the struggle of the gay and lesbian movement, sometimes (for example, in the Netherlands and the United States) resulting ultimately in the scattered institutionalization of gay and lesbian studies. In these countries, the picture is quite complex. For instance in the Netherlands, science was

quite supportive of homosexuals and their emancipation process. To what extent science could play an emancipatory role depends on the gay and lesbian movement's conception of homosexuality as well. If the movement embraces an essentialist idea of homosexuality, relating sexual orientation to brains, hormones, or genes, even the natural sciences in their ongoing search for a natural basis for (homo)sexuality may be welcomed as allies by the gay and lesbian movement.

Politics of AIDS

With regard to AIDS, two principal effects can be distinguished. First, AIDS increased the visibility of homosexuality in most countries and forced authorities to break through a conspiracy of silence to deal with it. AIDS meant that homosexuality was now discussed (if often negatively). Moreover, in some countries the gay "infrastructure" was used to implement policies of AIDS prevention. Funding and facilitation by the authorities in support of AIDS prevention strengthened some movements and allowed many activists to become professionalized. Some authorities allowed gays and lesbians to participate in official government bodies for the first time (for example, the United States, Australia, and Canada). But AIDS organizations often evolved in their own directions, sometimes denying their origins in gay activism and becoming well-financed social service agencies without little concern for a political agenda (Adam 1997: 23–38).

AIDS also weakened the movement, as the disease struck hard in the gay community and many activists died of its complications. Furthermore, AIDS often proved to be a convenient instrument for homophobic forces intent on using the state to harass or criminalize gay people. The result has been a "degaying" debate in several countries, where AIDS service organizations, gay and lesbian movement groups, and sometimes public health authorities sought to disconnect homosexuality from AIDS, pointing out that HIV transmission could affect "everyone." The consequence of this approach has sometimes been to invest considerable sums of public funds into AIDS campaigns directed to the "general public" to the neglect of those most at risk of infection.

In some countries the movement entered a new period as a result of AIDS, in particular the countries with the highest numbers of people with AIDS (the United States and France). In those countries, many new organizations were founded to combat the homophobic forces that chose AIDS as the new battleground. The new militance around AIDS, in turn, spawned a new queer politics around sexuality. In other countries, like the Netherlands, the recognition of the gay movement as an official counterpart for the government was strengthened by the epidemic, and radicalization did not occur (Duyvendak 1996: 421-38).

Popular Attitudes

All of these social, cultural, and economic tendencies result in and are expressed by the popular attitudes toward homosexuality. Findings (concerning postmaterialist values, support for repression and facilitation and violence against gays and lesbians) by different contributors to this book illustrate substantial disparities among the countries. The general trend in Europe is for the population in the Nordic Protestant countries to be more accepting toward homosexual behavior than citizens in the southern Catholic belt of Europe. East European societies are even less supportive of homosexuality, and, with the exception of the Czech Republic, only a very small percentage of people in Eastern Europe find homosexuality an acceptable lifestyle. Canadian, Japanese, and Spanish citizens can be found in the mid-range of the distribution, with a significant proportion of the population considering homosexuality as an accepted lifestyle. Australia and the United Kingdom are relatively tolerant societies for lesbians and gay men, whereas parts of the United States are staunchly homophobic. Overall, the U.S. and the southern African populations rank among the least tolerant in the world (Inglehart 1990: 194).

Especially visible in the United States are social constituencies that actively oppose equal citizen rights for gay and lesbian people and that work to suppress any manifestation of homoeroticism. Studies of highly homophobic people show that their homophobia is associated with high scores on measures of racism and sexism (Adam 1978: 42-51; Larsen, Cate, and Reed 1983; Bierly 1985; Seltzer 1992). They are often connected to conservative Protestant denominations (Bouton et al. 1989: 892) that wrap together a set of contemporary social "ills," such as abortion, "increase in crime, drug addiction, family disintegration, sexual promiscuity and illegitimacy among teen-agers, rampant homosexuality, and widespread pornography" (Diamond 1995: 280) into a compendium of signs of social decline. Especially prevalent among people beleaguered by economic restructuring and anxious about family instability, the homophobic constituency has proven that it is available to be mobilized for a series of conservative political and corporate causes.

Empirical research has shown time and again that in most countries younger people are more tolerant toward homosexuality than are older generations, and an increasing proportion of the younger cohorts of the population now regard sexual freedom as more important than traditional sexual morality. This trend is visible in almost all advanced capitalist societies (though Steven Epstein—Chapter 3—notes a new contrary trend in the United States). In all Western countries acceptance of homosexuality increased between 1981 and 1990 (Ester, Halman, and de Moor 1993: 113).

Attitudes and values seem to represent intermediary factors in the development of lesbian and gav movements. Numerous elements discussed herein (gender, class, religion, age, and so on) influence the postures and viewpoints of citizens, which in turn exert their effect on the movement. It is precisely the "translation" of these attitudes and values of the population into a political context that we turn to now.

THE NATIONAL POLITICAL CONTEXT: FACILITATING CONDITIONS

If a certain configuration of the above mentioned prerequisites is not present, it is unlikely that a gay and lesbian movement can come into existence. In other words, these factors are necessary but insufficient conditions for the development of a gay and lesbian movement. Just whether and how a movement develops depend heavily on the national political context. "At least in rich liberal countries it is probably true that the sort of underlying social, economic and cultural shifts which allowed for the emergence of gay liberation, had strong parallels elsewhere. . . . But they only became significant where they could find local meanings" (Altman 1997: 4). The chapters point toward five political factors that determine these local meanings. First, the structure of social cleavages is important, as it determines the format of the party system and the "issue space." Second, the political structure of a country, in particular its electoral system, influences the chances of the movement. Third, variation can be explained by the dominant mechanisms of conflict regulation—in other words, political culture. Fourth, the national power configuration of political parties affects the prospects of gay and lesbian movements. Finally, the judicial situation surrounding homosexuality is relevant in two respects. A certain level of legal adversity facilitates political mobilization, as it provides a real or symbolic "enemy." In situations where legal repression is backed by harsh and regular violence from the police or other entities, it triggers different reactions from the movement and determines whether a movement radicalizes or adopts a more instrumental emancipation strategy. Too much repression, however, is lethal for social movements (see also Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995; Koopmans 1995).

Social Cleavages

When a single dimension of conflict is dominant, all political issues are politicized along the lines of this dimension, leaving little room for new issues to become salient. France is a clear case in point. Multiple cleavages

generate multiple issue spaces and cross-cutting interests. In these cases political elites become experienced in accommodating a multitude of interests, as for instance, in the Netherlands. The rise and fall of issue saliency is not unstructured; shifts in the saliency of issues are the result of changes in the social structure and the political representation of social interests. Political parties, whose origin can usually be traced back to specific social cleavages and conflicts, are crucial in the politicization of issues. As a rule, the political space for new social movements, such as the gay and lesbian movement, depends on the salience of old cleavages.

One of the most dominant cleavages in (at least) Western societies is the state/religion cleavage. The strength of this cleavage, in addition to the restrictive impact of a strong church on the opportunities for the gay and lesbian movement as described above, is dependent upon the extent to which the relation between the state and the church(es) is settled, or at least pacified. In countries where the church still opposes the authority and legitimacy of the state in moral affairs, value systems other than the dominant religious ones will have difficulty in their claim for recognition. In those countries, considerable political energy is spent on the struggle between state and church, hindering other, new topics from entering the political arena, unless the gay and lesbian movement succeeds in becoming a recognized member of a secular front. For instance, France shows that a tense relation between state and church is partly favorable, partly unfavorable for gays and lesbians entering the political arena.

Movement development also depends on the strength of ethnic, national, and linguistic cleavages. In general the occupation of political space by a nationalist, regionalist, or language struggle is not favorable for the gay and lesbian movement, as these issues are usually too dominant to allow other conflict any political saliency (see LaPalombara and Weiner 1966). Nationalist conflicts, for example, may create a social and political atmosphere in which all deviance is rejected as treason. When one conflict or issue dominates to the extent that it threatens the main political institutions, as for example in Ireland until very recently, the political system allows very little space for other issues to become salient. However, the chapters show some contrary examples. Rivalry among nationalist elements can lead to a search for allies and an opening for new political players. As well, nationalist political organization and resistance against repression in general can function as a model for successful contestation for other (minority) groups. Although the political arena may be dominated by these topics, the gay and lesbian movement can ally with these minorities, claiming comparable minority rights, as is evident in Québécois nationalism in Canada and Catalan and Basque nationalism in Spain.

Moreover, the development of the movement depends on the strength of the class struggle. In general we can state that the more class relations are polarized and politicized, the less space there will be for new social movements. Again, this rule needs qualification; a strong labor movement (with the accompanying tradition of political struggle and working-class emancipation) sets an example and creates a historical precedent of liberation, which can function as a model for other "resistance movements." When this historical precedent and potential ally is not available, the emancipation and liberation process is more problematic.

There is also more openness to new social movements in left-wing parties than in center or right-wing political parties. Though in Britain, France, Spain, and Brazil, left-wing political parties and, in particular, Communists were once rather hostile toward gay and lesbian issues, over time the left-wing parties and some unions became considerably more supportive than did right-wing parties. In France, the gay and lesbian movement developed as a new political force, by learning to speak the language of class struggle.

More directly, left-wing political and labor organizations can also become allies in the struggle against discrimination (as was the case with women's and ethnic minority movements), considering that some trade unions related to left-wing parties have to deal with discrimination and harassment in the workplace. In Canada and the United States, labor unions have played an important part in initiating and gaining sexualorientation protection—and, subsequently, same-sex spousal benefits—in collective agreements, thereby making the extension of similar protections to all citizens less risky for politicians.

Political Structures

The political space for social movements in general, and the gay and lesbian movement in particular, also depends on the political structure. In countries where the political system allows very little room for social and political organization, as in the case of authoritarian regimes, lesbian and gay movements have sought to connect with other liberation or revolutionary movements. The chances of movements' emanating from authoritarian situations seem to depend on the social space prior to the democratic transition. The Institute for Sexology in the Czech Republic and the relative freedom during the period of Carnaval in Brazil are examples of these small niches for expression and organization. Furthermore, it is important whether allies can be identified and a coalition can be constructed with other liberation or emancipatory movements. When gay and lesbian movements face forms of exclusion and opponents similar to other movements around them, they may participate in common analyses and

provide mutual support with other subordinated populations—as is evident in the inclusion of the South African movement under the umbrella of the African National Congress, the participation of gay liberation in New Left common fronts in the early 1970s, and the formation of nationalist alliances (as discussed above).

Additionally, the political institutions for the regulation of conflict are important to the development of the gay and lesbian movement. Comparative analysis shows significant differences between majoritarian party systems and multiparty systems with proportional representation. When political institutions are designed to pacify and depoliticize social conflict (consensus democracies), the culture of negotiation and compromise creates possibilities for success. Furthermore, consensus democracies are designed to represent all minorities, which makes the entry of new political actors easier. In majoritarian party systems, where institutions are designed to politicize conflict and generate clear majorities and strong executives, the outcome of the gay and lesbian struggle is dependent on the incumbent party. When opposed to "permissiveness" (like the Conservatives in the United Kingdom and the Republicans in United States), the movement is usually stalemated. When the incumbent is supportive (like the socialist parties in France and Spain), rapid success is possible. In multiparty systems (with coalition governments), parties cannot monopolize the state apparatuses. This usually leaves more room for the gay and lesbian movement to seek political allies within different political groupings and over a longer period of time.

Another dissimilarity between majoritarian and multiparty democracies is the political representation of lesbians and gays within the political institutions. In majoritarian situations, where seats in local and national parliaments have to be won in each constituency, it is difficult for a representative of a minority group to be granted the opportunity to run for office. The list system with proportional representation allows parties to select multiple candidates, which results in wider representation of minorities.

Another meaningful characteristic of the political structure is the level of centralization and decentralization of political authority within a country. What is relevant for the development of gay and lesbian movements is whether or not sufficient autonomy exists for local and regional authorities to deviate from national politics. If there is local or regional autonomy, lesbian and gay movements can create political openings at these levels without necessarily having a strong national political organization. As government entails the monopolization of legitimate coercion over a particular geographical area, the size of the geographical area is important. In decentralized federal states, such as the United States, Canada,

and Australia, the local authorities have considerable autonomy in their decision making when compared with unitary states. The degree to which this favors the gay and lesbian movement depends, then, on local power configurations.

As a rule, the chapters in this book show that political opportunities for the gay and lesbian movement increase where there are more points of entry into the political system. Centralization normally obstructs access to the political arena for new political groups, though in some centralized countries this effect is mitigated by the attitude of the authorities toward those who challenge their legitimacy (for instance, in the Netherlands). Britain, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, however, was clear evidence that a more centralized system effectively blocks opportunities for gay and lesbian organizations to mobilize at a lower level. The British government introduced Section 28 of the Local Authorities Act to forbid local municipalities, dominated by the so-called socialist "Loony Left," to "promote" homosexuality as an accepted form of family life.

Political Culture

Political structures do not materialize out of thin air; they are the result of the dominant political culture (the system of subjective cognitive, affective, and evaluative predispositions toward processes and institutions of collective decision making). Countries marked by a more participatory political culture allow more social and political space for groups that feel deprived or discriminated against (Almond and Verba 1963). In the countries in our study, the authorities have distinct traditions of exclusion or inclusion of challengers, independent of their political color and social composition. Some of the national political systems have a tradition of facilitation, support, subsidization, and participation of social movements in official governmental bodies, whereas for others repression, censorship, and marginalization are the order of the day (see Kriesi et al. 1995). If, for example, a history of accommodation of minority groups exists (as in the Netherlands in the form of pillarization or in Australia and Canada in the form of multiculturalism), the behavior of the population and the authorities will differ from the behavior in situations where there is a republican tradition rejecting any kind of stable group identity (as is the case in France). In political science this aspect of political culture has been neglected until recently, in part because of a one-sided focus on instrumental movements in which group identities play a less important role. To understand the differences in movement development among, for instance, the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, France, and the Netherlands, this factor turns out to have a strong explanatory power. Whereas in some countries group identities have a self-evident place and

legitimacy in politics, in other countries political ideology hinders the recognition of the reality of a multicultural and multisexual society. In France, a country with a republican tradition, any development of an identity-based movement (and subculture) is attacked, from both the left and the right, as at odds with the revolutionary, universalist tradition This shows again that the broader political culture influences the manner in which minorities are dealt with in different national contexts.

Power Configuration

Cross-national analysis shows unequivocally that the political space for social movements depends on the national power configuration. Support from left-wing parties, primarily of social democratic or liberal origin, is widely associated with movement success. The electoral strength and representation of left-wing parties in government has substantial explanatory power of movement success. Even without political pressure from a strong lesbian and gay movement, left-wing parties in power are responsible for the decriminalization of homosexuality and the implementation of antidiscrimination policies. In most West European countries, leftwing socialist and social democratic parties dominated the political scene in the late 1960s and 1970s, a period that coincides with the emergence and successes of lesbian and gay movements. The decline in political power of the Left in the 1980s (in the Netherlands in 1982, in Germany in 1982, in the United Kingdom in 1979, and in Belgium in 1981) has hindered the homosexual emancipation movements in these countries. Exactly at the moment that support was urgently needed, in order to confront the AIDS epidemic, the political situation became less favorable. The absence of a strong and united left-wing movement may go a long way in explaining the situation in the United States. The rise to power of the New Right, with Ronald Reagan as its mentor, made even liberal politicians reluctant to react to the menace of AIDS in a constructive manner. The strong gay and lesbian movement and community, which had developed in the 1970s, had to deal with the epidemic largely on its own. In southern Europe, the opposite picture emerges: left-wing parties were weak during the 1970s but gained power in the 1980s. Socialists gained control of the executive during the 1980s in France (François Mitterrand became president in 1981) and in Spain in 1982. Again, socialist parties in France and Spain have played a crucial role in the facilitation of lesbian and gay movements. As a paradoxical result of this immediate success, the movement declined. Consequently, the few remaining gay and lesbian organizations were not ready to deal with the AIDS crisis either. It took a long time before an adequate community answer to counter the epidemic developed. In Australia, both Labour and the Liberal Party were supportive, yet only the minor Democratic Party nominated openly gay candidates. In Canada, the small New Democratic Party can be regarded as the most supportive party of the lesbian and gay movement, while in Britain the movement has also leaned strongly to the left in search of support.

One main conclusion that can be drawn from many of the cases is that a negative change in the power configuration is often the principal trigger for mass mobilization. Facilitation by the Left is important to the chances and development of the movement, but the decisive factor seems to be the threat that the situation may worsen. The actions of the main opponents of gay and lesbian emancipation, not facilitation by its allies, provoke large-scale mobilization and activity (for example, Anita Bryant in the United States and the Netherlands, Clause 28 in Britain, and Article 200 and the Orthodox members of Romanian Parliament). This leads to the following conclusions: (1) A movement's strength is largely dependent on the saliency of an issue. (2) The saliency of political issues is not primarily determined by social movements themselves but by their enemies/opponents and, thus, the political configuration. (3) Since sexuality seems to be one of the core issues in late modernity, the saliency of homosexuality in politics will increase and, consequently, so will the need for the gay and lesbian movement to mobilize.

The Iudiciary

In addition to the fact that legal repression plays one of the most important roles in the mobilization of lesbian and gay movements, the political space of the movement directly depends on the judicial status of homosexuality. Lesbian and gay groups almost universally direct their activities toward achieving the abolition of criminal penalties for homosexuality and other discriminatory legislation that marginalizes lesbians and gav men.

Apart from the direct and real threat on the quality of the lives of lesbians and gays, discriminatory laws also provide a symbolic focus for the movement, particularly where special laws and stipulations exist regarding homosexual activities and organizations. A clandestine movement may first focus on legalization through negotiation (as was the dominant strategy in northern Europe) or take to the streets and challenge the authorities directly. Where official repression is severe and backed by political violence (as is the case in Eastern Europe) or random violence is backed by homophobic opponents (as is the case in Latin America and South Africa), both strategies are more problematic to implement. The combination of legal and social repression is almost lethal to any social movement while the repression is maintained. However, as soon as legal and violent repression declines and a social opening is created, and perhaps

even allies can be found among the "revolutionary" or liberating forces lesbian and gay movements become visible and mobile. In cases of national repression, processes of international diffusion play a significant role; foreign examples of liberation provide a source of inspiration and imitation. Movements emerging around the world do not "invent the wheel" again. This brings us to our argument that the emergence and development of lesbian and gay movements are not unrelated and unconnected. A distinct and manifest process of transnational diffusion is discernible; gay and lesbian movements all around the world influence and imitate each other.

The International Context: Facilitating Conditions

The various chapters in this book show that it is difficult to write a history of the gay and lesbian movement restricted to a single country. In fact, the question is whether we should still speak of national histories, or whether the international context has become so important that we might talk of a global movement. National factors, nevertheless, do remain striking and weighty; it is better to speak of national imprints of a global movement. Moreover, similarities in movement development across countries do not necessarily imply international diffusion. We should not overlook the possibility that some countries share characteristics and these common characteristics color the national movements in the same direction. Nevertheless, the international context was and is of importance in understanding the emergence and development of lesbian and gav movements. Transnational diffusion is an important facilitating condition for movement development.

As elaborated in the respective country chapters, international organizations such as the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) actively diffuse ideas and models, stimulating movements to learn from each other in terms of goals, action repertoires, and strategies. The chapters show that representatives of national and international organizations have crossed many borders with the explicit idea of garnering international support for movements that have to work under difficult circumstances. The role of ILGA and of national movements is important in many of the countries researched (for instance, in Spain, South Africa, Brazil, Japan, and East European countries).

Imitation is not a modern phenomenon among homosexual emancipation movements. Even the early movements—for example, the Nederlands Wetenschappelijk-Humanitair Komitee, or NWHK (Dutch Scientific-Humanitarian Committee), which was a complete copy of the German original (Wissenchaftlich-Humanitäres Komitee)-followed a similar pattern. The Spanish movement, to mention just one example, followed almost entirely the French movement and action patterns. These examples illustrate that the impact of international diffusion is most impressive in the situation of a sudden change in political opportunities, such as the opening of the political system in the transition from dictatorship to democracy in which a movement must start from scratch.

Clearly, there is one movement that has been dominant in the world scene: the U.S. movement. Although it is inaccurate to speak of a single national U.S. movement, the worldwide wave of gay and lesbian movements since the late 1960s is attributed to the Stonewall riots in New York. More recently, mobilization around AIDS, for instance ACT UP, started in the United States and was taken over in many countries. These are clear examples of how events and organizations in one country may inspire people all over the world. The fact that the U.S. movement often functions as an example does not imply, however, that U.S. citizens intentionally diffuse their ideas and organizations via such international organizations as ILGA. "The American g/l/b movement has played a relatively small role in attempts to create an international g/l movement. . . . Most U.S. groups are far less interested in relations with their counterparts overseas than, say, groups in Scandinavia or the Netherlands, who have been the major forces backing the development of the International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA)," Dennis Altman (1997:4) correctly stated. The U.S. influence runs the risk of being overestimated, or more precisely, the Americanization of the gay and lesbian subculture is sometimes inaccurately extrapolated to the movement. Many European countries figure as examples for movements in Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Many chapters in this book show in detail how international diffusion actually works. Travel and emigration have inspired many people to start groups in their own country or in their newly established domicile. The two Dutch former members of the Cultural and Recreational Center (COC) who founded the Association for Social Knowledge in Canada are a case in point. Of course, these imitations and "transplantations" rarely work out in the same way as in the country of origin. What happens to the gay and lesbian movement in one country upon the development of the gay and lesbian movement in another country? Or to ask the question more precisely, What is the impact of the perception of the development of the gay and lesbian movement in one country on its development in another country? Similar names, symbols, issues (gay marriage, antidiscrimination laws), action methods, and so on show that movements learn from each other across borders. There are impressive parallels in the names of organizations: many countries have known "gay liberation fronts," "revolutionary leagues," and so on, indicating that

movements follow more or less comparable paths, pass through the same phases, and draw names from other social and political movements with which there is some resemblance in terms of ideology, goals, or methods of resistance.

In an era when queer theory seeks to throw gay and lesbian identity into question, it is interesting to see that gays and lesbians very often feel themselves to be "a people," considering an attack on their brothers and sisters in another country as an assault on themselves (for instance, the Dutch solidarity movement with the U.S. struggle against Anita Bryant). These strong ties of solidarity should be understood in the context of an identity movement, in which the gap between "their" and "our" struggle is rather small. Still, even this international orientation does not necessary imply a smaller relevance of the national context. Many imported goals and strategies that were very successful abroad ultimately did not fit in another context. Consequently, they were altered in order to be applicable and successful in the local situation. Perhaps the most telling example was the transfer of Gay Pride in Australia from the winter (the official commemoration of Stonewall was traditionally in June) to the summer, which transformed a marginal event into a massive celebration of lesbian and gay visibility.

The national context is still of great importance in explaining movement development in a specific country—concerning both the societal context of the "essential prerequisites" for movement emergence and development and regarding the "facilitating conditions" of the political opportunity structure. These factors create impressive cross-national differences among movements; gay and lesbian movements show articulate national imprints, even in a globalizing world.

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