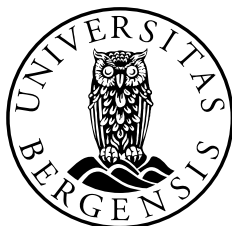# European *ally*gnment:
Civil society and political inclusion of the LGBTI community – a mixed methods approach.

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Abstract:

The quest for political inclusion of the LGBTI community is complicated. In the last decades, more queer electoral candidates have been elected, queer rights have increased, and general discrimination decreased. Simultaneously, the LGBTI civil society is increasingly faced with restrictive legislation, attacks on their activists and organizations, and violence during peaceful Pride Marches. In this thesis, I research the role of civil society in promoting the political inclusion of the LGBTI community in the European context. I base this study on theory about democratic representation and on civil society – specifically drawing on the Social Origins of Civil Society. Employing a mixed method research design, I hypothesize that descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is positively correlated with higher levels of civil society participation, and with the presence of nationalistic ideology in government. These hypotheses are researched through a panel analysis. Furthermore, I hypothesize that interest representation through the transnational queer civil society is challenged by the erosion of democracy – and that the challenges faced are similar irrespectively of domestic context. These latter hypotheses are researched through in-depth interviews with respondents from the European transnational civil society. The findings from the panel analysis indicate that civil society participation and a government promoting nationalistic ideology positively correlate with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The results from the in-depth interviews indicate that the erosion of democracy, right-wing populism, and lack of descriptive representation pose challenges for civil society to promote the interests of the LGBTI community. Mechanisms surrounding the European Union constitute both challenges and assistance for the queer civil society. My findings indicate that the challenges are similar, regardless of domestic context. I conclude that civil society arguably is important in the explanation of political inclusion of the LGBTI community – as it sometimes is one of the only available democratic channels for voicing the collective needs of the queer community. I argue that the queer civil society is particularly important in cases where a government promotes a nationalistic ideology. Lastly, I conclude that the intrinsic, carefully aligned allyship in the transnational queer civil society itself constitutes a vital role in the promotion of political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

Forord

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Olav min beste bror jeg vil ikke lengre synge en jazz standard på platen din, jeg vil heller lese opp denne mastergraden som spoken word. Jeg lover det blir ikke et langt spor det blir faktisk helt perfekt. You are .. in the shop. Mamma og pappa - takk for at dere ydmykt viste meg den akademiske verden, jeg trives her. Tusen takk for gjennomlesninger og tilbakemeldinger, begge to.

Jakob - we're just two London girls from all over the world who started planning a revolution four years ago and ended up entangled in theory and all the parallel universes. Nonetheless - this is my contribution to the cause. Completely unrelated - thank you for moving your life to my life many many weeks this fall.

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Hedvig. Jeg elsker vårt 40 år lange vennskap. Tusen takk for at du alltid svarer selv når det er vanskelig fordi jeg har spurt deg. Jeg er evig takknemlig for deg og # ditt vesen. Sees på Lemón.

List of abbreviations:

CSO – civil society organizations

EU – European Union

ILGA – International Lesbian and Gay Association

LGBTI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex

NGO – Nongovernmental organization

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1. Introduction

This thesis is about the role of civil society in the political inclusion of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI) community in Europe. Researching the political inclusion of the LGBTI community is important for several reasons. Firstly - both the progress and the backlash against political inclusion of the queer community have been unparallel in the last two decades. Yet, the lack of research in political science on this topic preservers. Arguably, the LGBTI community is not only subject to a deficit of democratic representation – but also from a deficit in scholarly attention (Ayoub 2022, 154 - 156). In this thesis, I contribute to narrowing this academic gap. In this introductory chapter, I begin by contextualizing the current state of political inclusion of the LGBTI community in Europe. Thereafter, I present the mixed methods research design, consisting of a panel analysis of 36 European states and ten in-depth interviews of activists from European civil society organizations (CSOs). This segment culminates in a presentation of my research question and my hypotheses. Subsequently, the academic contributions are presented, along with the potential societal contributions.

1.2 The state of political inclusion of the LGBTI community in Europe

Political inclusion of the LGBTI community in Europe has grown incrementally in the last decades, and gradually become an inherent part of "European values". Several processes underpin the relationship between European values and the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. During the eighties, advocacy through civil society grew steadily across Europe. Members of the queer community were mobilized, pushing for the advancement of the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. The mobilization of the queer community was accompanied by an alignment of allies – people outside the queer community who advocate for equality for LGBTI people. Starting as domestic social movements, queer advocacy gradually aligned into a transnational civil society advocating for political inclusion (Ji and Fujimoto 2013; Ayoub and Paternotte 2019). From the turn of the century, legislation across Europe became less tainted by discrimination – granting increased rights to LGBTI people. Same-sex marriage was widely legalized, adoption rights for same-sex couples allowed, and an increase of acceptance of civil union between same-sex couples (Velasco 2018). Consequently, the acceptance of the queer community grew. This has manifested itself in for example increased support of queer electoral candidates – increasing the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community (Abou-Chadi and Finnigan 2019; Magni and Reynolds 2021).

However, the advancement of political inclusion has been met by countermovements. This opposition becomes apparent through large numbers of people taking to the streets, creating ample demonstrations in the face of increased political inclusion of the LGBTI community (O'Dwyer 2018, 829). Additionally, the diffusion of progressive LGBTI-friendly norms has led to traditional countermovements directing their attention on the queer community (Ayoub and Page 2020, 696). These countermovements often involve conservative and nationalistic forces who greatly oppose the political inclusion of the LGBTI community (Swimelar 2019, 1). Increasingly, marches that counter the political inclusion of the LGBTI community are held at the approximately same time as the Pride parades. ILGA exemplifies this with the anti-LGBTI "great family march" held in Istanbul – attended by thousands. This demonstration and its slogan "Save your family and generation, say no to perversion" was aired on national TV. The Istanbul case illustrates the complicated realm of civil society and the political inclusion of the queer community. In a democracy, peaceful demonstrations are a sign of healthy citizen engagement. However, organization through civil society ceases to be a democratic tool once restrictions on organization and assembly target specific societal groups. According to the ILGA-rapport of 2022, several current dynamics complicate the queer civil societies' possibilities for promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Governments implementing propaganda laws targeting "LGBTI ideology", conservative and traditional movements organizing "countermovements" within the civil society space coupled with hostile public speech towards the queer community makes political inclusion of the queer community complicated (ILGA-Report 2023,11).

Furthermore, there is still a disparity in the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This lack of structural descriptive representation could mean that a substantial level of oppression of the queer community is met by low levels of resistance. In cases where the descriptive representation is disappearingly low, oppressive policies might even go unnoticed (Snell 2020, 12). Consequently, it could be argued that descriptive representation might be one of the few remedies against the continuous lack of political inclusion of the queer community (Mansbridge 1999). However, previous research shows that anti-LGBTI forces gain the largest traction in states where civil society traditionally has been oppressed (O'Dwyer 2018). Oppression of civil society continues to be important in the puzzle of political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Increasingly, civil society promoting political inclusion of the queer community is being targeted by opposing forces. According to the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), the previously mentioned constraints on the queer community

disproportionally target queer CSOs (ILGA-Report 2023, 11). These constraints lead to political inclusion of the queer community being suspectable to lack of descriptive representation *and* interest representation through civil society. In this thesis, these dynamics will be further researched.

1.3 Research questions and hypotheses

In sum – there has been large progress in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community in the last two decades. However, there has also been extensive backlash to these progressive movements. Furthermore, civil society seems to be vital in the discourse surrounding political inclusion in the case of the queer community. Civil society *actively* promotes the political inclusion of the queer community, and more *passively* protects the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. These dynamics lead me to the following research question:

> *"Which role does the European civil society have in promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community?"*

In this thesis, I divide the term "political inclusion" into two concepts – descriptive representation and interest representation. These concepts are further explained in chapter three. For now, I explain them in the following figure:

Figure 1: an overview of the concept of «political inclusion».
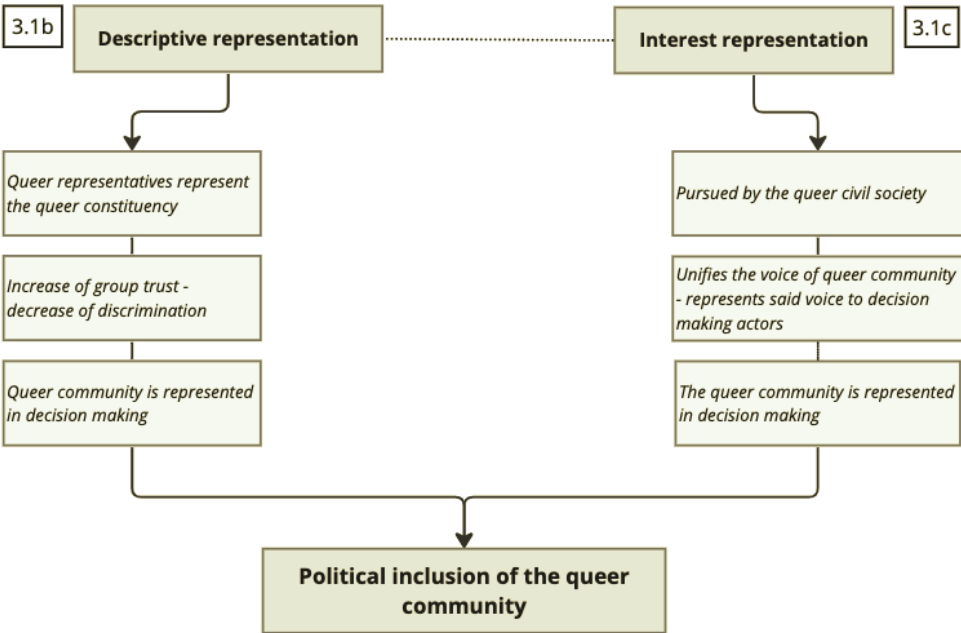
Figure 1: Numbers 3.1b and 3.1c reference the paragraphs describing descriptive representation of the LGBTI community and interest representation of the queer community, respectively.

Accordingly, I divide the main research questions into two sub-research questions. They are the following:

>*Research question a: Is an actively participating civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community connected?*

>*Research question b: Which challenges do the queer civil society face when conducting interest representation?*

These two research questions culminate in four hypotheses that are used to guide the research. To answer H1a and H1b, I conduct a panel analysis. H2a and H2b are analyzed through in-depth interviews.

>*H1a: an actively participating civil society positively correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.*

>*H1b: a nationalistic ideology in government positively correlates with stronger descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.*

>*H2a: Interest representation conducted by activists from the European civil society is negatively impacted by a lower degree of democracy.*

>*H2b: there are consistent challenges experienced by activists promoting interests for the queer community, irrespectively of their domestic context.*

1.4 Mixed methods research design

To address the research question, I employ a mixed methods research design. A large motivation behind this methodological decision is the current lack of comprehensive studies on the mechanisms surrounding civil society and political inclusion of the LGBTI community – a point that will be further explained in the coming segments of this chapter. Consequentially, mixing methods allow me to gain a larger overview. In this thesis, I conduct method *integration*. Through method integration, the research design is made in such a way that the findings can inform the researcher about slightly different aspects of the same concept. In this study, the research design starts with a panel analysis, followed by in-depth interviews. In other words, the quantitative method informs the qualitative method, allowing for an interactive analysis. The results from the two analyses are separately analyzed before they are analyzed as complementary studies (Magetti 2020).

1.5 Academic and societal contributions of this thesis

1.5a Research gap

A large motivation behind this thesis is to make an academic contribution to the field of political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Scholars in this field generally collectively contend that there is insufficient research on this topic (Magni and Reynolds 2018; Thiel 2019; Snell 2020; Ayoub 2022). There are several reasons why this research gap exists. Firstly – for long, LGBTI issues were not politicized. Sexuality was considered purely private – and any sexuality deviant from heterosexuality was deemed deviant (Thiel 2019, 122). This left political inclusion of the LGBTI community outside the scope of political science. However, there has also been a reluctance within the field of political science to research the intersection between sexuality and politicization. Scholars argue that sexuality research has been designated as "dirty work", which has negatively impacted the production of knowledge on sexual minorities. This notion could imply that this field is not only under-researched, it has also traditionally been undermined (Mucciaroni 2011; Irvine 2014; Paternotte 2018; Ayoub 2022). However, the power relations between authorities and management of LGBTI issues are arguably inherently about political power, and research on LGBTI politics tackles fundamental and enduring value-based questions in political science. This includes examining how democratic systems navigate challenges arising from social diversity and how minority and marginalized groups influence the majority to acknowledge their demands for recognition, freedom, and equality (Mucciaroni 2011, 17; Ayoub 2022, 156).

In addition to being insufficiently researched from a historical perspective, there seems to be a lack of overarching studies on the variations of political inclusion of the LGBTI community. This becomes apparent through the literature review in the coming chapter. To summarize, the number of studies on the political inclusion of the LGBTI community in the European context is low, and the geographical scope is scattered. Hence, I argue that a large N panel analysis researching the correlation between civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community grants insights into the more overarching mechanisms at play in the European context. Moreover, I argue that analyzing original interview data from activists in diverse domestic settings provides further insights into this subject.

1.5b Academic contributions – beyond the queer community

In addition to contributing to the field of political inclusion of the LGBTI community, I argue that this study can grant insights into other fields as well. The queer community constitutes a minority. While any minority faces unique and complex challenges, there are similar obstacles they need to overcome (Vibe 2017, 232). Arguably, knowledge derived from this study could apply in the case of indigenous people – traditionally oppressed and facing prejudice from the majority (Kymlica 2003). Furthermore, it can grant further comprehension about the descriptive representation of women – as they also have struggled to obtain sufficient descriptive representation (Mansbridge 1999; Reher 2018). In addition, it can provide knowledge about the consequences inflicted by the rise of populism and the erosion of democracy (Mudde 2019). Finally, it can increase the knowledge about the role of civil society in contemporary politics – and the role it has in minority politics (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017).

1.5c Societal contributions

A foundational point in political science is the criterion of relevance. Does the research hold significance for the average citizen? (Gerring 2012, 70). I argue that this study contributes with information that can be relevant for policymakers and civil society – and consequently also for the average citizen. As the previously mentioned ILGA rapports confirm – the state of political inclusion of the LGBTI community is not yet solidified in European countries and is currently under pressure. Gaining further knowledge on the political inclusion of the LGBTI community is therefore beneficial for a large number of people. Furthermore, civic engagement through civil society currently declining in the European continent (Henriksen, Strømsnes, and Svedberg 2019). Increasing knowledge on civil society's role in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community could contribute to knowledge for policymakers granting funding for civil society and civil society organizations in and of themselves. Lastly – political inclusion of the LGBTI community and civil society is pivotal in a democracy. Arguably, democratic quality is relevant for any average citizen.

1.6 Structure of this thesis

The structure of this thesis is built as follows. Following this introductory chapter is a literature review, where I lay forth the previous work on the relationship between civil society and the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Thereafter, I present the theoretical background for the two analyses. I lay forth theoretical background on descriptive representation, along

with on civil society and its democratic functions. Chapter three ends with an overview of the Social Origins of Civil Society theory (SOCS theory) – used to quantitively test the correlation between different characteristics of civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The theoretical chapter follows an overview of the data used in this study. The data for the panel analysis is derived from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Democracy) dataset. As there is no pre-existing data available on the challenges faced by the European civil society, I made original data through ten in-depth interviews. I then move on to explaining and discussing the methodological choices made in this study, presenting mixed methods research, panel analysis, and in-depth interviews. Subsequently, I present the results from both methods. Followingly, I discuss the findings. Lastly, I present my conclusion. Here, I argue that the role of civil society in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community is pivotal. I argue that civil society participation is especially important when authorities display nationalistic ideology. Nationalistic ideology inherently poses a threat to the queer civil society. Consequently, they might mobilize against the government with nationalistic ideology. Hence, the visibility of the queer civil society struggles might increase – potentially leading to higher levels of political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

1.7 Operationalization of "LGBTI" and "Queer"

Before delving deeper into this thesis, I will clarify the terminology. In this study, I purposefully employ the terms "LGBTI" and "queer" interchangeably to underscore a comprehensive understanding of this diverse community. The acronym "LGBTI" aligns with current EU and ILGA terminology. It is also frequently used by scholars researching identities that lay outside the heteronormative frames (see for example Ayoub 2014; Vibe 2016; Velasco 2018; O'Dwyer 2018; Snell 2020). Besides this, LGBTI is used in the operationalization of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in the V-Dem dataset – making this term the most precise to use in the quantitative part of this thesis. However, the situation is slightly different for the qualitative part of this thesis. Here, the term "queer" is used more. As an umbrella term containing more notions on sexual orientation and gender identity than those of the LGBTI acronym, this term is more inclusive (Conrad 2001; Janoff 2022; Haase, Zweigenthal and Müller 2023; Luciani 2023). Followingly, when speaking to respondents of different sexual orientations and gender identities, I decided to mainly use "queer". I made this choice to avoid framing any potential respondent in a category they were uncomfortable with. "Queer" has previously been viewed as derogatory, but has the more recent years been reclaimed by the

LGBTI community (Conrad 2001, 135). The term "queer" is followingly used interchangeably with LGBTI in this study.

In this thesis, I research the relationship between civil society and the queer *community*. When referring to the "LGBTI community*"*, I mean the group of people who share the characteristic of being queer. This means that it is the group of people who identify as having other sexualities than heterosexual, people of "different gender identity", and a combination of these. As I will get back to, this community does not share other characteristics than identifying as part of the LGBTI community. Consequently, it is not a tangible, easily distinguishable group. Nevertheless, I argue that this group of people constitutes a community (Snell 2020).

2. Literature review

In this chapter, I give a brief overview of the literature on European civil society and the political inclusion of the queer community that enables me to situate my thesis in the relevant academic field. As becomes evident in this chapter, the pre-existing literature about the political inclusion of the LGBTI community is still scarce, and thematically and geographically scattered. However, there is solid literature in this field, that constitutes the foundation of this thesis.

2.1 Europe as an "activist project"

I begin this literature review with an overview of the geopolitical scope of this thesis. By coining Europe as an activist project, Ayoub and Paternotte refer to how Europe was the place of origin for LGBTI activism. A large reason for this classification is that activism on the European continent has been established through an alignment of a transnational civil society conducting interest representation for the queer community. This allyship has been constituted across state borders. Additionally, institutions at the European supranational level have a reciprocal relationship with the civil society working on the ground. Several queer civil society organizations receive funding from the EU and function as "umbrella organizations". Examples are the International Lesbian and Gay Association – Europe (ILGA) and the European Centre-Right LGBTI+ Alliance (2019, 157 - 159). The EU also develops a common framework that accommodates policy harmonization. This intrastate alignment, called Europeanisation, is crucial for the union to run smoothly. This framework also constitutes an equalizer among queer citizens, particularly within the context of EU expansion (O'Dwyer 2016; Slootmaeckers and Toquet 2016).

2.2 Stigmatized minorities and social movements

The EU keeps up a continuous support for the queer civil society. Why is civil society deemed so important in the case of the LGBTI community? I start with the potential personal reasons. Eric Swank and Breanne Fahs run several regression analyses examining the connections between protest actions and queer identities in America. Swank and Fahs find that stigmatized minorities largely depend on social movement tactics, such as protesting and civil disobedience when contending rights promotion (2019, 325). The queer minority can be classified as stigmatized – historically having been condemned by the majority. This leads the queer minority to be categorized as an *insular minority*. This term calls for a short explanation. Firstly, every democratic state creates *topical* minorities, constituted by regular political minorities. In

a liberal democracy, this minority is to an extent protected – through the possibility of being on the winning side in the next election. Secondly, there are *ascriptive* minorities. Ascriptive minorities are minorities based on inherent, unchangeable characteristics, such as race or religion. These minority groups are unlikely to ever transition into a demographic majority. Given their perpetual minority status, it can be argued that they should be granted heightened protection of their rights compared to the majority. Finally – a description of the minority most relevant to this thesis - the insular and discrete minority. Insular minorities share the characteristics of ascriptive minorities but face additional challenges. These additional traits have led to their victimization by the majority in society. The queer community has historically been categorized as an insular minority, enduring discrimination and homophobia. Their insularity arises from their separation from a largely hostile majority (Vibe 2016).

Often, the people who themselves fall victim to injustice are the people who mobilize for change in norms. Women mobilize for women, people of color for people of color. There are findings that confirm this "identity motivation" in protests regarding sexualities. In the literature, this is referred to as a "sexuality gap" – pointing to an absence of heterosexual people pushing for queer rights. Not only are queer people making up the lion's share in social movement engagement for queer rights – but they also at large partake in activism for other causes (Swank and Fahs 2019, 325). Members of the queer community get immersed in a culture where they become part of social networks where political consciousness is accommodated for. Protesting is viewed as a useful and necessary tool for change. The fact that the queer community mobilizes themselves, leads me to believe that the overall strength of civil society in a state will affect the political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

The findings from Swank and Fahs contribute to the understanding of why social movements can be important for the people constituting the queer community. Queer civil society movements do however also impact the larger society. Previous research on the case of Poland finds that in states where civil society is underdeveloped, backlash targeting political inclusion of the LGBTI community gains a more extensive hold (O'Dwyer 2012). Philip Ayoub, Douglas Page, and Sam Whitt contribute to the understanding of how social movements, such as Pride, affect society at large. Conducting nationwide and local survey experiments along with in-depth interviews of activists, these scholars find that Pride parades increase the support of LGBTI+ activism locally. The Sarajevo pride also affected the funding for civil society in Bosnia – allocating more funding to pro-LGBTI activism, and less to anti-LGBTI groups. Ayoub, Page,

and Whitt argue that these findings highlight a «substantial potential» for collective action in support of marginalized groups (2021, 467).

2.3 Internalized and political homophobia

What are the reasons why the discourse around Pride is so contentious? Homophobia might be an important piece of this puzzle. Having roots in psychology, homophobia implies someone having an irrational fear of homosexuality. Homophobia is viewed as a phobia existing within a person – and can be treated through therapy (Janoff 2022, 16). The queer community constituting a stigmatized minority and homophobia is intertwined. In the context of this thesis, it is important to note the following – living in a homophobic society can lead to *internalized* homophobia. The term "internalized homophobia" refers to when homophobic sentiments infiltrate a person's subconsciousness. Experiencing internalized homophobia while being queer can lead to large degrees of shame, and hesitancy or inability to publicly "come out" (Allen and Oleson 1999; Frost and Meyer 2009; Wang and Chang 2021). External and internalized homophobia can constitute a self-reinforcing downward spiral. Lack of descriptive representation leads to queer people not seeing themselves in power-holding positions. Consequently, they remain unaware of the possibility of "someone like them" holding these positions. Furthermore, people in high-standing power positions experience societal and internalized homophobia as well. In cases where a politician personally wishes to publicly disclose their queerness, homophobia might stop them from doing so. Being open about one's sexuality can lead to the politician losing votes or being a victim of prejudice in other ways. This means that the queer society loses public exemplars, even though they might exist.

In the same way that homophobia seeps into the subconscious of individuals, it seeps into the fabric of politics. This is termed *political* homophobia. Like with internalized homophobia, political homophobia is a momentous obstacle to the political inclusion of the queer community. Homophobia turns political when a state purposefully makes a scapegoat of someone that they view to be *another (*Ayoub, Page and Whitt 2021, 468). In states that exude political homophobia, queer people are actively attempted to deprecate (Janoff 2022, 16). The deprecation of queer people on a systematic level is a tool used by states and religious elites. This tool seems to be frequently used in nationalistic governments, where political homophobia is an integral part of their rationale for staying in control. The distinction of queer people defined as "other" contributes to increased authority for actors seeking power. These actors create an "identity divergence", that functions as a means towards gaining state control

(Swimlear 2019, 2). So – establishing an "us" and a "other" is an efficient way of maintaining and securing power for authorities. It is however also an incentive for mobilizing the civil society. Through civil society organizations, the "others" can become an "us".

However, states make different appeals to political homophobia. Some states make stronger appeals to homophobia – coining them "intolerant states". Intolerant states encourage their collaborative "intolerant" civil society to be politically active. In this way, the state can ensure that the "political homophobia" becomes dispersed from the top down – *and* seemingly from the bottom up (Ayoub and Page 2020, 696). As I will get back to in the next chapter, civil society has a crucial role in maintaining democracy. This means that civil society in its purest form should have the opportunities to promote the interests of the queer community, and the interests of more traditional or conservative communities. These groups should in principle have the same opportunities for interest representation (Warren 2012, 378). However, Ayoub and Page finds that in states that are "intolerant" of the LGBTI community, the queer community is in different ways discouraged from being politically active. This means that the queer civil society faces difficulties in the act of interest representation itself, due to lack of funding and other obstacles. Furthermore, civil society might experience hurdles in turning interest representation into actual policy outcomes – as the "intolerant state" might be more responsive to the interests of the "intolerant civil society" more so than the interests of the queer civil society (2020, 696). To exemplify, I will use the case of the "anti-gender movement". The anti-gender movement is a movement tainted by nationalism and an opposition to the EU and "European values". This movement is arguably xenophobic, and anti-LGBTI. The anti-gender movement has funders in many large European countries (for example in Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland), and conduct large anti-gender campaigns through civil society organizations. The antigender movement promotes their interests through civil society organizations in Europe, cooperating with CSOs opposing same-sex marriage and pro LGBTI laws (Matejková and Mihálik 2023). As Warren states – a flourishing civil society contributing to maintaining democracy should consist of CSOs with equal opportunities for interest representation. Hence, the anti-gender movements *and* LGBTI movements should have the same possibilities to promote their interest. However, a discrepancy can arise when a state is tainted by political homophobia. In these cases, governments can disregard the queer community – while still seemingly maintaining a civil society rooted in democracy (Ayoub and Paternotte 2020).

2.4 Discourse as a remedy for political homophobia

Coming back to homophobia – I deduct that political and internalized homophobia is intertwined and affects constituency and representatives alike. Political homophobia, individual homophobia and internalized homophobia therefore might result in several complicating factors – there is a high plausibility that a large number of people live their public lives without openly disclosing their queerness. This creates a layer of obscuration in the study of political inclusion of queer people. Two main factors contribute to this ambiguity – there is no precise number on how large the queer population within a state is. Nor is it possible to know the precise number of queer members of parliament.

Therefore, for the time being – researching political inclusion of queer people through the aspect of civil society can be valuable. How does the queer civil society counteract political homophobia? Georg Vasilev's study from 2016 contributes to answering this question. Vasilev states that the role of advocacy-led *discourse* has been downplayed in the norm diffusion literature. Through an analysis of LGBTI-politics in the context of EU accession in Croatia and Serbia, Vasilev argues that civil societies fronting critical discussions is highly important. Looking at discourse surrounding pro-LGBTI norms, Vasilev finds that where the EU-accession process is tainted by national resistance against European norms, public discourse becomes particularly vital. Vasilev findings indicates that the robust European alignment of Croatia accelerated their acknowledgment of LGBTI recognition, whereas Serbia's comparatively weaker alignment with Europe impeded its progress (748). These differences arose even though the viewpoints on LGBTI acceptance were deeply divisive in both domestic contexts.

Previously, the assumption in the literature on EU accession has been that states only align with the EU if the union makes positioning with Europe attractive, and resistance expensive. This "mechanism of *material* rewards and punishments" has been an underlying assumption in the theories of why some states adopt EU reforms where others do not. Vasilev however argues that the role of external pressure conveyed through discourse has previously been downplayed. The motivation for change in the case of norms affecting the queer community, he contends, comes from critical discourse *and* material incentives granted EU-alignment. In other words – in the cases of Poland and Serbia, civil society discourse had a significant effect on their degree of "alignment with Europe". Consequently, pro-LGBTI norms solidified more in Poland than in Croatia (Vasilev 2016).

2.5 Threat perception and transnational civil society network

Implied in Vasilev's findings is the following – Croatia identified more with "European values" and EU, and activism-led discourse strengthened this alignment. In Serbia, ties to the nation was stronger, and the pro-LGBTI discourses impact comparatively diminished. The LGBTI community has historically been viewed as something that is in *opposition* to the nation, innately threatening civilization (Stychin 1998). One reason for this, is that sexuality is not confined to state boarders. Consequently, the state cannot control the discourse surrounding "queerness" – as this discourse is playing out at a transnational level (Conrad 2001, 125). Authorities might experience national security as threatened when their established values are challenged. In states where traditional patterns of religious and national identity are viewed as essential in society, EUs norms can be viewed as a threat. The diffusion of norms on sexual minorities from the supranational levels is perceived as a threat needing to be met with "self-defense" (Weyembergh and Cârstocea 2006, 216).

Ayoub's comparative case study from 2014 further contextualizes this point. Why does the norms surrounding queer rights arouse active resistance in some states, and not others? Looking at Poland and Slovakia, Ayoub shows that the degree of threat perception plays a role in how LGBTI-norms are mobilized. Analyzing interview data and original survey data, his findings indicate that heightened threat perception is observed in cases where religion is viewed as deeply ingrained in the idea of *the popular* nation. In Poland, a narrative linking LGBTI rights to a part of external influence was successfully established by the opposition to these norms. The Catholic Church was in Poland viewed as a "symbol of the nation". When the symbol of the nation was opposed LGBTI rights, LGBTI rights became increasingly viewed as *external values*. These were not values that were a natural part of Poland, they were *enforced* on them. Consequently, "pro-queer" norms were argued to be threatening national values, and threat perception rose. In the Slovenian case, LGBTI-friendly norms were met differently. In comparison to the Polish case, the Slovenian church was unsuccessful in solidifying itself as part of the popular nation. Oppositions to political inclusion of the LGBTI community struggled to mobilize a substantial resistance among the Slovenian people. Lastly – Ayoub findings indicate that resistance that surfaces in high-threat contexts may paradoxically increase the salience of the norm. This constitutes a double-edged sword in the case of political inclusion of the queer community. On one hand, the heightened visibility can contribute to their voice being heard. On the other hand, the visibility brings them into the limelight of their opposition (2014).

2.6 Nationalism and diverging identities

In the polish case, the presence of a strong conservative church decreased the effect of advocacy promoting political inclusion of the queer community (Ayoub 2014). Yet, framing the queer community as existing outside the nation is not solely detrimental to LGBTI civil society. A community excluded from the nation has a compelling rationale to organize at the transnational level. Ayoub's analysis shows that domestic queer civil societies have directed their attention from their domestic surroundings and started cooperating with civil societies from other states. Ayoub argues that this dimension gives the European civil society a crucial advantage that their conservative nationalistic opponents often lack. Conservative resistance movements struggle to evoke a comparable identity or establish equivalent cross-border connections due to their foundational alignment with nationalism. Their movements are by nature limited to the bounds of the nation (355). The LGBTI movement is however cross-national. In addition to the transnational civil society gradually occurring through cooperation, it has been initiated into lasting transnational configurations facilitated by European institutions and networks of activists, both formal and informal. These networks allow for knowledge transfers and wide cooperation (2014, 355). These constellations are inherently valuable for the queer community, accommodating civil societies from different states to support each other. This arguably has an important intrinsic "support" effect for LGBTI activists.

However – the queer civil society organizing at the transnational level also provokes reactions. They might successfully represent the interests of the LGBTI-community – but in doing so, they can also awake a widespread opposition (Egan and Sherrill 2005, 229). Ayoub and Chetaille refers to this opposition as a *countermovement*. In their 2017 study, they research the cultural dynamics of movement and countermovement in multi-level situations in Poland's EU accession process. Based on extensive, longitudinal fieldwork conducted with activists from Polish civil society, they distinguish the opportunities enabled by this context in into two dimensions – political opportunities and *discursive* opportunities. The EU accession process provided the polish LGBTI-movements with a tangible discursive reference point. The discursive opportunities arise in situations where there is countermovements, or counterframing. Ayoub and Chetaille finds that, in the polish Lesbian and Gay (LG) movement, the counterframings stemmed from the *same* concept: that norms promoting LGBTI rights were *external* – from outside of the state. How did both the LG movements and their opponents base their arguments on the same notion? From the side of the LG civil society, the "external perspective" was used due to their longstanding cross-border relationships. Historically, LG

movements have maintained cross-national contacts and exchanged knowledge with allies in many countries. This transnational information transmission has given rise to more abstract frames that can extend across borders and adapt to varied contexts, in addition to the movement's local viewpoints. However, one disadvantage of these 'external' frames is that they inadvertently emphasize LG people' foreignness, making them vulnerable to politicization by countermovements. Through this notion, the Ayoub and Chetaille-study points to one of the most complicating factors involved when European civil society promotes political inclusion of the LGBTI-community. The alignment with "Europe" creates a dilemma when activists advocate within their respective states. While it creates tangible reference points for their advocacy, the same point serves a similar purpose for the forces opposing them (Ayoub and Chetaille 2017).

In her study from 2019, Safia Swimlear examines the politics and discourse surrounding LGBTI rights in Bosnia over the last decade. She unveils a complex pattern explaining how different identities impact queer rights. She argues that, in the Bosnian context, multiple narratives create tension in the LGBTI context. National identity and ethno-nationalism could be the main domestic constraints hindering human rights changes from occurring – especially when tied to sexuality and gender. Swimlear's findings are in other words aligning with Ayoub's – a threat to "national values" might provoke opposition to the political inclusion of the queer community. Swimelar analysis contributes to this thesis with another important finding – the notion of a "historic, unified nation" may overlook the presence of different identities within said state. This establishes a scenario where nationalism is inclined to oppose LGBTI rights, as they are seen as embodying divergent identities that might jeopardize the nation (2019, 2). If sexual minorities assert their visibility and promote the security of their identity, ethno-nationalists may interpret this as a challenge to their own identity, prompting them to strengthen and affirm their own identities in response (Swimelar 2019, 17). While this visibility poses a large challenge for the queer community, the discourse emerging between civil society and government can increase their visibility. In line with Ayoub, Swimelar notes a double-edged sword - visibility can amplify discrimination, yet it can also raise awareness about the challenges faced by the queer community. Consequently, their political support may increase (Swimelar 2019, 5).

There are several reasons to why political inclusion of the LGBTI community is contended on the European continent. Koen Slootmaeckers argue that there is a growing view of political

inclusion of queer people equating degree of "Europeanness". Slootmaeckers argues that LGBTI rights has evolved into a "standard for civilization". This standard is used to assess a state's international legitimacy (2017, 517). This implies that a state might be motivated to implement queer politics to increase their international credibility. While this not necessarily is a problem in and of itself, Slootmaeckers argues that states might advance queer politics as a mean to gain international recognition – not to promote actual queer political inclusion. The result can be that these efforts in reality end up as "ghost politics" – politics that in actuality is inconsequential in the strengthening of queer political inclusion. Slootmaeckers bases this argument on an in-depth analysis on LGBTI politics in Serbia. He argues that Serbia's accession process to the EU influenced the dynamics of Belgrade Pride from 2001 to 2015. In this study, he argues that while Belgrade Pride started as a benchmark in the proses of EU accession, it evolved to become a ritualized event, devoid of queer politics in the domestic context. While starting of as a Pride organized by activists, it turned into a pride organized by the state to illustrate Europeanness towards the EU (2017, 530).

2.8 What remains to be researched?

Through this literature review, a number of factors become apparent. Firstly – while still under-researched, there is enough literature to inform the current thesis. The previously mentioned studies provide implications as to which areas need further research and draw up a line of factors that are evidently relevant when studying the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. There are however some factors I wish to point to. While the scholars included in this literature review do not constitute an extensive list, it becomes clear that there still is a limited number of scholars studying the field of LGBTI politics in the European context. Furthermore, most of these studies are case studies, comparative studies, and studies on mechanisms occurring on the micro-level through surveys or interview data. Moreover – as explained by Ayoub, Paternotte, and by Swimelar, there seems to be a negative correlation between nationalistic identity and support for the queer community on an individual level. There are however also findings implicating that the discourse between nationalistic forces and queer civil society can lead to increased visibility, which again can lead to less resistance against "LGBTI-friendly" norms. What seems to be lacking is overarching studies researching larger mechanisms at the country level over several time points. I therefore bring with me the findings from these studies and apply them to a larger array of states. I also use them as building blocks when speaking to respondents from the European civil society.

3. Theoretical background

In this chapter, I lay forth the theory that this thesis builds on. In this study, the dependent variable is the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. To account for what this term encompasses, I use theory on political representation, descriptive representation, and interest representation. To explain the main independent variable, civil society, I first present a general theory explaining what this concept implies. Thereafter, I present Social Origins of Civil Society, to further explain the independent variables.

3.1 Democratic representation

3.1a Political representation in a democracy

In this thesis, my dependent variable is "political inclusion of the LGBTI community". I divide the term "political inclusion" into two concepts: descriptive representation and interest representation. In this segment, I will provide the literature constituting the background for this conceptualization, starting with theory on political representation.

What exactly does descriptive representation entail? In this thesis, the term "descriptive representation" will encompass individuals who share experiences and lifestyles that, in some way, typify the class they represent (Mansbridge 1999, 629). There are numerous reasons why descriptive representation could benefit the queer community. Firstly - the presence of openly LGBTI representatives in the legislature could diminish the stigma and "foreignness" by providing a familiar representation of queer people. The mere presence of openly LGBTI individuals can serve as a manifestation of a historically invisible minority, bringing them into the public sphere. This presence correlates with a higher passage rate of LGBTI-friendly policies, a correlation that persists even after accounting for factors such as social values and democracy. Additionally, their impact on legislatures may have an educational aspect, as they can directly influence other legislators through collegial relationships and contribute to fostering allies within the legislature (Reynolds 2013). In simpler terms, the significance of descriptive representation for the queer community lies in the fact that representatives themselves can actively work towards fostering a more "LGBTI-friendly" political environment. Furthermore, the presence of queer people in the polity can increase "allyship" among the other representatives. Having representatives that either themselves are part of the queer community, or that sympathize with this group, can lead to a higher level of *political equality* (Mansbridge 2003; Dahl 2006).

Additionally - two pivotal functions, the deliberate and aggregate functions, play a crucial role in political inclusion. The deliberate function centers on understanding diverse societal viewpoints during conflicts of interest within the constituency. Representative equality is essential for this understanding, emphasizing the need for at least *one* legislative representative per group. On the other hand, the aggregate function aims to ensure the optimal policy outcome for a broad spectrum of societal groups, seeking proportional representation in conflicts (Mansbridge 1999, 634). Neither the deliberate nor the aggregate function of democracy reaches its full potential without real representation. Therefore, the effective function of these systems relies on the political inclusion of minorities – such as the queer society.

3.1b Descriptive representation and the queer community

So - the idea is this: without a minimum of one representative from the queer community in policy formation and decision-making, the queer community is excluded from both the deliberative and aggregative functions of democracy. How can this be counteracted? I contend that a primary factor in enhancing political inclusion for the queer community would involve an augmentation of their *descriptive representation*. Used in the context of minority research, descriptive representation means that the elected delegates representing marginalized groups share notable characteristics with their constituents. The representatives, in their personal lives and in their characteristics, to some extent reflect the broader category of people they represent. Representatives descriptively resembling their constituency can facilitate effective communication in deliberations. A representative embodying a minority can offer distinct insights and firsthand experience from the minority perspective.

Moreover, involving representatives who accurately reflect a minority's characteristics in situations where interests are not yet fully crystalized, can direct policy changes in a direction benefiting the minority. The viewpoints of the representatives from a particular minority could otherwise be lost – as the majority lack first-hand knowledge of the lived experiences of a minority. While you as a white cis heterosexual woman can read up on the experiences of a queer woman of color, you will still inevitably have blind zones that can result in you making policy decisions that are detrimental to the queer minority (Moon and Holling 2020). Therefore, the insights from within the minority can improve the quality of deliberation. This is a key outcome of descriptive representation (Mansbridge 1999, 629 – 630: Snell 2020).

In addition to creating useful and necessary deliberation among people in power, depicting minorities in positive ways can help them gain confidence about their possibilities to gain ruling power. This can offer desperately needed social meaning. The "ability to rule" effect could be self-reinforcing, helping other group members believe they too have the power to rule as well. Group mistrust may followingly be reduced (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Increase of group trust is important for the queer minority in particular – both for the individuals themselves, and to decrease societal prejudice towards them (Vibe 2016). Furthermore, findings show that descriptive representation is deemed most important by people who are considered politically disadvantaged (Arnesen and Peters 2018, 869). As mentioned in the previous chapter – queer people are more likely than straight people to partake in demonstrations (Swank and Fahs 2019). The queer community has continuously been victim for political homophobia and violence – making them a politically disadvantaged group (Vibe 2016, 232). Accordingly, I argue that descriptive representation is a particularly important part of political inclusion of the queer community.

3.1c Interest representation and civil society

In addition to descriptive representation, I argue that interest representation is an integral part of political inclusion of the queer society. In this segment, I argue for why I hypothesize that activists from European civil society face *similar* challenges, irrespective of their domestic context (H2b). The queer community is a group that has suffered political discrimination over several decades – making them politically disadvantaged. The queer minority, as with any other ascriptive minority, mainly have *one* common denominator. What primarily brings this minority together is their queerness, with little else serving as a unifying factor. To explain what I mean by this, I turn to Iris Young's notion of "gender as seriality": drawing on the workings of Sartre, she characterizes people waiting for a bus as a series bound together by minimal interactions, and the societal rules and norms of bus-waiting. This collective is formed around their shared relation to a material object, the bus, and the social practices associated with public transportation. Having diverse actions and goals, they are unified solely by the common desire or need to ride that specific route. While they together constitute a social collective, there's no identification or affirmation of common experiences, or a shared identity. The latent potential for this series to organize as a group becomes evident if the bus fails to arrive; they may then complain, share stories, and assign someone to contact the bus company (1994, 724 - 726). Young uses this bus-rider metaphor to describe the experience of womanhood – but it aligns with the experience of queerness as well. The common denominator of the queer community is

not necessarily their shared traits such as their sexuality or gender identification – but rather their navigation of the social rules they are forced to comply by an oppressive society (Snell 2020, 11).

This complicates the queer communities' possibilities to attain descriptive representation. Queer people are diverse, both in their ideological beliefs, in their place of residence, their socioeconomic status, gender identity, etc. Therefore - to enhance the descriptive representation of the queer constituency and, as a result, promote political inclusion of queer people, it may be necessary to assemble a substantial critical mass. A specific threshold would have to be reached to exert a significant influence on policy decisions (Reynolds 2013, 265). To adequately represent these heterogeneous aspects of the group, the critical mass must be sufficiently large to encompass even potential internal differences in perspectives (Mansbridge 1999, 636). Where the threshold of critical mass cannot be reached, civil society can act as compensation for descriptive representation. Civil society develops independent political channels that aid in the representation of interests and constitute a clear channel where the demands and wishes of the queer community can be conveyed (Diamond 1994, 8). In a sense, the civil society constitutes a political channel in and of itself – notwithstanding political binding power (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 74).

Based on these scholars' points, I argue that the queer community will struggle to reach the "critical mass" that breaches the threshold leading to descriptive representation. I therefore put forward a second possibility to reach political inclusion – the possibility offered by civil society. Unifying the voice of the LGBTI community through civil society organizations can lead to a unification of this group, to the point where critical mass is reached. Subsequently, this critical mass can serve as a threshold for achieving policy influence through effective interest representation. Consequently, the queer community can gain the possibility of affecting policy output – through interest representation. Where descriptive representation is unattainable for the queer minority, I hence argue that civil society can function as an alternative channel for political inclusion – compensating for the lack of formal institutionalized representation.

3.2 What is civil society?

3.2a Definitions of civil society

A key concept in this analysis is civil society. In this segment, I explain what civil society is. As with many other concepts within political science, the concept of civil society cannot be

easily summarized. Its interpretation depends on specific context, and underlying ideologies often play a significant role. This is especially true when addressing contentious topics, such as the political inclusion of the queer community (Edwards 2012, 480). Political inclusion of queer people has been, and continues to be a controversial topic. Civil society organizations built by activists therefore remain crucial in this public discourse. Ideally, civil society functions as an area of free choice, engagement, and community – functions highly important for the queer community (Walzer 2002, 37). Within-state heterogeneity does however exist in various ways –states house several nations, several ideological standpoints, and different minorities. Civil society plays a unique and pivotal role in making these different voices heard in democratic issues where they otherwise would remain unacknowledged. Civil society is paramount in this democratic purpose, largely due to one main function: in its purest and most ideal form, civil society is autonomous from the state. Serving as an independent space for free expression, civil society is separate from the government it operates within. It is also separate from formal political structures. A civil society that is both de facto and de jure separate and independent from the state can be a key factor in maintaining democracy. A reason for this is civil society's role in keeping governments accountable, ensuring that the balance of power is intact, and safeguarding the separation of powers within the government branches. In other words – civil society organizations are key in the concept of "checks and balances" in a democracy (Diamond 1994, 5-7). In the case of minority-driven civil society, this democracy-enhancing role is a fundamental key point in their motivation. Creating governments that are truly representative and responsive calls for mechanisms ensuring governmental accountability (Warren 2012, 377).

3.2b Civil society – contributing to government accountability

Civil society has an important role in ensuring this governmental accountability. To explain how, I want to preface that civil society not simply is a residual or interchangeable term for "society", or everything outside the state and formal political structures. In addition to being voluntary, self-sustaining, independent, and law-abiding, civil society organizations possess unique characteristics that differentiate them from other groups. Civil society is interconnected to the state, but not in a way where the goal is to win formal office. The objective of civil society is to obtain concessions, policy changes, and government accountability. In other words – civil society organizations aim to influence politics, but outside of the structures of formal political power and the party system. Civil society serves as public meeting points for citizens to interact, initiate discussions and deliberations on current issues, and reach consensus on the

future direction of their societies. Civil society accommodates for the regular citizen to actively participate in democratic processes, without having to directly engage in political parties. Participation in these domains is essential for marginalized groups such as the queer community – providing them with a unified voice in the absence of formal political power. Where concrete descriptive representation in formal politics is unattainable, civil society organizations can make up a "substitute". This substituting role can represent a minority like the queer community, in the place of descriptive representation (Diamond 1994; Bernhard et.al 2017). To summarize: civil society is the sphere between the state and the private realm and plays a key role in maintaining acceptance for opposing viewpoints in a democracy. It has a pivotal role in keeping the state accountable and contributes to channeling the voices of the constituency. These are roles that are highly important for minorities in a society – such as the LGBTI community. 3.3 The role of civil society in a democracy

In this segment of this theoretical chapter, I will argue for why I hypothesize that a strong civil society positively correlates with descriptive representation of the queer community in European states (H1a). A reason for this assertion civil society's role in increasing tolerance for opposing viewpoints within a democracy. Which democratic channels are available to the civil society working to gain acceptance for political inclusion of minorities?

3.3a Ensuring compromise between societal groups

A strong civil society aims at ensuring a connection from the average person to the governing entities. Populace actively participating in civil society gain insight in democratic processes – increasing their awareness of how political advocacy functions. A politically active populace may result in a strong ability to maintain checks and balances, which again contributes to maintaining democratic quality (Diamond 1994, 8). Moreover, a pluralistic and flourishing civil society serves as a "home" for dissenting viewpoints and acts as a safeguard, facilitating for the co-existence of several societal groups. Without these mechanisms, democracy would arguably lack depth and remain superficial (Walzer 2002, 39).

Actors involved in civil society works for the safeguarding of a structured, legal framework to ensure their independence and ability to act freely. Consequently, civil society not only *limits* the influence of the government, but *validates* governmental authority when it adheres to rule of law. As a result, civil society also invalidates governmental authority when it deviates from rule of law. These civic organizations operate in a nonpartisan manner, aiming at enhancing the

quality of political systems and promoting democracy (Diamond 1994, 5 - 7). In the reciprocity between civil society and democratic governing bodies, we find compromise. No single group is persistently triumphant – no single group persistently defeated. These concessions are imperative in the process of teaching people and groups how to live with a multitude of different social conflicts (Walzer 2002, 38). This ability and willingness to coexist with other groups within a society is paramount for democracy itself, but also for the members of any minority. As earlier established – political equality is the ideal for a liberal democracy. Political homophobia and lack of queer representatives in parliament leads to less political equality – making democracy more brittle.

3.3b Civil society as representatives for the "people"

In the coming segments, I argue for why I expect that interest representation conducted by activists from the European civil society is negatively impacted by lower degree of democracy (H2a). A robust democracy is an aspirational goal, demanding that those affected by decisions have the chance to exert influence over them. Civil society contributes to the deepening of democracy by organizing constituent voices, and has become an indispensable element within liberal democracy. It is now inconceivable to envision a functional democracy without the multifaceted impact of civil society on public discourse and representation (Warren 2012, 388). Through civil society organizations, people are able to organize their interests, values, and opinions. The actors of civil society ultimately become representatives that shape public opinion and mobilize people. Therefore, an organized and strong civil society contributes to defining the "people" whom a state de facto represents. In turn, these formal institutions of democracy respond to these organized interests and representations (Warren 2012, 378). As previously mentioned, the representative dimension of civil society is pivotal in this thesis. Where the queer community is underrepresented descriptively, they consequently may end up being excluded from the formal political sphere. However, an organized queer community working through civil society organizations may experience increased political inclusion. A robust democracy is built on the inclusion and consultation of every group in decision-making processes. This consultation and participation are crucial especially when decisions pertain to their own interest. Put differently - any form of exclusion, whether deliberate or inadvertent, of the queer community from political decision-making erodes the overall quality of democracy in a state (Diamond 1994, 6).

CSOs and activists partake in decision-making, ranging from subtle influences on public opinion to highly focused and participatory inputs into specific decisions. Alongside the substantial growth of electoral democracy in the past three decades, there has been a rapid surge in the emergence of social movements, interest groups, oversight organizations and network-based organizations. Increasingly, the democratic structures are designed to provide opportunities for those affected by collective decisions to have meaningful influence over the outcomes. A democracy should ensure representation that mirrors the diversity and size of the population it serves (Warren 2012, 379 - 380).

3.3c Interest representation within the state framework

In other words – civil society has a vital role in democracy, creating room for opposing viewpoints, facilitating a marketplace for opinions, and channeling citizen opinion to governing bodies. Civil society's role is however not that of actual policy determining. In this segment, I wish to draw attention to the role of the state in civil society. The state comprises the structures a democracy functions within – meaning that it also carries great significance for civil society. The state defines clear lines for the perimeter within which civil society works. Within these perimeters, civil society organizations in Europe have grown to a diverse range of entities, both formal and informal (Diamond 1994, 5). The state framework has an essential role in maintaining the standards for civil society and managing conflicts that may emerge. The state and civil society are intertwined in this role – both sustaining an infrastructure for communication. Maintenance of this infrastructure is deemed important to conserve a plural society accepting of the democratic outlooks a democracy intends to perpetuate (Walzer 2002, 46). Therefore, it is ideally a close and cooperative relationship between the state and civil society. The state needs to address the disparities that result from the varying capabilities of different groups in mobilizing resources and delivering services to their members. Policy areas covering queer political issues, or acceptance and antidiscrimination of queer people, are more easily accepted in the overall populace when civil society and the government are coordinated in their efforts. Lastly, the state is necessary to establish boundaries on the types of inequality that may develop within various associations due to e.g. unequal access to funding. In essence, a functioning civil society relies on the intervention and accommodations done by an externally involved state (Walzer 2002, 47).

3.3d The restrictions from lack of democracy

In the prior segment, I argued that the state structure is necessary for civil society to function optimally. However, state structures can also heavily constrain the scope of civil society. In the coming segments, I argue for why I hypothesize that government promotion of nationalistic ideology positively correlates with increased descriptive representation of the LGBTI community (H1b). Limitations typically involves general restrictions imposed on a *wide* spectrum of organizations; alongside specific constraints placed on a smaller subset of groups. These restrictions can target specific groups that the state wants to keep from gaining political inclusion – such as queer civil society organizations. These targeted restrictions often send out broader, chilling effects – potentially weakening the overall democratic quality. However, in democratic states, civil society can push back against such constraints through the legal and policy avenues. In stark contrast, undemocratic states present a graver situation, as they have the authority to manipulate restrictions on civil society at their discretion. In such cases, they carefully adjust the space allocated to different types of organizations, the nature of their work, and their alignment with the state or ruling party's interests. In various regions, governments employ severe limitations on the freedom of nonprofit organizations. They may do so during crises or as an ongoing strategy to shape civil society in a way that aligns with the state's goals for social service provision (Sidel 2012, 298 - 299). In times tainted by crises, states might turn to right wing populism and nationalism. This is done as a measure for the authorities to increase control over their reign (Mamonova, Franquesa and Brooks 2020, 1499). This point was also touched on empirically in the previous chapters (see segment 2.5 and 2.5).

As part of the reaction when faced with ongoing crises, governments often aim to discourage or even eliminate activities related to advocacy, public interest lobbying, and other forms of dissent. Both paradigms, crisis-driven and ongoing, are observed worldwide and contribute to the constriction of the space within civil society that is crucial for the advancement of democracy and social justice. In non-democratic states, the government's intentions are explicitly and intentionally directed toward limiting the influence and activities of civil society groups. To achieve this, governments employ a combination of legal and political measures designed to suppress civil society's autonomy and influence. This often involves discouraging, and sometimes even attempting to eliminate, activities related to advocacy, public interest lobbying, and other forms of dissent. Discouraging and eliminating specific civil society

organizations is observable worldwide and contributes to the constriction of civil society spaces that are vital for the advancement of democracy and social justice (Sidel 2012, 308).

3.4 Social origins of civil society

The study in this thesis builds on theory from the previous segments. However, more specifically, it also builds on Social Origins of Civil Society (SOCS theory). Discussing SOCS theory allows for further understanding of civil society.

3.4a Path dependency and civil society

SOCS theory emphasizes the explanatory potential derived from examining inter-state power dynamics across time. How have civil society institutions historically been embedded within the changing power dynamics, and how has the power relationship between civil society and political institutions evolved? (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 125).

While this theory has a clear historical aspect, I empirically research the last 20 years. I do not use the SOCS theory to explicitly account for variables affecting the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Instead, I use it as a framework for potential independent variables. There are multiple reasons why I rely on SOCS theory in my analysis. Firstly - in SOCS theory, it is highlighted that human behavior is significantly limited by already established social, economic, and political systems rooted in historical legacies. Any civil society is subject to its social, political, and economic influence proportional to political affluence (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 74). This point denotes that without political power, any civil society organization will struggle to achieve its objectives. In other words – civil society is reliant on state responsiveness in order to achieve successful interest representation.

Furthermore, SOCS theory builds on the notion of that how civil society works *now* is a result of how civil society historically has been placed within a state. In SOCS theory, it is argued that distinct forms of civil society have developed due to different power constellations between social classes. This mechanism can be referred to as "path dependency". Path dependence emerges because, once specific institutional structures are established, it becomes more convenient and cost-effective to build upon these existing arrangements rather than create entirely new ones from the ground up (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 82). Path dependency is a fundamental part of SOCS theory, as this mechanism contributes to explain both how diverse

forms of civil society has come to be – and why their origins continue to matter. Consequently, I argue that SOCS theory can grant valuable insights in this more contemporary study.

3.4b Civil society in non-democratic states – used as justification?

SOCS theory points to another pivotal point that can help explain the workings of civil society and its effect on the political inclusion of the queer community. Salamon and Sokolowski indicate that CSOs may both strengthen and weaken the political inclusion sought after by civil society. Civil society can offer protection and aid to those positioned at the lower rungs of the social and economic hierarchy. For example – organizing the voice of the LGBTI community through civil society can lead to political inclusion, even in cases where descriptive representation is absent. However, the presence of civil society can also be used as a justification for avoiding more comprehensive forms of assistance to those facing the most profound challenges. In more troubling scenarios, civil society institutions might even become tools for stifling expressions of social and political activism (2017, 126). As per the SOCS theory, a government might maintain a civil society presence as a rationale for avoiding the enhancement of formal political inclusion for the queer community. Even in a state without democratic mechanisms where the queer civil society is influential, the mere appearance of a civil society can serve as a justification for withholding increased political inclusion for the LGBTI community. That means that in non-democratic states, governments can notably and deliberately curb the influence of civil society organizations, employing legal and political measures for this purpose (Sidel 2012, 308). In chapter two, I explained the concept of "political homophobia", and how intolerant states create a cooperating intolerant "civil society" to speak the case of the state from a bottom-up perspective. In the states where this occurs, governments can rationalize and justify a lack of comprehensive aid for the queer civil society – or suppress the civil society working for political inclusion of the queer community.

3.4c The five different forms of civil society patterns

In this thesis, I hypothesize that when states routinely consult their major CSOs, the political inclusion of the queer community raises. In SOCS theory, a total of 41 states were analyzed – eventually categorized into five recurring patterns (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017). The five patterns are based on already well-established classifications of social class power relationships (see Moore 1966; Esping-Andersen 1990; Rueschmeyer et al. 1992). The main idea is this – each pattern describes a set of civil society characteristics based on the social class power relationship. The variations are a result of differences in which social class and social actors

exercise the predominant power in a society (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 83). In this segment, I will present the five categories – in addition to two "extra" patterns existing within the SOCS theory. I want to bring the reader's attention to the *characteristics* of the patterns, more so than the inherent typologies. Though the patterns serve as a beneficial categorization, it's their characterizations that will be incorporated into the panel analysis.

3.4d Traditional and liberal pattern of civil society

The first pattern presented in this theory, is the *traditional pattern.* In a "traditional" civil society, nobility and landowners have been at the winning side of the power constellations. Consequently, the use of labor-suppressive methods to sustain an exploitative mode of production has hindered the development of civil society. In addition, organized religion has been influential in these states, playing a role in legitimizing premodern power structures. This has led to creating a situation where people depend on family ties and religious institutions, more so than civil society. Next civil society pattern is the *Liberal pattern.* The liberal pattern is characterized by a traditionally bourgeoisie dominance. Improved economic productivity and political liberalization support civil society growth. Simultaneously, civil society can end up becoming too reliant on charity in this pattern – and diminish as a result. In the liberal pattern, the liberal approach has also undermined state involvement in civil society (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 99).

3.4e Welfare partnership pattern

Following the *liberal pattern* is the *welfare partnership* pattern. SOCS theory proposes that this model is linked to states in which industrial middle-class components has confronted significant pressures from lower socioeconomic classes. In response, the middle class turned to the state and affiliated religious institutions to negotiate a compromise. The hallmark of this pattern is a compromise involving the provision of state-funded social welfare protections, facilitated through «tamed» nonprofit service organizations – such as the church (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 102).

3.4f Social democratic pattern

The fourth pattern presented by Salamon and Sokolowski is *the social democratic pattern*. This pattern is distinguished by a substantial nonprofit workforce, predominantly comprised of volunteers, and strongly focused on communicative functions. This development is rare, as it characterizes states where the power of the bourgeoisie and elites has been counteracted by the

lower classes. This negotiation has resulted in an increase of government funding of welfare services (2017, 107).

3.4g Statist pattern

The fifth and last fully formed pattern is *the statist pattern.* In this pattern, practically all dimensions of civil society are constrained by the state. In line with the SOCS theory, this result is anticipated to emerge in situations where economic progress is hindered. This hindrance often stems from conservative elites who gain advantages from the exploitative agrarian mode of production, resulting in economic stagnation and potential military challenges from more advanced nations. This experience of external threat motivates a "revolution from above" – where e.g., military officers take charge of the state administration and initiates a program of rapid industrialization and modernization. This may be prompted by conflicts among elites, military defeats, humiliation triggering defensive responses from key figures, foreign intervention, or other crises (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 110).

3.4h "delayed democratization" and "hybrid" pattern

Lastly – within the SOCS theory, there are two categories not yet fully formed. These are "delayed democratization", and "hybrid". Firstly – delayed democratization is distinguished by states that were recently subjected to an abrupt systemic social or political upheaval. These dramatic changes are consistent with the SOCS theory, which predicts that such transitions might alter the social class and institutional power dynamics that influence the size, functions, and funding of the civil society sector. While political upheavals were place in all Soviet bloc nations after the fall of the Soviet Union, not all of them saw a significant decline in state power—a necessary requirement for upsetting the statist paradigm. Salamon, Sokolowski and thus states that delayed democratization may indicate a transitional state rather than the final result (2017, 118 - 119). The last pattern of civil society proposed in the SOCS theory is the *hybrid patterns*. The states in this category are noted as "semi stable" by Salamon and Sokolowski (2017, 121).

4. Data

These patterns of civil society explain the independent variables in this study – and hence set guidelines for the data needed in the quantitative analysis. In this chapter, I present the data used in this thesis. In this study, I set out to test the relationship between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. In addition, I researched which challenges the transnational civil society conducting interest representation is faced by. To conduct this research, I need quantitative data on civil society descriptive representation of the LGBTI community, and qualitative interview data from European activists.

4.1 Case selection - why Europe?

In this thesis, the scope is limited to Europe. There are several reasons to why this choice was made. Firstly - there is to date limited data describing variations of political inclusion of the queer community. While this applies to the world in its entirety, there has been harvesting of quantitative data in European states. Europe is therefore chosen based on two technical advantages – there is enough data from European countries to conduct a large-N panel analysis, and there is sufficient variation between the states to estimate inferences about which mechanisms are at play. Other regions might have a more consistently low level of descriptive representation of the queer community. This lack of variation between the states would make it difficult to explain potential mechanisms affecting the dependent variable. Although I propose a transnational framework in this research, it's critical to remember that the scope-condition of the 36 European countries is constrained. A cross-national investigation runs the danger of obfuscating the contextual variations between the nations. Nonetheless, research suggests that the influence of civil society on political power granted to the queer community appears to exist regardless of the specific conditions of the states (Kováts 2018, 2).

Additionally, Europe is a region that encompasses the EU dogma of safeguarding sexual minorities, and the existence of states situated at the opposite ends of the "gay friendliness" continuum. Additionally, Europe stands as the sole world region where the rights of sexual minorities are formalized in binding international law. An example of this binding law is article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty. Furthermore, the beginning of the 2000s encompassed the inclusion of "sexual minorities" in the anti-discrimination article in the fundamental charter of the EU. This constituted a benchmark for the queer community, as discrimination against based on sexual orientation became part of the fundamental rights all member states was required to

adhere to (EU charter article 21, 2009) Moreover, the dissemination of norms on the LGBTI community was heavily tainted by the Cold War. The politicization of LGBTI rights occurred much earlier in several Western European states due to the sexual revolution in the 1960s and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. In contrast, the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain, relatively isolated from these influences, addressed the issue much later (Ayoub, Wallace, Zepeda-Millán 2014, 77).

4.2 The Varieties of Democracy dataset

In this thesis, my research question is "To what extent does the European civil society promote political inclusion of the queer community?". In this segment, I will explain the data I use to answer this. I will start with the data used in the panel analysis. The data for the panel analysis has been derived from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), titled Country-Year: V-Dem Full + Others, version 12. I use the v-dem dataset for several reasons. Firstly, the V-DEM dataset contains a country-level variable on sexual orientation and political power (v-democracy codebook v.12, 204 – 205). Other datasets contain data on individual attitudes toward the LGBTI community (World Values Survey; Europe value survey; Eurobarometer). However, in this thesis, I am mainly interested in the measures at the country level – and measures on actual inclusion rather than public opinion. Furthermore, the V-Dem dataset contains information on a substantial number of states – a span that outclasses other datasets. This allows for observation of the same states on all five-time points (Wooldridge 2014, 448). I, therefore, decided to base my analysis on the V-Dem dataset, as it contains a rich number of detailed variables on the different aspects of democracy, in addition to a useful and insightful variable on the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The units used in this analysis are country-year, collected on a total of 36 units. Table 1 presents the complete list of states included in this analysis. While all these countries are part of Europe, they differ in several aspects. For example – they have different degrees of democracy. For example - the degree of liberal democracy in Hungary is lower than in Sweden. A lower degree of democracy could affect the power divisions within the state, decreasing the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. The states are in other words not drawn through a "most similar research design". To take these differences into consideration, I include an independent variable measuring democracy in the panel analysis. Additionally – in this thesis, the main independent variable is civil society, not democracy. However, as shown in the theoretical chapter, civil society is greatly affected by the characteristics of the state.

Table 1: all states in the panel analysis

No.	Country name		
1	Albania	19	Latvia
2	Austria	20	Lithuania
3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	21	Malta
4	Belarus	22	Montenegro
5	Bulgaria	23	Moldova
6	Croatia	24	Netherlands
7	Czech Republic	25	United Kingdom
8	Denmark	26	Norway
9	Cyprus	27	Poland
10	Estonia	28	Portugal
11	Finland	29	Romania
12	France	30	Russia
13	Germany	31	Serbia
14	Georgia	32	Slovakia
15	Greece	33	Spain
16	Hungary	34	Sweden
17	Ireland	35	Turkey
18	Italy	36	Ukraine

4.3 Time points

Five points in time were used to create the cross-sections of these states: 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2019. This timeframe is substantiated by a technical rationale. The most recent year with data for all variables on the units of analysis is 2019. Therefore, this is the ending point of the analysis. Furthermore, after checking other time points during the relevant period in the V-Dem dataset, I found that these five years allowed for the highest number of observations (a total of 180). All 36 states contain all observations in my dataset, making it balanced as a result (Dougherty 2011, 515). The academic rationale for employing this specific time frame is as follows: the year 2000 is chosen as the starting point because, in 1999, a "non-discrimination" policy was incorporated into the Amsterdam Treaty of the European Union. The Amsterdam treaty marked a significant shift in the European debate on queer society – as article 13 gave European institutions the power to sanction discrimination based on sexual orientation (1999). Additionally, this time frame is noteworthy because during this period, there has been a rise in rights granted through the judicial system. Human rights courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights have increasingly become involved in the advocacy for LGBTI rights. However, with this upsurge, a countermovement has surfaced. In numerous countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, there has been the enforcement of "negative bans" on same-sex marriages—

altering constitutions to permit marriage exclusively between a man and a woman (Vibe 2016). These dynamics of progress and backsliding that have occurred from the beginning of the 2000s until the last year of available data, render this time frame interesting for analysis.

4.4 Main variables

4.4a Operationalization of the dependent variable: *"descriptive representation of the LGBTI community"*

I begin by pointing to a crucial point to keep in mind when conducting quantitative studies on LGBTI political inclusion. Belonging to a non-heterosexual sexual orientation has historically been associated with shame and secrecy, creating a dilemma. While research could potentially improve this challenging situation, the shame and secrecy surrounding sexual minorities complicate the research process. Despite efforts, such as the dependent variable in this dataset, there are likely unreported cases, both in defining "members of polity" and within the population. An *exact* estimate of the queer population in the polity is unavailable. Followingly – to measure the descriptive representation of the queer community, I use the variable political power distributed by sexual orientation. This variable grants insights into descriptive representation within a state's polity – meaning that it can tell us something about which mechanisms affect the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in European states. coding of the variables in the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et.al 2022, 21 - 22).

The dependent variable in this study focuses on power distribution by sexual orientation, and is part of the «political equality" cluster in the V-Dem dataset. This variable has been created with John Gerring as project manager and asks the Country Experts the following question: *"To what extent is political power distributed according to sexual orientation?"*. In this variable, the V-Dem team has attempted to make this variable generate the most precise result achievable. The V-Dem clarification reads as follows:

> *This question contrasts (A) the political power of heterosexuals and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTI) members of the polity who are not open about their sexuality with (B) the political power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTI) members of the polity who are open about their sexuality. (A) will be referred to as "heterosexual" and (B) as "LGBTI."* (Coppedge et. al 2022, 21).

Earlier in this thesis, I discussed homophobia, both political and internalized. Coppedge et al. divide the members of polity in two groups – **A** and **B**. Group A contains *everyone* in the polity who have *not* openly disclosed their sexuality. Coppedge et. al. chooses to operationalize this group as "heterosexual". In operationalizing the variable in this way, the coders consider that

there potentially could be (and assumably is) members of polity who are queer – but not openly so. These people are coded as heterosexual by default – as there is no way of knowing the accurate number. In one way, this makes this analysis less accurate. The question thus arises - what am I measuring if the dependent variable is based on an inaccurate measure?

This point is important to keep in mind. However, I argue that using this variable nonetheless is helpful in further understanding the dynamics of political inclusion of the LGBTI community. I make this stance based on two main points. Firstly – the inaccuracy of the values stems from *de facto* inaccuracy, not faulty data collection. For the average constituency, the members of policy in group A are regarded as not belonging to the queer community. Secondly, currently, there is no method to gather this data without intruding on the privacy of the members of the polity. Making generalized categories such as this one is arguably the only way of operationalizing descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Lastly – at this stage of research on LGBTI political inclusion, alternative datasets containing macro-level data on LGBTI political inclusion are lacking.

Coppedge et.al also mentions that the comparison of political power between group **A** (heterosexuals) and group **B** (LGBTI), is comparing their political power per person. By stating that LGBTI has more, equal, or less power than heterosexual people, the coders are comparing their power per person (V-Dem Codebook v.12, 209). This means that the values in this variable tell us something about the power *relative* to their share of the population. Given that this variable pertains to the influence of LGBTI individuals within the polity relative to the constituency, I utilize it as an indicator of descriptive representation.

In this section, I will explain the values inherent in the variable descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This is an ordinal scale, aggregated through the Bayesian item response theory measurement theory (IRT) (V-Dem codebook v.12, 209). The variable measures descriptive representation and political power relative to their population share on an interval scale ranging from 0 to 4. A value of zero indicates complete exclusion of queers from the public sphere, while a state with a value of three suggests that queers and heterosexuals have approximately equal political power, proportional to their population. As shown in table (variable-stats), no state in my dataset is coded as having a value 4 on the "descriptive representation of the LGBTI community"-variable[1]. A state with value four would be a state

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[1] See Table 10 in the appendix for a full overview of the states and their values on the "descriptive representation of the LGBTI community" variable, at each time point in the panel analysis.

where the queer community enjoys somewhat *more* political power than heterosexuals. It is worth mentioning that in the v-dem dataset, ordinal scales in some cases have values below 0 or over 4. As will become apparent, some of the values on the ordinal scales are below 0, due to the measurement model used by the V-Dem team (V-Dem.net, 2023).

The responses used by the coders are the following:

Table 2: values on dependent variable

Value	Description
0	LGBTIs are entirely excluded from the public sphere and thus deprived of any real political power (even though they may possess formal powers such as the ballot).
1	LGBTIs have much less political power than heterosexuals. LGBTIs enjoy formal rights to participate in politics but are subject to informal norms that often serve to exclude them from the halls of power.
2	LGBTIs have somewhat less political power than heterosexual citizens.
3	LGBTIs have about the same political power as heterosexuals. Each group enjoys a degree of political power that is roughly proportional to their population.
4	LGBTIs enjoy somewhat more political power than heterosexuals by virtue of greater wealth, education, and high level of organization and mobilization.

(Coppedge et. al 2022, 209).

4.4b Main independent variable: *"Civil society"*

The dependent variable in this thesis is civil society. In the panel analysis, I operationalize "civil society" as "civil society participation index (CSPI)". The "variable question" is the following:

«Are major CSOs routinely consulted by policymakers; how large is the involvement of people in CSOs; are women prevented from participating; and is legislative candidate nomination within party organization highly decentralized or made through party primaries?"

To clarify, this definition implies that the domain of civil society exists in the public realm *between* the private sphere and the state. In this space, citizens come together in various groups to collectively pursue their interests and ideals. These groups are commonly referred to as civil society organizations (CSOs). CSOs encompass a wide range of entities, including interest groups, social movements, professional associations, charities, and other non-governmental organizations. The primary purpose of the Civil Society Participation Index is to offer a metric for a resilient civil society. In this context, a robust civil society is defined as one that maintains autonomy from the state, allowing citizens to pursue their political and civic objectives freely

and actively, irrespective of how these goals are conceptualized (Coppedge et. al, 51). This means that, in this thesis, "degree of civil society participation" implies how much civil society is consulted by policymakers. It does not refer to constituency participating *in* civil society.

As mentioned, the CSPI variable is an aggregated variable, created by extracting point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model applied to the indicators used for candidate selection (national and local), CSO consultation, CSO women participation, and CSO participatory environment. The final scale is an interval scale, ranging from low (0) to high (1).

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variable.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Percentile 25	Percentile 75	Maximum
Descriptive representation of the LGBTI community	180	1.3	0.96	-1.2	0.75	2.1	3.1
Civil Society Participation Index	180	0.79	0.17	0.27	0.71	0.92	0.99

The mean value for the dependent variable is 1.3 – meaning that on average in my population, the descriptive representation of the LGBTI people is comparatively *lower* than straight people. The lowest value on the dependent variable is -1.2, and the highest 3.1. This means that none of the states in this analysis reaches the value 4 on the dependent variable. The mean value on the main independent variable is 0.79, on an interval scale from 0 – 1. The minimum value on the independent variable in my population is 0.27, and the maximum 0.99. In the following table, I present a scatterplot between the dependent and independent variable, to visualize the relationship between descriptive representation and civil society in the V-Dem dataset. This exploratory plot indicates that in states where the CSPI-variable reaches a value higher than 0.4, the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community -variable increases. In other words – it suggests that the relationship between civil society and descriptive representation in the V-Dem dataset is positive.
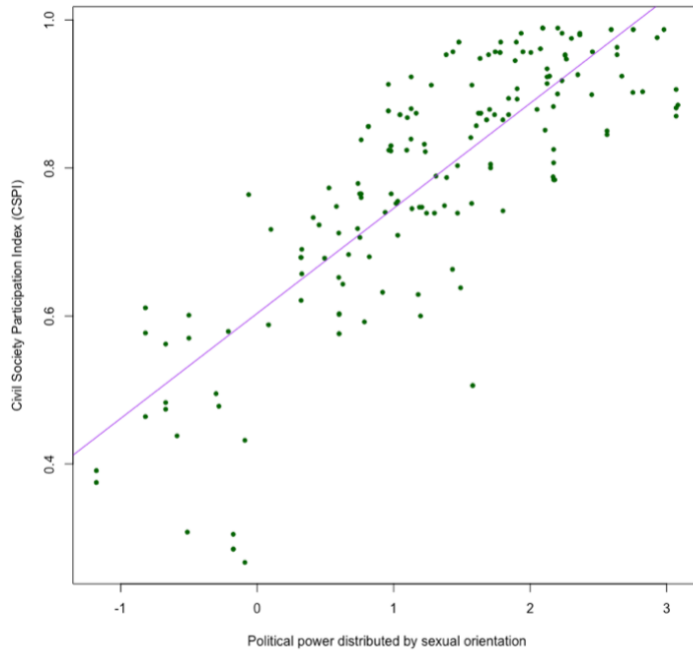
Figure 2: scatterplot displaying the correlation between dependent and independent variable, before adding other independent variables.

4.4c Other independent variables

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, the independent variables are sourced from the SOCS theory. Clearly, the inclusion of civil society in this thesis is grounded in the SOCS theory. I will briefly touch upon the other independent variables and provide rationale for the selection of these specific variables. When researching which other variables to include, I carried out some exploratory panel analyses to get an impression of which variables could in fact affect the dependent variable. I conducted a panel analysis with the SOCS theory patterns as "typologies", creating dummies for each of the civil society patterns. I ran the analysis with six dummies for the four relevant patterns, in addition to the "hybrid" patterns. There were 19 states that corresponded in both the SOCS theory dataset and my own dataset, accounting for the inclusion of "borderline" cases in the SOCS theory dataset (Salamon and Sokolowski 2017, 99 - 121). In this exploratory analysis, the effect of three typologies was significant: liberal civil society pattern, welfare civil society pattern, and statist civil society pattern. The results from this analysis can be found in model 4 in chapter 6 (results). However, desiring a more nuanced analysis, I identified a set of independent variables, each corresponding to different characteristics of civil society patterns from the SOCS theory. This approach enabled me to assess the individual impacts of these diverse characteristics and gain insights into their varying degrees of influence.

Variable name	Question in V-Dem	Theoretical and empirical justifications for inclusion in panel analysis
Civil society participation index	*Are major CSOs routinely consulted by policymakers; how large is the involvement of people in CSOs; are women prevented from participating; and is legislative candidate nomination within party organization highly decentralized or made through party primaries?*	See segment 4.4b.
Universal vs. means tested welfare programs	*How many welfare programs are means-tested and how many benefit all (or virtually all) members of the polity?*	This variable is included in the regression analysis as a characteristic pertaining to the "social democratic pattern of civil society" in the SOCS theory. According to Salamon and Sokolowski, this civil society constellation exists in states with high level of government funded welfare services. My assumption is that states with higher levels of universal welfare-programs is tainted by a strong welfare-state (and consequently have a higher level of state funding of welfare).
State ownership of economy	*Does the state own or directly control important sectors of the economy?*	This variable measures the extent of state control over economy – a characteristic present in the "statist pattern" of civil society. This "control for above" might occur in cases where *external threats* are high. This variable also controls for "liberal pattern for civil society" by default – as this pattern is characterized by liberal, market-led economy.
Electoral democracy index	*To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?*	This variable measures level of electoral democracy and is included to control for features of the "delayed democratization" pattern. A state moving from statist pattern to "delayed democratization" would show higher levels of electoral democracy. Consequently, the opposite would be true for a state moving from for example "social democratic pattern".
Accountability	*To what extent is the ideal of horizontal government accountability achieved?*	A power structure fostering accountability is a fundamental aspect of the SOCS theory and a key element in the role of civil societies within a democracy. In a democracy, a state that maintains checks and balances demonstrates a heightened level of accountability. Assesses the capability of state institutions to enforce checks and balances on the government. The "horizontal accountability" encompasses measures related to the legislature, oversight agencies, and the judiciary. The selection of this variable aims to mitigate potential multicollinearity concerns associated with the "CSPI" variable, given that the "accountability" measure does not include any metrics related to civil society.
Religious ideology	*If this state promotes a specific ideology, would you characterize it as religious?*	This variable indicates whether the government of a state eludes a religious ideology. This variable is in line with both the "traditional pattern" and "welfare pattern" of civil society presented in the SOCS theory. In the SOCS theory, it could be possible that the religious institutions also are a part of civil society. The "religious ideology" is included as a measure of religious presence in a state that exists irrespective of civil society.
Nationalistic ideology	*If this state promotes a specific ideology, would you characterize it as nationalistic?*	Nationalistic ideology could indicate presence of "statist civil society pattern." However, I also include "nationalistic ideology" based on the assumption that the presence of strong nationalistic ideology is in "opposition" to LGBTI political inclusion – as the queer community gets labelled as "foreigners". While this intuitively has a negative effect, it could also lead to higher levels of *visibility* for the queer community. The visibility could increase the level of counterframing, followingly increasing the effect of civil society on political inclusion. Additionally, this variable reflects whether a states government eludes a *nationalistic* ideology. The choice to control for this variable is in line with the previous work on *threat perception,* leading to increased levels of nationalism. Previous work indicates that both increased threat perception and nationalistic ideology can negatively impact political inclusion of the LGBTI community (Stychin 1998; Conrad 2001; Cârstocea 2006; Ayoub 2014; Egan and Sherrill 2005; Ayoub and Chetaille 2017; Swimelar 2019).

Ideology	*To what extent does the current government promote a specific ideology or societal model in order to justify the regime in place?*	This variable is included in the panel analysis to include "non-specified" *ideology* in the panel analysis. While not being directly tied to the SOCS theory, I am interested in seeing whether *nationalistic* or *religious* ideology has an effect due to characteristics embedded in these specific ideologies – or if the potential effect stems from a government eluding any form of ideology.

The full operationalization of the independent variables can be found in the appendix, along with the categorization of the state into typologies (Table 7 and Table 9). In this section, I'll briefly outline the variables included and their alignment with the SOCS theory. All control variables are checked for multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (Kellstedt & Whitten 2018). None of the variables show high levels of multicollinearity (see appendix, Table 8).

4.5 In-depth interviews

4.6 How is data created through in-depth interviews?

In this segment, I am explaining how the qualitative data for this thesis was collected. In this thesis, I am analyzing the interview data through a *thematic* analysis. I will describe this further in the following "methods-chapter, but briefly put - this implies that I am using a substantive approach. When using a substantive approach, the researcher attempts to analyze what the text-data *means*. Going beyond "just" what the respondents say – what does their perspectives mean in a bigger picture? In a substantive approach, the interview-data is used as an indicator of how the respondent views events. The data is considered a "window" into the participants social environment. In this way, interviewing respondents can lead to the researcher being able to "borrow their perspective", through listening and analyzing how they view the field of interest (Silverman 2000, 123). When conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher can acquire the perspectives of someone seeing the world differently than they do themselves (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 3). This is one of the main attributes of in-depth interviews – the ability to access the unique knowledge of the respondent (Kvale and Brinkman 2009, 48).

4.7 How to view interview data

I am going to briefly touch upon three different approaches to how to regard the data gained from interviews. In the positivistic approach, the researcher is seen as someone who carefully coaxes the information from the mind of the respondent. This means that, in the positivistic approach, the knowledge that is gained from the interview is *created* and *negotiated* during the interview. The researcher can bring forth knowledge from the respondent that the respondent was unaware of previously (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). In the constructivist view, an interview

is viewed as an "active encounter", creating knowledge existing in that specific context (Gubrium and Holstein 2004). This view, that the knowledge derived from interviews exists purely between that exact respondent and that exact researcher in the unique setting of the interview has gained critique from other researchers (Ritchie et al. 2014, 179). As with the quantitative analysis, I adhere to a broad set of scholars applying the *pragmatic approach* to knowledge derived from interviews (Ritchie et. al 2014; Miller and Glassner 2011). In the broadly pragmatic approach to knowledge generated through interviews, it is recognized that distinct settings indeed give rise to unique knowledge. However, pragmatic scholars argue that the knowledge harvested from an interaction holds value beyond this its immediate context. As pointed out in the previous chapter – researching through a pragmatist approach implies being committed to solving an empirical puzzle, through the means that seem most useful (Small 2011, 63). Interview data is one of the few ways to include the interpretations made by the respondents themselves. This can contribute to research by adding perspectives and explanations to the analysis – perspectives that could otherwise be lost (Ritchie et al. 2014, 180). To summarize – the qualitative data that is analyzed stems from ten respondents working in the European queer civil society. It is *their perspectives* that constitute the data. In the following chapter, I will explain how these respondents were sampled, and how the analysis has been conducted. In the coming two segments, I elaborate on the perspectives from which my respondents provide information and the questions I posed to elicit these perspectives.

4.8 Respondent perspectives as data

Since I am using a substantive approach to analyzing the data in this thesis, it is worth pausing with who the respondents are, and why I deem their perspectives as informative to the research question. before embarking on the explanation of the context my respondents speak from, I wish to mention a latent characteristic of the respondents. In the in-depth interviews, I spoke to activists that are part of the European transnational civil society conducting queer interest representation. Implicitly – the results from the in-depth interviews are in line with the effect of civil society on the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. There is a cohesive transnational civil society in Europe, with the same goal of interest representation of the queer community. The civil society is transnational in three ways. Firstly, it consists of organizations with several member states (such as the European Centre Right LGBTI+ Alliance), domestically situated organizations that cooperate internationally (such as Oslo Pride and Skopje Pride), and individual respondents who personally know each other. Several of my

respondents pointed to how the queer civil society cooperates on a transnational level, through attending the different national "pride marches" (as mentioned by Respondent 2 and Respondent 9), and through creating CSOs where representatives from different states meet up to share experiences (as mentioned by Respondent 1). As I will discuss in the coming segments, they also face similar challenges. Being confronted by similar issues, they share information and keep a conscious focus on supporting each other. I highlight this because, in addressing minority representation amid ongoing discrimination, there is internal support within civil society. In a sense, they are their own allies. Faced with a lack of external support, it can be argued that the ability to conduct interest representation is increased due to the interincisal focus on support.

I will begin by briefly presenting the organizations that my respondents work in. This gives an overview over which context the ten interviewees speak from[2]. All the respondents in this thesis are employed within a European civil society organization, employed from six different countries. Table 4 shows an overview over the organizations involved in this MA-project, which country the organization operates from, the overarching goal of the organization, and a link to their webpage.

Table 5: respondents for in-depth interviews

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[2] None of my respondents were asked about personal information such as their gender identity or sexual orientation, and the data therefore did not need to be reported as "sensitive data" (in line with RETTE and Sikt). While I got the consent to use the full name of nine of ten respondents, I chose to anonymise them.

Name of CSO	Respondent nr.[3]	Position	Overarching goal of SCO	URL:
European Centre-Right LGBTI Alliance	Respondent 1 (Sweden)	President	*«We work to strengthen cooperation between the member organizations, provide an LGBTI voice in the centre-right policies on the European and national level as well as providing a centre-right voice in the LGBTI+ community."*	https://LGBTIalliance.eu/
Oslo Pride	Respondent 2 (Norway)	International coordinator	*"For Oslo Pride, it is important to stand in solidarity with queer individuals abroad, especially in areas where the situation and rights of queer people are under pressure. We focus on countries in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, where we contribute with expertise and exchange of experiences, and support in dialogue with authorities."* (original text in Norwegian)	https://preview.oslopride.no/p/about
Bilitis	Respondent 3 (Bulgaria)	Executive director	*«Advocating for changes in legislation and policies to fully respect the rights of LGBTI people, equal inclusion in all spheres of public life, recognition of LGBTI families, gender recognition, prevention of anti-LGBTI hate crimes.»* *"Work at international level to raise awareness of the state of LGBTI rights and democracy in Bulgaria.»*	https://bilitis.org/en/about-us/
Bilitis & TransMission	Respondent 4 (Bulgaria)	Coordinator	*"In 2021, Robin started the TransMission youth trans group, through which the Live Your Truth exhibition was created, as well as an Instagram account raising awareness on trans issues.»*	https://bilitis.org/en/about-us/
Queer Center (*previously Subversive Front*)	Respondent 5 (North-Macedonia)	Senior Advisor	*"Advocacy of policies and laws that address the needs of the sexual and gender minorities community, and ensure their protection."* *"Building cooperation, partnerships and alliances with civil society organizations, ministries, local self-government units, state agencies [...] in order to advance the status and the human rights of sexual and gender minorities in the country and beyond."*	https://s-front.org.mk/en/about/
The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (*NHC*)	Respondent 6 (Norway)	Senior advisor on equal rights	*"We believe that defending the human rights of everyone, regardless of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation, is the key to promoting security and prosperity for all."*	https://www.nhc.no/en/who-we-are/
The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (*NHC*)	Respondent 7 (Norway)	Communication advisor for the EEA grants	-	-
FRI – Foreningen for kjønns- og seksualitetsmangfold	Respondent 8 (Norway)	Leader of the international department	*"FRI is part of a global rights movement working to promote equality and non-discrimination worldwide."* *"It is the local queer organizations that live in and understand the local context, working locally on competence building and inclusion. FRI's overarching role is to facilitate strategic collaborations and funding and to engage in advocacy work towards Norwegian authorities regarding the situation of our partners in various countries.»*	https://www.foreningenfri.no/sann-jobber-vi/
-	Respondent 9	-	*"Almost all time I spend in (country)[4], that's why I communicate every day with the activists, and the LGBTI people there. Also, with the partners abroad and sometimes with the embassies. But almost all the time, when I don't work with documents, I have different communication with the people from (country), other people, or human rights centers."*	
Queerwoj Maj	Respondent 10 (Poland)	Board member	*"Responsible for EEG-funded project dedicated to increasing access to health services for queer people, as well as advocating for queer rights and reproductive justice"*	https://www.queerowymaj.org/

Additional civil society organizations:			
Interpride	Respondent 2 and respondent 3	*«WorldPride, licensed by InterPride and organized by one of its members, is an event that promotes visibility and awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) issues on an international level. WorldPride includes parades/marches, festivals, and other activities such as a human rights conference.»*	https://www.epoa.eu/europride/about-europride/

4.9 Interview guide

An example of the interview guide in full can be found in the appendix (Table 11). To explain how I gathered the qualitative data, I will provide some examples from the interview guide I used for the interviews. I used a semi-structured interview guide with four main "clusters" of questions, based on previous research. I made sure to cover "Civil society in Europe", "Dynamics at play", "the role of European values" and "ideology", before asking the respondent if they wanted to add anything. Keeping these clusters constant allowed me to gather information about the same topics for all the respondents. Nevertheless, the semi-structured format of the interview guide provided the flexibility to customize the questions more precisely for each respondent. Using this approach, I could collect data that not only offered comprehensive insights from the ten respondents but also provided valuable perspectives from their individual regions and state-specific contexts.

After having conducted around three interviews, some patterns started emerging. These were processes surrounding the decrease of democratic quality, experiences of lack of representation of the LGBTI community, and dynamics surrounding "European values". While the interview guide initially accommodated these topics to be covered, I adjusted the subsequent interview guides to allow for a greater emphasis on these mechanisms. This might pose a limitation, as I may have unintentionally guided the respondents to emphasize a specific topic more than they would have otherwise. However, these common patterns were mentioned rather early in almost all my interviews and elaborated on further in the interview. I therefore maintain confidence that these mechanisms would be present in my date irrespective of whether I mention them or not.

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[4] Respondent 9 is kept entirely anonymous. I argue that their insights are of great value to this study, also when the context of their viewpoints remain undisclosed.

5. Methodological approach

In this chapter, I present the research design of this thesis. This is done through three sub-parts. I first introduce mixed methods and argue for why I employ this method. This segment is followed by an overview of panel analysis, and in-depth interviews.

5.1 Mixed methods approach

5.1a pragmatism as a research paradigm

Any researcher must employ a research paradigm – an organizing structure for their work. This structure builds on an epistemological understanding of reality, that is present through the research process as an entirety – from creating the research design to drawing the final conclusions. Pragmatism acknowledges the existence of several realities open to empirical investigation, aligning itself with addressing practical challenges in the tangible world. Martina Yvonne Feilzer argues that "pragmatism is a commitment to the uncertainty" – pointing out that even where causal relationships are found through analysis, they might be temporary and hard to pinpoint (2010, 14). In the words of Mario Luis Small – "the pragmatist researcher is first and foremost concerned with an empirical puzzle, solving it through whatever means appear useful in the process (2011, 63). As previously mentioned, the studies of LGBTI politics is still novel (Reynolds 2013; Snell 2020; Ayoub 2022). I therefore contend that at this stage, this subject would benefit from broader, more exploratory research designs with the aim of comprehending the underlying mechanisms. I, in line with Ayoub, Wallace and Zepeda-Millán, argue that a mixed methods approach is superior in researching comprehensive, cross-border phenomenon (2014).

5.1b What is mixed methods?

Feilzer argues that a solution to this challenge is employing mixed methods research (MMR) (2010). Mixed methods consist of a combination of quantitative and qualitative data types. Some components of the phenomenon are measured through quantitative methods – others through qualitative. This multimethod research allows for a research question to be answered through various strategies – employed to understand different aspects. Examples could be combining quantitative surveys and qualitative observations – or, as I do – a quantitative panel analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews (Seawright 2016, Feilzer 2010; Maggetti 2020). Several scholars, focused on the *relevance* of political science, contend that mixed methods are especially apt for problem-centered, context-specific research tackling urgent issues in the practical realm of politics. As previously mentioned, I argue that the field of LGBTI political

inclusion constitutes an urgent issue. Mixed methods are well-suited for pressing issues because it provides opportunities for alternative, adaptable, and non-traditional methodologies. Hence, it can bridge gaps in discussions related to overarching theoretical concepts and methodologies, thereby enhancing the integration of research and practical application (Maggetti 2020).

5.1c Integration of methods

There are several ways to construct a mixed methods research design. Martino Maggetti presents an extensive overview in his 2020 article, where he distinguishes between method triangulation, integration and case studies oriented mixed designs. In this segment, I will present the rationale behind employing an *integration approach*. Through an integration approach, I can use both quantitative and qualitative methods as "non-redundant parts" of my study. In other words, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods allows me to investigate the research question from different angles – without the methods intersecting. The most common strategy used in method integration is to connect the quantitative method with the qualitative method from the outset. This way, the first method can inform the second. Taking my own research design as an illustration—I utilize a quantitative panel analysis to provide insights into the mechanisms that warrant further investigation in the subsequent qualitative methods. Both methods aim at answering the same question – through an embedded design. An embedded design implies that the panel analysis and the in-depth interviews are interpreted together once the stage of data collection and analysis are concluded (4-8). Arguing for the use of integration of methods, Jason Seawright asserts that this specific approach allows for the researcher to involve an "indefinite cycle of discovery and refinement". Where other methods use linear sequences or employ parallel designs, using an integrative multi-method allows for a "double testing" of the findings. The results from the first method in the research design can be tested in the second method. Seawright therefore suggests that the integration approach is more advantageous compared to linear sequence or parallel approaches to MMR (4-10).

5.1d Methodological concerns – mixed methods research

There are some limitations to MMR that are important to keep in mind when analyzing the results. Several scholars are critical of MMR – in particular to the arguably most ambitious approach, namely the *nested analysis*. The main concern of these critics is that of *ontological misspecification* – where e.g. a faulty operationalization travels through the research design in its entirety. This would make all inferences from that analysis defective (Rohlfing 2008, 1493).

Derek Beach goes far in his critique of MMR, arguing that since the different methods inquire fundamentally different questions. Therefore, the answers cannot contribute to a joint answer (2020). While the two methods in this thesis do inquire about slightly different *dimensions* of my research question - they are both employed to answer the same research question. I therefore take a less constructivist stance than Beach and argue that useful knowledge can be found through MMR. In-depth interviews do give other causal explanations than the panel analysis does. However, since I use method integration, the findings from the panel analysis inform the design of the interviews. Pointing back to Seawright, this is part of the appeal of the integration approach to MMR.

As mentioned, the field of LGBTI politics is still novel within political science. I therefore argue that before providing concrete causal evidence, it is more pressing to identify the contributing factors instead of presenting causal evidence. In the case of researching LGBTI political inclusion quantitatively, the lack of sufficient data is a monumental challenge. I argue that, at present, the quantitative findings are insufficient as the *sole* explanation for this complex field. I therefore argue that the analytical limitations are counterbalanced by the benefits of the integration approach to MMR.

However, a concern regarding the use of MMR is that it is both time consuming and resource intensive. The financial backing received from Fritt Ord facilitated the execution of this research. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the employed methodologies may be vulnerable to the inherent limitations associated with only one researcher undertaking a substantial project. Learning and using two very different methods at the same time coupled with the analytical scrutiny of findings derived from these different approaches, is challenging. Therefore, there might be further nuances that could've been detected. However, I argue that the findings from both the panel analysis and the in-depth interviews contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the political inclusion of the queer community. I also contend that the findings from MMR can be more robust than those from single methods research.

5.2 Panel analysis

5.2a What is a panel analysis?

In this section, I will briefly outline what a panel analysis is, and why it is employed in this thesis. In this study, the panel analysis constitutes for a deductive part of this analysis (Gerring 2012, 173). Here, I use the SOCS theory to look into civil society effect on political inclusion

of the queer community. Firstly - in this analysis I am researching a topic that requires me to work with data that is organized into clusters of higher-level units. I embark on unraveling a complex puzzle spanning multiple states and years within the intricate discourse of queer politics, characterized by diverse levels and marked by moments of contentious justice (Ayoub and Chetaille 2020, 22). My units are 36 European states – on five different points in time. This could've been analyzed through a simple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model, designed to estimate the linear relationship between dependent and independent variable. However, I expect the dependent variable (political inclusion of the queer com) to vary at group level, beyond what the independent variables can explain alone. In other words, once all covariates are considered, there are no additional correlation between measures. The model operates on the assumption that all higher-level units are identical, not taking their differences into account. However – units on the same level (e.g. countries) in the real world differ greatly from one another, something that the more basic regression like OLS fails to take into account. I hold this expectation because units on the same hierarchical can unique – even though they are at the same level of the hierarchy. Therefore, when dealing with hierarchical data, especially those involving temporal hierarchies marked by noticeable dependence over time, this factor must be taken into account (Bell and Jones 2015, 135). To quantitively analyze this relationship without taking the grouped structure into account may result in ineffectively fitted models – and consequently unreliable results (Beck and Katz, 1995; Greene, 2012).

5.2b Fixed or random effects?

To navigate this complexity, I employ a panel analysis, using "time-series-cross section" (TSCS) data that encompasses repeated observations on units of interest (Beck 2001, 271). The utilization of both time series and cross-section data enhances the analytical scope (Midtbø 2016, 116). The primary objective of the panel analysis is to explore *changes* and *developments*, necessitating historical dynamics data from each unit of observation (Dougherty 2016, 529). These qualities make panel analysis ideal for researching political inclusion and civil society through the lens of SOCS theory. There are however a multitude of approaches to panel analysis. In this section, I will provide a brief overview of the arguments presented by both sides in the highly contested debate on "Fixed- or Random-effects", before arguing why I use the Random Effects model in this analysis.

How to approach the panel analysis has been widely contended in the literature. The two main camps have been between Fixed Effects (FE) approach, and Random Effects (RE) approach.

It's crucial to emphasize that both approaches have utility, but their effectiveness hinges on the researcher's specific objectives. There are a number of tests that can be employed to inform the researcher about which model is best fit for their specific data, such as the F-test or the Hausman Test. These tests can help identify the model that best suits your data. However – an equally important indicator to whether you should employ FE or RE, is the context of the research. Which effects are you interested in distinguishing?

According to Andrew Bell and Kelvyn Jones, both models are fit to use in cases where the research question is complex and contain aggregations of data – hierarchical data. These aggregations could be for example municipalities nested into states (place-based hierarchies) or measurement occasions nested into entities such as countries. The latter example can be TSCS data and panel data. Bell and Jones argue strongly *for* RE modeling, claiming that there are limited cases where FE is advantageous compared to RE. A crucial point is that the FE modeling excludes *context* from the regression – leading to researchers and policy makers missing out on sought after information. "Controlling out" context, as opposed to modelling it, can make the results overly reductive (2015, 133 - 134). Fixed effects concentrate on changes within the states and years, allowing for the control of unobserved heterogeneity (Gormley and Matsa 2014, 619). However - fixed effects eliminates the variables that are constant over time. In the context of my analysis – looking at the same cluster of states over a period of time – a FE model would remove vital information. In the RE model, individual-level variation is controlled for, meaning that the estimation of relationships between the variables are more accurately estimated (Bell and Jones 2015, 138). I finally want to point to the *selection* of the states in my analysis. The states are all part of the European continent, as this is the geographical scope of this study. They are however selected randomly, and due to data-availability. The units are not selected due to them being a member of the EU or due to their GDP (Dougherty 2016, 525). Therefore, I argue that they represent a random sample from the European continent. Concludingly – due to the characteristics of my panel-data and the purpose of my study, I choose to approach the panel analysis with a RE model.

5.2c Methodological concerns – panel analysis
However, employing panel analysis data has some drawbacks that one must be aware of. Multicollinearity has the potential to taint panel data. When numerous independent variables overlap and measure the same influence on the dependent variable, this is known as multicollinearity (Kellstedt & Whitten 2018, 263). As mentioned, the notion that there is no

perfect multicollinearity in my variables remains true after the independent variables' multicollinearity was evaluated (Kellstedt & Whitten 2018, 233). This is not to suggest that the factors have *no* correlation. Nonetheless, the data utilized in this analysis do have heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation. In what ways does this affect the analysis? To start with, autocorrelation (or serial correlation). Autocorrelation between variables indicates that they are associated across time, also known as serial correlation (Wooldridge 2012, 234). In other words, the variables' observations and the observations are associated (Lander 2017, 491). Running the Breusch-Godfrey test on my data revealed the presence of AR(1) serial correlation between my variables. The panel analysis is therefore corrected using the Prais-Winsten (PW) estimation (Beck and Katz 1995, 637-638). Another concern when using panel analysis is heteroskedasticity. Heteroskedasticity means that the variance of the error term is not constant after taking the explanatory variables into consideration. The use of the Breusch-Pagan test showed heteroskedasticity in my dataset. I therefore employed clustered standard errors, clustered on countries. Explicitly accounting for correlation between the groups of countries makes the standard errors more robust (Wooldridge 2012, 483). Due to these analytical strengths, I research descriptive representation of the LGBTI community through a panel analysis. However, there are still dimensions of political inclusion that is left unanswered. To further investigate these aspects, I've used a second method – in-depth interviews.

5.3 In-depth interviews

Where the panel analysis was a deductive study, the in-depth interviews is an inductive study (Gerring 2012, 173). Qualitative research focuses significantly on how individuals comprehend and attribute meaning to their social environment – I therefore employ in depth interviews to investigate *how* (Ritchie et al. 2014, 275). This means that I draw larger theoretical connections based on the empirical findings. In this segment, I will explain how I requited respondents to participate in the in-depth interviews, how to analyze the findings from the respondents, and methodological concerns.

In addition, in-depth interviews can contribute to the explanations through adding personal testimonies to this otherwise state-dominated analysis. One of the main reasons to why in-depth interviews was conducted for this thesis, is it's "mapping"-potential. The process of creating interviews includes identifying the territory in which the theme of interview will take place (Ritchie et al. 2014, 209).

5.3a Sampling of respondents

In the previous chapter, I described who the respondent in this study is. In this chapter, I will explain how they were selected, and how the interviews were conducted. The in-depth interviews analyzed in this thesis began by mapping out civil society organizations that work with LGBTI rights and political inclusion from a European context. Recall that the purpose of the interviews are inductive – the goal was to further investigate the quantitative findings, and search for other mechanisms affecting civil society and political inclusion of the queer community. Therefore, the purpose of the interviews is not to *generalize* the findings, but to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the different mechanisms at play. I started by contacting the NGO International Lesbian and Gay Association Europe (ILGA-Europe), receiving reply that their workload was currently too overwhelming to partake in research. I also reached out to EU civil servants, without any luck.

Returning to the drawing board, I decided to turn the sampling process from top-down to bottom up. I started contacting people from domestic civil society organizations who worked with interest representation of queer people on a European level, instead of reaching out to overarching umbrella organizations. I thus initiated purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling, also known as judgement sampling, operates on the premise that selecting the most relevant examples for a study yields the 'best' data. I reached out to potential respondents by e-mail, inviting people to participate. What started as purposeful sampling was then paired with snowball sampling – as my interviewees started suggesting that I reached out to additional people beyond themselves (Ritchie et al. 2014).

During my recruitment, I was invited to attend some seminars at Oslo Pride Week. I do not reside in Oslo, and thus had to overcome some common pragmatic issues. These includes factors such as interviewee accessibility and availability, budgetary resources, time constraints, and logistical aspects such as travel, all of which are relevant to the facilitation of face-to-face interviews (Leavy 2017, 78). However, many of the practical issues were resolved by me receiving a grant from Fritt Ord. This created a budget that allowed me to travel to Oslo for a research-stay, during Oslo Pride. This largely solved the issue of interviewee accessibility, as many European activists was in Oslo to attend Pride.

I attended seminars consisting mainly of panel discussions with individuals from European civil

society organizations. After the seminars, I approached and invited five activists to participate in the project, who all kindly agreed to lend me their insights for this study. Consequently, my interview data is from activists working in civil society organizations from six countries – Bulgaria, Norway, North Macedonia, Poland, Sweden – and a sixth country. I argue that this diversity in domestic context can bring a more comprehensive overview over different mechanisms affecting political inclusion of the queer community in Europe.

To summarize - the sampling was conducted through purposeful and snowball sampling, both approaches within non-probability sampling. The respondents were deliberately chosen due to common, specific characteristics – they were all working in a civil society organization conducting interest representation of queer people, and they were attending the same Pride-event. This sample is not designed to be statistically representative of "European civil society" – that would require tenfold more interviews and an alternative way of sampling. I do however argue that they are symbolically representative (Ritchie et al. 2014, 116). This is a stark contrast to the sampling process for the panel analysis. This difference is important to keep in mind when analyzing the findings from the interviews – the sampling for the interview data was done purposely, based on specific characteristics of the respondents. I contend that this contributes to a larger and more robust understanding of the mechanisms surrounding political inclusion of the queer community and European civil society – but the findings are not statistically generalizable or representative.

5.3b Coding interview data

How have I analyzed the interview data? Firstly, I transcribed the interviews. While software to help the researcher with the time-consuming task of transcribing exist, I choose to transcribe the interviews manually. This choice was made for ethical reasons (the respondents were informed that the tape recordings of the interviews were to be kept in SAFE). Additionally, transcribing the interviews myself was an ideal chance to get familiar with my data. I was also able to code as I was transcribing. Coding is the process of combining pieces into a classification system in which data with comparable qualities or features are grouped together (Saldana 2009). After having transcribed and coded about three interviews, patterns started emerging. At this point, I started organizing the data into a *data matrix*. When working with a data matrix, the researcher continuously classifies the sentiments from the respondent into concepts or abstractions. Organizing the data through a matrix allows for a comprehensible overview of the different arguments made by the respondents (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña

2014). Basing the framework for the qualitative analysis on a matrix allows me to work dynamically. The abstraction can happen through several levels of abstraction, allowing for thorough analysis without losing track of the raw data from the interviews. Since I am using a semi-structured interview-guide, the data held a moderately predetermined form from the onset (Ritchie et al. 2014, 282). Analyzing my data through a data-matrix made the final labels apparent in a systematic way.

5.3c Deriving labels from the codes

After having coded my data, I moved on to labeling the codes through cross-sectional methods (Ritchie et al. 2014, 273). I had three main points in mind. Firstly, none of the labels were created *before* the analysis began. Employing an inductive approach to the analysis of the interview data, I prioritized the creation of low-inference and descriptive labels. As the analytic process unfolded, subsequent labels evolved into more abstract interpretive concepts or themes (Braun and Clarke 2006; Ritchie et al 2014). Hence, the concrete empirical findings constitute the larger more abstract labels. This approach is illustrated in the coming chapter (results) – where the findings are divided into three larger overarching labels, all built on the interview data. This leads me to a second important point when analyzing interview data: to grant all the units (respondents) the same "analytical treatment". All the interviews were treated the same and weighed equally in the final analysis. Lastly – I made sure to try to view each interview as if it were my first, during the process of analysis. In this way, it's easier to discover new patterns and distinguish labels that are truly derived directly from the data material, and not based on pre-held presumptions (Ritchie et. al. 2014).

The analysis of qualitative data is non-linear and requires the researcher alternating between different levels on the abstraction ladder (Miles and Huberman 1994). Through keeping an open mind and viewing each interview as the first, I was left with a two-digit number of concepts (Ritchie et al. 2014, 287). After transcribing the ten interviews, I thoroughly analyzed the codes in the data matrix, searching for patterns and viewpoints that the data from the respondents had in common. This can be referred to as a phenomenological analysis (Ritchie et al. 2014, 273). For example – a respondent stating that the pursue for political inclusion of queer people was hindered by "lack of free media", was labelled as "democratic erosion" – as freedom of speech is an integral part of a liberal democracy. However, statements regarding increased government control over "citizen bodies" are also labelled as "democratic erosion", as the need for government control increases as democracy decreases. This form of labelling is *categorization*,

the labels are interpreted and contextualized. To ensure transparency for the reader, I exemplified the labels through quotes in the coming chapter (Ritchie et al. 2014, 278 – 280).

5.4 Methodological concerns – data from in-depth interview

In this segment, I will cover the main concerns I kept in mind when conducting the in depth-interviews, and when analysing the data.

5.4a Causality?

Firstly – causality. In the panel analysis, no inferences about causality are made. The results from the panel analysis simply show an association. However, in my in-depth interviews, I further investigated what the role of the transnational queer civil society is, and which challenges activists face when conducting interest representation of the queer community. That means that the questions asked were of a causal nature. Followingly, my respondents gave answers that imply causality – stating that they perceived x to be affecting their possibilities to conduct interest representation. However, it is important to keep in mind that I spoke to ten activists only. While they have some degree of variability – they promote interest from six different states and work in different organizations, ten activists are still not adequate for confidently stating causality. Followingly, I can do nothing more than indicate causality in this thesis. There are multiple complications within causality that need to be considered to fully account for causality. There are several confounders that make correlation appear as causality. These include for instance a common cause – where a classic confounder affects interest representation and the civil society itself (Gerring 2012, 294). A classic confounder in the case of this thesis could be "erosion of democracy". Lower democratic quality could decrease the government's sensitivity to the voice of civil society, in addition to removing the democratic channels available for civil society. In this thesis, democracy is controlled for in the panel analysis. While the variable appears insignificant, there is reason to argue that it nonetheless is relevant (as argued in 7.1a). Furthermore, an antecedent confounder can be present in the relationship you're investigating. If you are interested in the effect of X on Y, you need to be aware of a potential variable existing before X – not necessarily affecting Y unless it goes through X (Gerring 2012, 298).

5.4b Emotionalism and lack of scrutiny?

An over-reliance on interviews has been critiqued by several scholars – one of them Paul Atkins. Raising concerns about the excessive use of "narrative-driven interviews", argues that

researchers may treat the interview data at a superficial level. Atkins argues that, in some cases, information harvested in the interview setting can be taken at "face value", without further scrutiny by the researcher (Atkins 2005, 8). This point is important – but can be used as a guideline rather than arguments against using interviews for data collection. The risk of treating the data at face value is motivation to make sure that the data is thoroughly analyzed. Furthermore, I contend that interviews stand out as one of the rare approaches enabling researchers to generate data based on the experiences and perspectives of others.

In a similar line of thought, in–depth interview as a methodology has been criticized by Silverman (2011) for being tainted by "emotionalism" – where the researcher fails to acknowledge the interactive and contextual character of the interview, viewing the data "romantically and uncritically" (Ritchie et.al 2014, 182). While these concerns are important to keep in mind, I conform to the arguments made by Ritchie *et. al*. The points from Atkins and Silverman are not useless, but they overstate the potential pitfalls, and undermine the benefits of in-depth interviews (2014, 182). I therefore made sure to keep these critiques in mind during the sampling and analyzing of data – using them as guidelines for creating a more robust research design.

5.4d Time resources

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I used a semi-structured interview guide. Keeping the interview guide flexible was important. Interview data is created through an *interactive* process, where the data material comes to the surface during the interview. The semi-structured interview guide allowed me to get below the surface of what was being said, as I was able to ask follow-up questions and linger longer on themes where the respondent seemed like they had more to share. It allowed me to make sure that I harvested data on the same topic with all of my respondents, in order to gain their unique perspectives on the same themes (Ritchie et al. 2014, 184).

The in-depth interviews for this thesis were all rather lengthy – lasting from a minimum of one hour to a maximum of two. All of the interviews were taped after receiving the respondent's consent to do so. The interviews were held either at the offices of the respondent or at "Pride-huset" – a building made to hold seminars and discussions during Oslo Pride. A challenge when conducting in-depth interviews is deciding the "cut off point". This applies both to the process of sampling respondents, and when conducting interviews. How much data is enough data? The

dynamics that occurred during the interviews made this point slightly demanding. This was due to two reasons – my respondents are passionate activists – working tirelessly for queer rights and political inclusion. Consequently, they were eager to share their insights. Additionally, I made sure to show my curiosity and engagement throughout the interviews (Kvale and Brinkman 2009; Ritchie et al. 2014). The combination of a safe environment (Pride-huset) and highly invested respondents and researcher created lengthy interviews. The longer interviews are arguably a strength in this analysis, as I gained invaluable perspectives on a wide set of dynamics. However, the lengthier interviews are resource-demanding both during the interviews and in the process of transcribing. The final transcriptions of the ten interviews exceed a hundred and twenty pages.

5.4e Scope limitations

The sampling of respondents should aim at creating "as diverse as possible within the boundaries of the specified population" (Ritchie et al. 2014, 116). Having a larger participant pool for the qualitative analysis, encompassing individuals from a broader array of countries, could have yielded deeper insights and contributed to a more nuanced final analysis. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the sample provides a mix of perspectives from both the Eastern and Western regions, people working from within and outside of the EU, leaders of civil society organizations, and *mere employees*. However, there is a noticeable absence of perspectives from the southern countries, such as Spain, Portugal, and Malta. While the current composition is not without merit, the lack of representation from the southern perspective is a slight drawback. Furthermore, the findings from this study draw on Western narratives outlining the origins of LGBTI identities and politics, as well as sociopolitical systems of civilizations that have supported the blossoming of sexual variety. This could lead to a failure to recognize that the prerequisites touched on in this study might not be universally relevant in cross-cultural or historical contexts beyond the West (Rahman 2019, 16). The terminology used in this thesis, such as "LGBTI", is also western-oriented (Vibe 2016, 248).

6. Results

In this chapter, I start by presenting the findings from the panel analysis. Thereafter, I present the findings from the in-depth interviews. In chapter seven, the findings are discussed as complementary to each other. In this chapter, I keep them separate to grant an organized overview over the quantitative and qualitative findings. Recall - the hypotheses that are tested in these analyses are the following:

> *H1a: An actively participating civil society positively correlate with descriptive representation of the queer community.*
>
> *H1b: A nationalistic ideology in government positively correlate with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.*
>
> *H2a: Interest representation conducted by activists from the European civil society is negatively impacted by a lower degree of democracy.*
>
> *H2b: there are consistent challenges experienced by activists promoting interests for the queer community, irrespectively of their domestic context.*

6.1a Findings – panel analysis

Hypotheses 1a and b are tested through a panel analysis, and hypotheses 2a and b through in-depth interviews. In the coming segment, I present the results from the quantitative panel analysis through three models. In these models, I gradually introduce the control variables from the SOCS theory, starting with a bivariate regression analysis containing civil society's effect on the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Followingly, I control for four further control variables. These four variables are characteristics that describe different civil society patterns, and that I expect to be rather constant over the five time points of this analysis. In model 3, I include the two last characteristics of the SOCS theory patterns – religious and nationalistic ideology. I also control for "ideology" to verify whether the outcomes attributed to religious or nationalistic ideology are due to this specific ideology characteristic, or if it mostly comes from the state eluding any ideology. Model 4 has all variables from model 3, but also has six dummy variables controlling for "civil society pattern" from the SOCS theory. This model is a robustness check and not a full-fledged model.

Table 6: Results from panel analysis

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	-2.29 ***	-2.01**	**-2.57*****	-2.34 ***
	(0.333)	(0.60)	**(0.65)**	(0.57)
Descriptive representation of the LGBTI community	-	-	-	-
Civil Society	4.57 ***	4.01 ***	**4.28 *** **	3.50***
	(0.39)	(0.89)	**(0.82)**	(0.80)
Welfare programs	-	0.22 *	**0.29 ** **	0.37***
		(0.11)	**(0.10)**	(0.09)
State ownership over economy	-	-0.01	**-0.042**	-0.05
		(0.13)	**(0.11)**	(0.11)
Electoral democracy index	-	-0.38	**-0.26**	0.01
		(0.65)	**(0.65)**	(0.60)
Horizontal accountability	-	0.18	**0.15**	-0.01
		(0.19)	**(0.19)**	(0.19)
Ideology	-	-	**-0.10**	0.10
			(0.06)	(0.05)
IOG: Religious	-	-	**-0.15**	-0.28
			(0.44)	(0.39)
IOG: Nationalistic	-	-	**0.64 ****	0.69 ***
			(0.21)	(0.19)
Civil society pattern: Liberal	-	-	-	0.79 **
				(0.30)
Civil society pattern: Welfare	-	-	-	0.65 ***
				(0.18)
Civil society pattern: Social democratic	-	-	-	0.00
				(0.22)
Civil society pattern: Statist	-	-	-	-0.40 *
				(0.17)
Civil society pattern: Delayed democratization	-	-	-	0.24
				(0.23)
Civil society pattern: Hybrid	-	-	-	0.19
				(0.21)
N:	*180*	*180*	*180*	*180*
Adjusted R-Squared:	*0.647*	*0.672*	*0.703*	*0.774*

Notes: ***p<0.0; **p<0.001; *p<0.05

IOG: Abbreviation for «ideology of government».

Models uses RE and are corrected for first order autocorrelation (AR1). Clustered standard errors are included in parentheses.

Model 1 shows a bivariate regression analysis. This regression shows the effect of the independent variable (civil society participation) on the dependent variable (descriptive representation of the queer community), without controlling for other variables. In model 1, the adjusted R^2 is 0.647. A high adjusted R^2 implies that the independent variable(s) accounts for a large share of the variability in the dependent variable. In Model 1, only the independent variable "civil society participation" is controlled for. This implies that civil society participation alone explains the variation in descriptive representation of the queer community to a high extent in this population. Again, Model 1 only contains one variable – therefore the results are not robust. However, this bivariate regression implies that there is a positive correlation between and active civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. So far, the analysis supports H1a. However, since no other variable is controlled for in this analysis, this finding does not provide robust findings.

Model 2 shows the correlation between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the queer community while controlling for four other variables. Including more control variables improves the precision of this model, by addressing unrelated sources of variance in the dependent variable. Followingly, the coefficient estimations are more dependable than in Model 1. Additionally, including control variables isolates the impact of the main independent variable, offering a greater understanding of the relationship's robustness and ensuring that it is not skewed by other influencing factors. In model 2, I control for *welfare programs, state ownership over economy, electoral democracy index and horizontal accountability.* Government ideology is still left out. Thus, model 2 indicates how descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is affected by the five "control variables" from the SOCS theory-theory, irrespective of "government ideology". variables. Firstly – the CSPI variable is still significant, at the p<0.0 level. Its coefficients have decreased slightly – meaning that the effect of civil society on descriptive representation of the queer community has decreased by 0.57 when controlling for the other variables. The coefficient of civil society is 4.01 in model 2 – indicating that when the values of the variable "civil society" increase from 0 (lowest possible value) to 1 (highest possible value), the "descriptive representation of the LGBTI community"-coefficients increases by 4.01. This suggests that when civil society participation raises from 0 – 1, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases by 4.01 coefficients. the dependent variable ranges from 0 – 4, but due to the measurement model used by V-Dem, its minimum value is -1.2. Therefore, in this population, a 4.01 increase implies that the value rise from -1.2 to 2.81. This indicates that when the civil society is "fully

participating", the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community *almost* reaches "about the same political power as heterosexual citizens" – value 3.

Recall – the control variables in model 2 is included to test whether *other* dimensions of SOCS theory influence the relationship between civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Of the four control variables, only one is significant in model 2. The variable measuring welfare programs is also significant – albeit at the $p < 0.05$ level. This means that in model 2, it is implied that having a higher degree of universalistic welfare programs slightly increases descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The other control variables remain insignificant. Lastly – from model 1 to model 2, the *adjusted R-squared* has increased from 0.647 to 0.672. The adjusted R-squared implies that Model 2 accounts for a larger proportion of the variation of descriptive representation than Model 1. While this makes intuitively sense, as more variables are controlled for, adjusted R^2 encourages model parsimony. This means that the inclusion of unnecessary variables is penalized (Wooldridge 2012). Hence, a higher number of variables does not necessarily lead to a higher adjusted R^2, but the control variables in model 2 nonetheless increase the total explanatory power of the model.

Model 3 is the model that will be used in further discussion. I will further explain why in the "model 4 and robustness check" paragraph. For now, I'll present the findings from Model 3. Firstly - three more control variables are included. These are government ideology, and two dichotomous variables indicating if the ideology is religious or nationalistic. When I control for these ideology variables, civil society rises in its coefficients, to 4.28. When civil society increases from 0-1 in model 3, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases to reach well within value 3 – granting the LGBTI community the same degree of political power through descriptive representation as the heterosexual constituency. This result supports H1a, suggesting that a descriptive representation of the LGBTI community positively correlates with a strong civil society. Additionally, universal welfare program continues to be positively correlated with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in my population, at the $p < 0.01$ level. A one-unit increase in the welfare programs correlates with a 0.37 increase in the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community coefficients. Furthermore, controlling for ideology in model 3 increases the adjusted R2 to 0.716, indicating that these three variables increase the "goodness of fit" of model 3 compared to the two preceding models. A greater amount of variation in the dependent variable is accounted for. Looking at the variables further substantiates this notion. While the variable controlling for a mere ideological presence and

religious ideology is insignificant, the presence of nationalistic ideology is significant at the p<0.01 level. The coefficient indicates a positive relationship between nationalistic ideology and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in my population. The coefficient indicates that a one-unit change (from 0 to 1) in the "nationalistic ideology" variable increases descriptive representation of the LGBTI community by 0.64 coefficients. This result supports H1b and rejects the null hypothesis. Model 3 shows that none of the other variables are statistically significant. This indicates that in the population used in this analysis, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is not significantly affected by the other SOCS theory "characteristics" – state ownership over economy, electoral democracy index, and horizontal accountability. 6.1b Robust testing: model 4 and alternative variables

When controlling for "civil society patterns", in model 4 the adjusted R^2 increases to 0.792. This indicates that controlling for SOCS theory typologies in addition to the variables from model 3 creates a better fitted model. However, model 4 is included in Table 5, as a robustness-test. Incorporating a robustness test into this analysis serves as a validation of the results obtained from model 3. This enhances confidence in the reliability of the main variables of interest, even when additional variables are taken into consideration. In **model 4**, the six civil society patterns are included in the panel analysis. The rationale behind including these patterns in a robustness test instead of in a final panel analysis, is based on two main points. Firstly - there are 36 countries in my analysis, and 19 states from the SOCS theory. That means that the remaining 17 countries are continuously coded as 0 in model 4. Those remaining 17 states become a "reference category" by default. If these 17 states shared civil society pattern, that would increase the robustness of the findings from model 4. However, these states are not a purposeful reference category, but constitute a reference category by default. This is a drawback with this model. Secondly, the *liberal* civil society pattern variables contain only one country (United Kingdom), and the hybrid civil society only two countries (Denmark and Italy). These dummy-categories therefore fail to deliver substantial output in itself – and I derive more nuanced information from controlling for *characteristics* from the SOCS theory.

I will however point to a couple of points that increase the confidence in the findings from the previous models. Firstly – the effect of civil society on descriptive representation of the LGBTI community decreases to 3.50 in model 4. The effect is still positive, and statistically significant at the p<0.0 level. The effect of welfare programs slightly increase – and reaches the p<0.0 level of confidence. This increases the reliability of the significance of "welfare programs" in

model 3. However, the "corresponding" civil society pattern "social democratic civil society pattern" is not significant. The same goes for the "religious ideology" variable. The "welfare civil society pattern" is on the other hand highly significant.

Moreover, the "nationalistic government" variable becomes significant at the p<0.0 level in model 4, and its coefficients increase slightly. This can also be interpreted as a robustness-check for the same variable in model 3. Lastly – the liberal civil society pattern reaches the confidence level of p<0.01, and the statist civil society pattern the confidence level of p<0.05. The *liberal* civil society pattern consists solely of the United Kingdom, and do not inform about a broader trend. However, the *statist* civil society negatively correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in this population. Its "corresponding" characteristic *state ownership over economy* remains insignificant in all four models. A last interesting point in model 4 is the increased adjusted R^2. When controlling for the SOCS theory typologies, the explanation power of the model increases from 0.703 to 0.774. This indicates that when controlling for the different types of civil society pattern, more the variation in the dependent variable "descriptive representation of the LGBTI community" is explained.

6.1c Alternative variables

In my analysis, I explored various variables to gain a nuanced understanding of the political landscape potentially affecting descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. In this segment, I will briefly explain some other variables that was part of the panel analysis at an exploratory point of the study. Firstly – several measures of "religion" was included in the analysis. I included the Regime Most Important Support Group (v2regimpgroup_7), aiming to identify the primary support base on which the current political regime relies for maintaining power. This variable contains information on whether the current regime relies on a religious support group. I also included regime *opposition groups* (v2regimpoppgroup), in the analysis, to see if this variable had an effect. None of these variables were significant – nor did they change the relationship between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. I also considered The Diagonal Accountability Index (v2x_diagacc) as the "accountability" variable, but opted for the Horizontal Accountability instead, as the first contain measures of SCOs. I also included measures of corruption and *engagement in independent political associations* in the explanatory phase. None of these variables influenced the dependent variable in my population, or remarkably changed the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Finally, I also included "EU"-dummies at an exploratory

point in the analysis, to control for whether being member of the European union effects descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This simplistic variable was not significant in this analysis.

6.2 Results from in-depth interviews

In this segment, I present the main findings from the in-depth interviews. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the in-depth interviews are analyzed through indexing and sorting of cross-sectional data. I find three overarching labels that all my respondents point to as affecting the relationship between civil society and the political inclusion of the queer community. These are the erosion of democracy, lack of descriptive representation, and the European Union. In the coming segment, I present a figure illustrating the three labels, and which categories they are built on. I thereafter go on by showing what interview data constitutes the nine categories. Before I go on to present the distinct results from the interview data, I will mention the latent results that I found through interviewing activists from the European civil society. These results are outside of the interview data, as they are purely observations. Firstly – some of the respondents I interviewed brought up other respondents in my sampling pool during their interviews. For ethical reasons, I did not inform the respondents about who the other respondents were – they simply brought up each other because they are part of the transnational queer civil society and followingly used each other to exemplify issues surrounding interest representation in the European context. Secondly – two of my interviews ended rather abruptly because the respondents lost track of time and needed to rush off to meet the Norwegian prime minister. Two others were kept shortly after the respondents came back from the Norwegian parliament where they had attended a conversation with the minister of equality. These points are relevant because they illustrate that descriptive representation and interest representation are connected – and because they give some insights into how the transnational queer civil society works.

Figure 3 illustrates the three overarching themes found through labelling the in-depth interviews.

6. Interest representation through civil society: results from in-depth interviews

6.3	**Erosion of democracy**	6.4	**Lack of descriptive representation**	6.5	**European Union**
6.3a	Right wing populism	6.4a	Lack of political support	6.5a	Accession process
6.3b	Propaganda	6.4b	Lack of human rights	6.5b	"European values"
6.3c	Civil society as "justification"	6.4c	Bureacratic workload	6.5c	Authorities experiencing increased threat perception
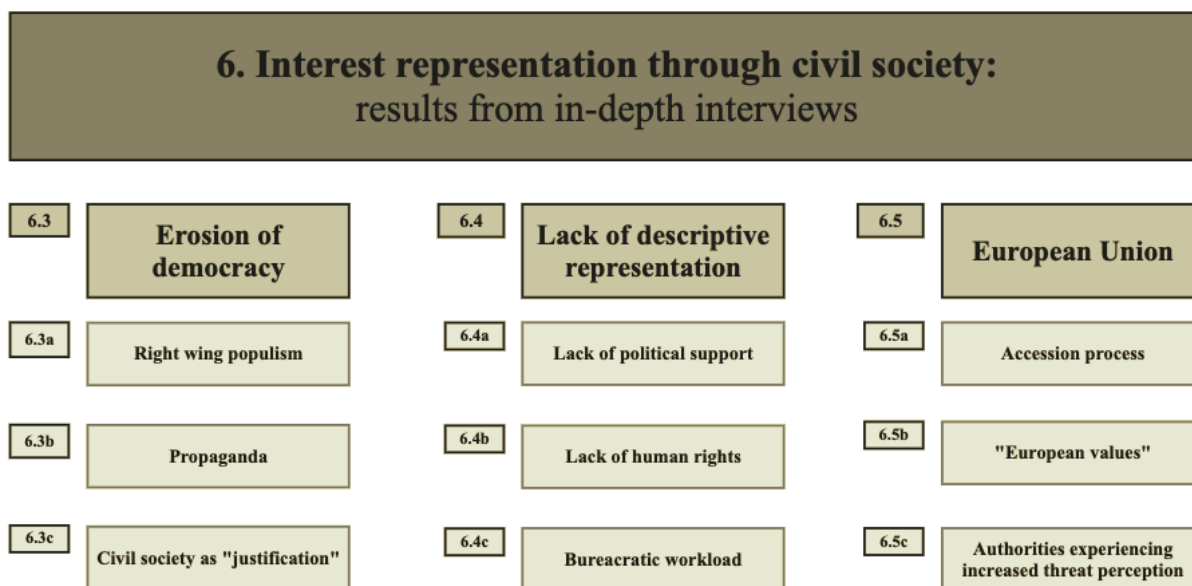
6.3 Erosion of democracy

When discussing the retraction of queer political inclusion, Respondent 8 states the following: *"This is much broader. It's much bigger. It's about antidemocratic forces, so that's why such an alliance (*the transnational queer civil society*) is necessary. They use the LGBTI as a wedge—we just have to be good at saying 'yes, we are a wedge, but the ultimate goal here is so much larger. You need to see it now so that we can stop it.' Because this is just the beginning. This is domino. We are the first piece that falls, but then so much else falls that also affects all of you."* (July 2023). I this statement, Respondent 8 argue that the LGBTI community is used as a wedge in anti-democratic processes. They furthermore explain that being used as a wedge means that they can attempt to alert the population as a whole – like a canary in a coal mine. This suggests that the queer civil society has an important role in maintaining the checks and balances in a democracy. Moreover - erosion of democracy negatively impacting political inclusion of the queer community was mentioned by every respondent in this study. This result is in line with the points made in the theoretical chapter – the erosion of democracy can significantly reduce the channels through which civil society can exert influence.

This poses a challenge for most civil society organizations. However, as Respondent 4 points out, these challenges are even graver for the queer civil society: *"For the last two years, we've had a total of five parliamentarian elections. That has led to pure political turmoil, people are not trusting any type of government. That's a challenge in the political landscape in itself. So,*

within this kind of context, our job gets even tougher. Our (the LGBTI civil society) causes and what we advocate for – it's the perfect time when an election rolls around, to put us as blame for everything" (June 2023). Political upheaval and lack of trust between constituency and government complicates the democratic channels available to the civil society. *"This is important I think – we are fighting for LGBTI equality – but there is no functioning state. Not only is our democracy young – it's just not functioning. It's a fake democracy. Vote buying, election results being modified (...) a very heavy corruption on all levels". (*Respondent 3, June 2023). Respondent 3 claims that advocating for equality in a dysfunctional state ends up being "besides the point". When the concept of "democracy" is marred by illiberal practices like vote buying and corruption, achieving political equality through democratic means becomes exceedingly difficult. This means that erosion of democracy can not only diminish the political inclusion of the queer community - it can also discourage civil society from continuing to push for interest representation.

Furthermore - a large reason for why the erosion of democracy can diminish the political inclusion of the queer community, is that a more totalitarian state requires more control over their citizens. This point is illustrated by respondent 9: *"I also think that if you look at all world - that now it's time when authoritarianism attacks democracy. We have less and less democratic countries. If you have a totalitarian government, that should control everything, including your body (...) Now, the types of gender identity – it's a lot. And it's some kind of shock that my gender identity could change during my life. It's everything out of control."* (June 2023). The perception of queer people is often framed as bodies beyond control. The erosion of democracy suggests a consolidation of government authority, driven by a desire for control that extends to the regulation of citizens. For the government to maintain control, their worldview must be maintained, and accepted by their constituency. *"If you ask me, as an old feminist, it's about the LGBTI persons dissolving some categories that, for some, make the world come apart completely. One wants to question power relations and the organization of interpersonal relationships, which can be experienced as extremely rigid for some."* (respondent 8, July 2023). This viewpoint is shared by Respondent 7: *"I think democratic erosion has a really bad influence. I believe they want to be strong leaders. They can't handle this grassroots chaos. They don't want to be challenged on their opinions and thoughts. You see this with legal changes in the country. Hungary, for example, has received several new constitutions, where they give more and more power to themselves.»* (June 2023). When democratic erosion occurs, the government control increases. This can have severe negative impacts on the current

European civil society possibilities to conduct interest representation in the name of the queer community, in addition to limit the possibility-structures for the future queer civil society.

6.3a Right wing populism

So – the data from the in-depth interviews implies that there is an overarching theme of democratic erosion that decreases civil societies possibilities of interest representation. In this segment, I will illustrate the three categories that constitutes the "erosion of democracy"-label. One of the recurring topics mentioned by my respondents, was right wing populism and nationalism. As illustrated by Respondent 10, populistic forces and erosion of democracy can be closely related: *"We are in the midst of economic crises, and democracy is going down. Basically, the situation that we have, there's a political party who is most popular – not because of Christian values, I think most people don't really care, its more about offering some sort of populist idea that it's going to be fine. Whatever's going to happen, it's going to be fine" (Respondent 10, July 2023)."* Respondent 10 argues different crises in a state accommodates for populistic forces to gain power. Strong public figures emerges, granting a sense of relief and security for the population. In addition to crises accommodating for the *emergence* of populist leaders, crisis can also contribute to *legitimizing* them. *"We've also seen a rise of far-right rhetoric, and also just people believing them more. We've seen a rise in their votes as well, in the last election. We don't have any foresight at all, we never know what's going to happen. That makes a lot of people very afraid of speaking up and supporting our cause. It immediately puts them on the line for voter support. They don't see us as a proper voting population. Not yet anyway. That's for sure an issue." (Respondent 4, June 2023).* Respondent 8 states that *«What we're talking about is far-right extremists who have some connection to fascists, like Meloni in Italy. So what we're also seeing is a significant rise in a radical far-right, which is very hostile not only towards foreigners but also towards the LGBTI community» (July 2023).* In the right-wing rhetoric, the LGBTI community is branded as "foreigners" – which means that they are not viewed as an "us". This hostility can greatly diminish the civil societies possibilities of interest representation for the queer community. Respondent 8 further underlines the challenges the right wing forces can pose for the LGBTI community: *"They are gaining more and more political power, and it worries me a lot. Because they have a stated goal to dissolve or completely remove the ordinary rights that we have managed to establish over the last ten to twenty years.»* Respondent 7 summarizes this segment: *"So, the more populist attitudes and mindsets in Europe, the less civil society.»* (June 2023).

6.3b Propaganda

A second category that I've coded as part of the "erosion of democracy"-label is propaganda. This point was mentioned by several of my respondents. Respondent 5 explains the functions of propaganda towards the queer community: *"They literally believe that children are at risk, that the sexuality education will have really harmful effects on children's and people's health. And there's of course a lot of disinformation and fake news, a lot of incitement and hate speech. So, this is now something that we are facing."* (June 2023). The notion that the queer community poses a risk for *children* is prominent in the propaganda against political inclusion of the queer community. This point was also brought up by Respondent 2: *"I notice that what is the common denominator, if we look at the USA and Europe – it is that children should be protected. I understand – I want that too! But it's a narrative that I see those who engage in a conspiratorial approach – when they mainstream it, they start with children, whom we all want to protect."* (June 2023). Respondent 6 explains the propaganda in the following way: *"the more rights we* (the LGBTI community) *get, the more dangerous this is for children. This is a narrative which is of course contrafactual, I mean all research contradicts it. but the narrative is very strong because if somebody asks you "don't you want to protect your children?" and everybody will say of course I want to protect my children. It's a very simple very basic mechanism."* (June 2023).

According to Respondent 6, the narrative constructed around the conflict between queer rights and the safeguarding of children is counterfactual. There is not a contradiction between queer rights and protecting children. This point is also touched on by Respondent 7: *«When it's not allowed to discuss queer rights in the school system, where are young people supposed to get their information from? Not from parents, not in the school system. In that case, I believe civil society plays a crucial role in information sharing. And by being able to act as a counterbalance to state-owned and controlled media.»* (June 2023). Respondent 7 argues that civil society becomes increasingly important in cases where other democratic channels are blocked – a process that can occur when propaganda is salient.

An important aspect of propaganda is the need to control the public narrative. In a sense, propaganda can be argued to be a *symptom* of democratic erosion. Respondent 3 states that *"another external factor in Bulgaria is lack of freedom of media. We don't have free media. Our media was owned by one person, basically all the media outlet was owned by the same*

person. This is really creating a distorted reality." (June 2023). When several of the democratic channels become saturated by *one* (or few) voice, other democratic channels are needed. In the case of propaganda against the queer community, several of the respondents argued that civil society is crucial for political inclusion of the queer community: *"I think that several society and civil organizations, they're the only one who can give to take back this discussion in the right way (...) We also collect all these stories and make research and we know how to make it visible. I think this monitoring system works quite good to give feedback for governance."* (Respondent 9, June 2023).

6.3c Civil society as justification

In the literature review, I described how CSOs conducting interest representation of the queer community in states with higher degrees of political homophobia are working within a particularly difficult environment. These CSOs might suffer from a lack of state-support and are challenged by civil society organizations that are "intolerant" of the queer community, such as the anti-gender movement. In the data from the in-depth interviews, the *anti-gender movement* was frequently mentioned. None of the questions from my interview guide mentioned the anti-gender movement, but it was consequently brought up by my respondents. Respondent 3 explains this point in the following way: *"There's a number of over a hundred civil society organizations that are member of the anti-gender movements. They portray themselves as pro-family organizations, of concerned parents and concerned citizens, they became a part of civil society. So if one of the democratic tools of civil society is to participate in different working groups, to different institutions, give suggestions to draft laws etc.. Now our opponents also play in the same field. And if the government is not supportive of our work and of human rights, they could easily choose these organizations as the voice of civil society, so they could completely dismiss us. Cause we are not the only actor in the field. And this pushed us even further to the back, as LGBTI organizations."* (June 2023). According to Respondent 3, the anti-gender movement creates civil society organizations that operates in the same sphere as the queer civil society. A consequence of this can be that, in the cases where erosion of democracy occurs, the state in question can purposefully choose which civil society organizations to be responsive to – and which ones to dismiss. Respondent 3 points to how this opens the door for less democratic states to appear receptive to civil society opinions, while *selectively* favoring specific organizations in their decision-making. In any democratic state, some civil society organizations will have more political influence than others. However, the real problem arises when the state itself selects which civil society organizations to listen to,

and which to dismiss. Respondent 5 describes the function of the anti-gender movement in the following way: «*The output that is being produced by these groups follow a similar structure, strategy and impact (...). They also more or less use the same strategy, using human rights vocabulary, but also more or less causing more panic and fear with the audience that they target. And this has been a trend in Bulgaria, which is our neighbor country, in Romania, we see it in Poland, Hungary. (June 2023).* It is important to note that in a democracy, civil society is supposed to function as a realm promoting different voices. To exemplify – this would mean voices focused on interest representation of the queer civil society, and voices focused on conservative values. However, when describing the current situation of queer civil society organizations, Respondent 7 stated the following: *"Offices are raided, their organizations are opposed (...) The authorities try to stop them. So, I believe the authorities are actively working against the LGBTI civil society."* (June 2023). My respondents also explain how their organizations has been subject to violence. *"The location of the establishment of Subversive Front was the attacks that happened to the LGBTI support center that was formed one year before that. So 22nd of June 2013, it was the attacks against the center. The next day we established our organization."* (Respondent 5, June 2023). *"Whenever a new election would come around, we would be a new target to some sort of attack. Two years ago our community center was attacked by an presidential candidate and ten other people – one of our coworkers got hit in the face. And our community center was basically destroyed."* (Respondent 4, June 2023). These quotes are just a few examples of the violence my respondents have met – and continue to face. This indicates that the queer civil society faces grave challenges that CSOs do not.

6.4 Lack of descriptive representation

In this thesis, I argue that descriptive representation is an integral part of political inclusion of the queer community. In the following segments, I will illustrate how descriptive representation was discussed by my respondents. Respondent 1 touched on descriptive representation when talking about the president in Latvia: *"I'm absolutely certain that descriptive representation plays a role. I'm confident that a queer president can have a positive impact on the country. It can influence sister parties, reinforcing that relationship and making one more like "the others." (Respondent 1, June 2023).* Respondent 6 touches on descriptive representation as well, stating that *"I used to love Oslo Pride. (...) These last two years I switched on the radio. I hear people that have no connection to me or my life discussing me and my life, and there's no representation of my position there. It's politicians - none of them speak for me."* This quote

underlines the importance of descriptive representation can have in political inclusion of the queer community.

6.4a Lack of political support

The point of "political support" – or lack thereof - is recurring in the interview-data. This category has several implications for interest representation of the queer community: *"You can say that while experiencing perhaps more political oppression, you also see mobilization and strength in the queer community, which I find very motivating. So, it's both setbacks and victories, you could say."* (Respondent 2, June 2023). While not underestimating the negative impact political oppression has, Respondent 2 here points to how more political oppression is met by a more close-knit queer community. This sense of support and unity could potentially lead to a more "bonded" queer civil society. However, Respondent 3 states the following: *"Because the situation is very difficult with lack of recognition and protection of LGBTI rights at any level. It's also hostile just general opinion, and the attitudes of society are not favorable. They are either silent, or vocal, but in a bad way, and they are openly aggressive. That means that we don't have celebrities who are out and in support, don't have politicians who are out and in support. We don't have the luxury to only focus on advocacy or doing community work. We have to do everything. This is also very difficult to navigate." (June 2023).* Respondent 3 points to a crucial point here – the lack of political support can lead not only to a lack of political inclusion itself. It can also lead to the opposing voices gaining more traction – as they are not being spoken against. Respondent 3 makes another key element in this statement. The lack of political support and descriptive representation leads to the workload of representing the interests of *all* queer people – lesbian, gays, bisexuals, and trans persons. While there are common denominators between these groups, they also face separate challenges. Staying à jour with the current challenges of the LGBTI community sometimes becomes the responsibility of the queer civil society alone. Had descriptive representation of the LGBTI community and political support been more present, some of this workload could've been taken on by parliamentarians, or other public figures.

In my interview with Respondent 8, I asked if she had any thoughts on what she thought the queer civil society can do to increase political support in contexts where its currently lacking. She stated that *"when you say, "what can we do?" it's like a "wake-up call." This is much bigger than just LGBTI; it will have an impact on all of you (...). It's clear that this attack is an attack on the body, on the rights to one's own body and what it should be allowed or not allowed to*

do.» (Respondent 8, July 2023). In other words – one of the ways the LGBTI civil society is conducting interest representation, is through underlining that *everyone* in society will be affected by this increased control in the longer run. In this way, the civil society actively seeks to mobilize allies by stressing that ultimately, every societal group stands to suffer from a deteriorating democracy. "*The significant battles are won when people stand together. When we achieved gender-neutral marriage laws in Norway, it was because the entire LGBTI community stood united for a common goal. People connected within their own political parties, from right to left, because it almost has to become a movement for it to happen.*" (Respondent 2, June 2023).

When discussing political support, I asked Respondent 1 about the choice to include "center right" in the name of their CSO "European Centre-Right LGBTI+ Alliance". The answer was the following: "*I think it's crucial to signal from the start, even in the name, that it's political. It's a perspective—we're constructing this based on a political conviction. It makes the plan more robust. And it can reach people who might not have otherwise listened. Other organizations may not be tied to a specific political party, but they are still political. They aren't apolitical, because then they wouldn't be able to have an opinion—and they certainly do. (...) Like, you can argue for this from a right-center perspective, you can argue for this from a left perspective, and you can argue for this from a more politically neutral standpoint»* (June 2023). Conducting interest representation from various political standpoints is in other words deemed important. In line with this, civil society in Europe work together, creating transnational bonds to make sure that interest representation is performed from different states as well. *"We receive a lot of feedback from activists that just being there—knowing that someone is there—to say hi, ask how you're doing, is crucial. It's not so much about Oslo Pride; it's about creating a framework where they can gather and build networks, becoming a support network for each other."* (Respondent 2, June 2023). Respondent 9 explains how people from different European countries attending each other's Pride-events can positively impact the queer civil society: *"It's for example for participants when they come, they see how it could be and all your aims can be realistic. All your goals. Now you can be sure for what you take all these risks."* (June 2023). Respondent 9 claims that through transnational cooperation in the civil society, activists from different domestic contexts can experience the progress achieved in other countries. This can be inspirational and contribute to advancement of political support in more countries.

6.4b Lack of human rights

Evidently, there are several viewpoints within the civil society pursuing political inclusion of the queer community on how to gain political support. One approach is to claim to be "non-political", based on the assumption that this will grant access to support in a wide specter of parties and parliamentarians. Another approach involves explicitly stating a political alignment to illustrate that the political inclusion of the queer community can be approached from various perspectives. Respondent 2 states the following when discussing backsliding of queer rights and European Economic Area (EEA)-grants: *"Do you want the money? Yes, but then you must uphold basic human rights." Yes, that's the message here—it's not politics, it's fundamental human rights.»* (June 2023). In this case, Respondent 2 points to how LGBTI rights are *human rights* that should prevail regardless of political conviction. This notion – that queer rights are human rights, is crucial when discussing political inclusion of the queer community. This brings me to a point mentioned by Respondent 8, when discussing the "anti-gender ideology": *"It's a clever term. If we replace it with just "human rights ideology," it immediately becomes much more challenging. But that's what one should do. It's human rights ideology that you're against." (July 2023).* My results suggests that there is a connection between lack of standard human rights and political inclusion of the queer community. This seems to be going from both bottom up and top down. Firstly: *"Some people are not engaged in creating a civil society because they are really focused on surviving (...) You need to have the privilege of peace of mind and a full fridge in order to be able to think about your rights, to be honest"* (Respondent 10, July 2023). Respondent 5 also highlights how in states where the fundamental rights of people are lacking, the existing power disparities are readily maintained. *"I think in societies where people are having their daily lives based on how to meet their fundamental needs like food (...), its easy to use these narratives – divides, to keeping people in power. Very often, a tool to use for that, is the "name" to be blamed for, is the people with less power, who are marginalized, who have no say whatever." (June 2023).* In other words – the LGBTI community, as an already marginalized group, are easy for the people in power to put the blame on. When there is no descriptive representation of the queer community, it is easy for the power structures to remain in place – at the expense of the LGBTI community.

6.4c Bureaucratic workload

"If you're fighting for survival, you're more focused on that rather than the biggest picture. This is also a problem because this also undermines the results that we as a unified, total

movement, have." (Respondent 3, June 2023). This quote leads me to the last category in the "lack of descriptive representation" label - the bureaucratic workload. My findings suggests that the paperwork-related workload put on the queer civil society so large that the civil society organizations end up being "watered down" through the constant search for funding: *"What civil society do is that they start applying for other topics that are similar to their initial cause because there's "okay, there's funding for this.. its not really in our priority, but it will secure funding and well figure it out". Then after some years, the organization become so broad in what they do that the basically loose the focus of why they were established in the first place" (Respondent 3, June 2023).* Respondent 5 points to the severity of this point as well, stating that *"Projects I have worked with that are EU funded are an enormous workload of bureaucracy – which kind of limits what you can do with your other work. (...) Why do you need this? Like you need to employ at least one person to work on only that, and you want to focus on working with peoples real life stories. On a daily basis. So it's a bit frustrating."* (Respondent 5, June 2023). The heavy administrative burden that is put on queer civil society groups can contribute to them having lower chances of gaining political inclusion. However, it can also be a symptom of a *lack* of representation in the formal political entities. If descriptive representation of the queer community had been higher, it is possible that the processes for granting support would've been simpler, or the grants to the queer civil society larger. However, there are also channels that allow more efficient interest representation of the queer community. In this quote, Respondent 1 explains how they conduct interest representation in their transnational civil society organization: *"We try to look at each other. We also want to have influence and be in contact with the EPP. We have established contact with them, had meetings where we inform those who are in the European Parliament because there is an inter-parliamentary group for LGBTI issues. So, we write to them occasionally and say, 'This is what we are doing, this is important, and you should consider this in this particular matter.'"* (June 2023). Interest representation through these channels can increase the possibilities for the queer civil society to function as a "substitute" for descriptive representation.

6.5 European Union

"But to be honest, I'm very very happy that we are in the EU. Because we are part of something greater, and for now this is a really important thing – because it prevents our government from doing even more awful things in terms of human rights and economy and democracy." (Respondent 10, July 2023). The third label that emerged through the interviews, was the European union. This label contains categories that seem to positively impact civil society's

possibilities for interest representation, and that seem to diminish them. Where the categories making up "erosion of democracy" and "lack of descriptive representation" was described as mainly negatively impacting political inclusion of the queer community, the categories constituting "European union" are more complex. This label is compounded by categories that can be viewed as increasing *and* decreasing political inclusion.

6.5a Accession process

To become part of the European union, the candidate state must undergo an "accession process" to adhere to standards set by the EU. The accession process is closely tied to the Europeanization process described in chapter 2, as this process harmonizes the candidate states to conform to the unions "ways of doing things". On the one hand, the accession process can enhance the civil societies possibilities to perform interest representation – as the process for example requires LGBTI rights to be included in national legislation. That the EU focuses on queer rights when a candidate state undergoes the accession process, can increase political inclusion of the queer community. On the other hand – where candidate states already have achieved the status of member state, the tools for furthering political inclusion of the queer community by the EU decreases. Respondent 2 explains this paradox in the following way:

*"The issue is that when Bulgaria and Romania entered the EU early on, LGBTI rights weren't a priority for the EU. They (*the EU) *don't have the leverage now because they are already in. The fact that the EU has shifted its focus on this, becoming uncompromising to a large extent, brings about a change."* (June 2023). This point was also touched on by respondent 6: *"I think this is important because, if you look at the enlargement process around 2004 - there were some demands on human rights issues. But first of all, they looked at ticking the boxes on relatively clear simple issues. And LGBTI issues, at that time, it had not really entered the human rights agenda."* Respondent 3 makes a similar point when discussing Bulgaria and the inclusion of LGBTI rights as a part of the accession process: "*This was a requirement, so they include the sexual orientation, and they ticked the box. And they accepted us into the European union. And now the European union has no tools to influence our government in any way. Because we are already in. And they can't kick us out – and they can't force us to do anything else. So actually, by being part of the Europe union, when the requirement was so scarce, leads to the fact that we so many years later have no advancement in legislation."* (June 2023). Respondent 3 argues that because Bulgaria and Romania became part of the EU but still struggle to maintain queer political inclusion, the EU has furthered their emphasis on queer political inclusion in the accession process. This quote again shows the duality of the accession process – Bulgaria and

Romania went through the accession process and gained membership in a time where the demands on political inclusion of the queer community was low. Followingly, the legislation came to a halt – an evolvement the EU struggles to combat. However, after this "situation" became apparent, the accession process has advanced. Newer candidate states must fulfill more robust and extensive changes to enhance political inclusion of the queer community.

6.5b "European values"

When asked what he thinks "European values" is, Respondent 4 jokingly answered: *"it's the gays."* (June 2023). While his reply made us both laugh, it illustrates a reason to why "European values" has become both a helpful tool and a potential obstacle for political inclusion of the queer community. The notion that European values can be both useful and an impediment was held by the lion's share of my respondents: *"I think that it gives LGBTI rights organizations in those countries something to build on in terms of addressing political issues in their countries. It also provides a tool that can be used for all human rights movements in the countries that sign and enter into the partnership. Then civil societies in those countries have something to use as a tool. I see it as positive. I'm not surprised that it is used politically, but I see it as positive in principle that there are requirements."* (Respondent 9, July 2023). The "European values" can constitute tangible points that can help the civil society in their interest representation of the queer community. The previous mentioned inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the anti-discrimination article in the EU charter is an example of how the EU can contribute with more concrete points for the queer civil society. However, the notion that there exists a set of fixed values that all European states must adhere to can have negative impacts on the political inclusion of the queer community. As Respondent 6 states: "*I don't think anyone has, you know, a claim to the European values. I mean, human rights values are international values, and they're built on an international consensus. (...) So I don't like it, but I appreciate the function it has in terms of safeguarding human rights. I just don't like the term."* When Respondent 10 was asked about their opinions on "European values", they replied the following: *"When I hear "European values" I think... What is "European values"?* (laughs) *Maybe we don't really discuss it enough, what are the values? (...) When it comes to leaders such as Orbán or Kaczyński or Meloni, they're referring to this feeling of being left behind."* (July 2023). Respondent 10, speaking from a Polish context, suggests that the absence of a consensus among European states on the definition of "European values" allows leaders from various countries to claim that the EU is "leaving them behind." This statement implies that European values might not be inherently European, but rather values determined at the

supranational level and then distributed to all EU member states. In states where these values are distributed without the full support of state leaders and their constituency, backlash can arise. Arguing that European values is used as propaganda in more autocratic states, Respondent 9 argues that: *"if you ask people, "European values - what does it mean, exactly?" (...) if you ask them, "should gay people be sent to prison?" They say "No.", "Do you want them to be killed?" They say "No". It makes no sense. But it's really good."* (June 2023). In this quote, Respondent 9 explains that European values as propaganda against the queer community is efficient in states eluding political homophobia.

6.5c Authorities experiencing increased threat perception

Backlash can arise in various forms. Backlash to "European values" and the EU in the form of *increased threat perception* was pointed to by a large number of the respondents in this thesis. Respondent 10 points to how some forces claim that European values are viewed as predetermined – agreed on before they joined the union: *"I'd say that they're referring to the fact that they're being invited to a party that's already started. (...) It's something that they play on – the emotion of being excluded. That there is something that is being enforced on us. Like okay – this is a participation, it's a willing participation – but they don't really give us the opportunity and the voice."(July 2023).* Respondent 10 highlights that while joining the EU is a voluntary decision, newer member states may still feel with their limited influence on seemingly predetermined norms. When political inclusion of the queer community is part of these predetermined norms (through being part of "European values"), the queer community can become a central point in legitimizing the EU as a "threat against the nation". This point is further informed by Respondent 9: *"European values - it's a part of this process how to fight external enemies. (...) Of course, without external enemies, you cannot keep your power. This is a very good method that we can export, root and export. It's a method on how you can keep power."* (June 2023). The experience of European values as being "imposed" on them further legitimizes the decrease of political inclusion of the queer community. *"They* (the authorities) *just find simple explanations that would work without much thinking. And having a scapegoat solves it. Were poor because of the gays. We are last on all the charts because the EU wants to destroy us because we're this old and ancient nation with wise people that are so good that the world is against us, because we are so good. And they just want to put us aside for their own purpose"* (Respondent 3). These points illustrates that an increased sense of external threat against the national state can decrease political inclusion of the queer community. However, increased threat perception can also make states more inclined to set in place stricter

mechanisms securing the authorities from potential *internal* threats as well. Respondent 6 highlights this point through discussing Turkey and a new constitutional change: *"the new constitution gives, protection for your family against deviants. So, it means basically that they're now introducing that a family should be a protected entity. But not from earthquakes for example, but from deviants, for threats against the family, which is basically us* (the LGBTI community)." (June 2023).

6.6 Alternative categories in the in-depth interviews

When analyzing the in-depth interviews, I found an array of variables that very well could also explain which challenges the queer civil society in Europe is facing. I conducted ten in-depth interviews with highly competent people – meaning that I gained a wide range of both challenges and explanations to why these challenges might exist. Some points that could've shed light on the analysis has been left out. The three final labels are constituted by data that was recurrent in all ten interviews. I decided which elements to keep, and which to exclude through systematically going through the data matrix containing the interview-data with the aim of using the most re-occurring points in the analysis. However, there are three other categories that could have large explanation power, in addition to the themes already discusses. These are the increase of *propaganda laws* targeting the LGBTI community, the role of institutionalized religion (especially the catholic church), and the large presence of activist burnout. These points were mentioned by many of my respondents, but to a lesser extent than the final categories and their overarching labels. I however do not wish to downplay these other explaining variables and argue that they also are of importance.

6.7a Summary of the findings from the panel analysis

The main findings from the panel analysis were presented in model 3. The results from this panel analysis suggests that civil society participation is positively correlated to descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. In the population of this thesis, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases with 4.28 coefficients when civil society participation increases from 0 to 1. That implies that when civil society participation increases from low to high, the LGBTI people goes from being completely deprived of real political power to being represented to about the same extent as heterosexual citizens. The confidence level on this correlation is $p<0.0$. Robustness tests increases the confidence in this relationship. In model 3, I also find indications that universal welfare programs can be positively correlated with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Lastly, I find that "nationalistic

government ideology" also positively effects descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This implies that in this population, "civil society participation" is the variable most strongly positively associated with the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community and is also the variable that accounts for the greatest proportion of variation in the dependent variable. However, degree of universal welfare programs and a nationalistic ideology also positively correlate with the dependent variable. The robustness-tests suggests similar findings. I hence find support for H1a and H1b. These analyses indicates that when civil society participates more actively, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases. I additionally find support for H1b – as my panel analyses indicates that descriptive representation of the LGBTI community slightly increases when a government promotes nationalistic ideology.

6.7b Summary of the findings from the in-depth interviews

Analyzing the in-depth interviews resulted in three overarching labels, each composed of three categories. The first label is "Erosion of democracy", constituted by right-wing populism, increased levels of propaganda, and civil society used as a "justification". My respondents explain how a lower degree of democracy leads to a higher need for control over citizens' bodies, making the queer community particularly targeted. They also inform me of the increased use of propaganda targeting the queer community. Simultaneously, right-wing groups infiltrate the space of civil society, making it more challenging for the queer civil society to conduct interest representation. These challenges were brought up by all respondents, implying support for H2b. The second label found in the interview data is "lack of descriptive representation". This label is made up of a lack of political support, a lack of human rights, and a large bureaucratic workload. The activists explain that they carry out interest representation by reaching out to broader segments of society. They highlight that the absence of human rights forces large parts of the queer community to prioritize survival over advocating for their interests. Additionally, my respondents discuss the considerable bureaucratic challenges involved in securing funding.

These challenges were also touched on by respondents from all the domestic contexts in this thesis. The last label is "European Union", made up by accession process, European values, and an increased experience of threat perception among states. The respondents describe the European union as both supporting and hindering interest representation through civil society. The accession process has facilitated the integration of LGBTI rights into national legislation.

However, my respondents argue that the EU's influence over queer issues at the national level diminishes once a candidate state becomes a member state. They describe how "European values" can be helpful in interest representation, as it provides civil society with a "tangible" aspiration for queer rights. However, European values are also used by traditional and right-wing forces as something that is "foreign" and "imposed" on the national states. Lastly, my respondents explain that they experience a connection between "European values" and threat perception within states. They point to how increased threat perception makes it more challenging for them to conduct efficient interest representation of the LGBTI community. They experience that when authorities experience a sense of threat, they mark the queer community as "scapegoats". This again negatively impacts their possibilities of interest representation. These points were present in the data material from all ten interviews. I thus also find support for H2b – the challenges faced by European civil society activists are similar, irrespective of their domestic context.

7. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the findings derived from the mixed methods approach. In the previous chapters, I have described the two methods and their findings separately. I now turn to discussing them as integrated findings – in line with the integration approach to mixed methods.

7.1 Research questions

The aim of this thesis is to further the knowledge about political inclusion of the queer community in the European context. The queer community has been, and continue to be, a marginalized minority. As argued in the theoretical chapter, I contend that civil society is a pivotal part in understanding political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Followingly, the research question in this thesis is:

> *"Which role does European civil society have in promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community?"*.

While prior studies about the topic of political inclusion of the LGBTI community exist, most are case studies, case comparisons, or survey studies on individuals' opinions about the queer community. Consequently, there is to date no extensive framework guiding research on political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Followingly, I made two sub-research questions:

> *Research question a: Does European civil society strengthen the descriptive representation of the queer community?*

> *Research question b: Which challenges do the queer civil society face when conducting interest representation?*

In the search for a more comprehensive overview of this topic, I constructed a research design based on mixed methods research. My motivation for performing method integration was to accommodate for research of two slightly different aspects of political inclusion of the queer community. I argue that conducting two methods allowed me to gain both broader and deeper insights. To answer RQ.a, I employed a panel analysis with 36 European states from the year 2000 to 2019, to look into civil society's role in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. After establishing a correlation between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community, I moved on to answering RQ.b. I carried out ten in-depth interviews with activists from the transnational European civil society. Interviewing respondents from various domestic contexts working with interest representation for the queer

community granted valuable insights from activists with firsthand experience of the challenges the queer civil society faces.

I had two hypotheses that I set out to research through the panel analysis. These were the following:

> *H1a: an actively participating civil society positively correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.*

> *H1b: a nationalistic ideology in government positively correlates with stronger descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.*

The results from the panel analysis supports both H1a and H1b. In my population, an actively participating civil society has a significant positive association with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This finding implies that when civil society is "highly participating", descriptive representation of the LGBTI community almost reaches approximately the same political power as heterosexual citizens. Furthermore, in states where national ideology is strong, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is also higher. I also found that in states where welfare programs are more universalistic, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is also higher.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with the goal of answering these two hypotheses:

> *H2a: Interest representation conducted by activists from the European civil society is negatively impacted by a lower degree of democracy.*

> *H2b: there are consistent challenges experienced by activists promoting interests for the queer community, irrespectively of their domestic context.*

Through analyzing the interview data, I found support for both H2a and H2b. Every respondent explained mechanisms surrounding erosion of democracy as a grave challenge for their possibilities for interest representation. Moreover, my respondents informed me about similar challenges, irrespective of which domestic context they were conducting interest representation from. Furthermore, the activists argued that the EU accession process helps interest representation - as the EU as of now requires candidate states to implement LGBTI-friendly policies into their national frameworks. However, they also highlight that the European Union's ability to impose sanctions for insufficient political inclusion of the LGBTI community

diminishes once a candidate state attains membership. The findings from the in-depth interviews also imply an ambivalence toward "European values". My respondents argue that on the one hand, they can contribute positively to interest representation, as it can create tangible points to use in interest representation. On the other hand, "European values" are used by forces opposing the political inclusion of the queer community, such as the right-wing movements. Moreover, my results indicate that interest representation conducted by civil society can be staggered in states where authorities experience European values imposed by the EU as a threat to their nation.

7.2 Civil society participation and democracy

In the coming paragraphs, I will account for what I contend can be learned from these results – and what I contend should be interpreted with care. In this segment, I focus on whether European civil society strengthens descriptive representation of the queer community. I find that the degree of civil society participation is positively correlated with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This indicates that in states where civil society routinely is consulted by policymakers, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is higher. I expected this finding from a theoretical standpoint and found support for this hypothesis in the results. Civil society could explain the variation in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community, as shown in my data and analysis. The effect is significant and implies that when civil society increases from low to high, the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community reaches "about the same" level as that of heterosexuals. This implies that civil society participation *is* important in explaining variation in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Furthermore – the adjusted R^2 in model 1 (testing only the correlation between independent and dependent variable) is 0.647. Comparatively, the adjusted R^2 in model 3 is 0.703. While the adjusted R^2 increases when controlling for the SOCS theory variables, the change is not that large. A high adjusted R^2 in model 1 indicates that civil society participation alone explains a large share of the variation in the dependent variable.

The large explanation power of civil society participation brings me to the levels of multicollinearity in this analysis. As mentioned, all the multicollinearity levels are below five and do not pose a grave issue in the analysis. However – the highest level of multicollinearity is between the variables measuring civil society and democracy. This implies that these two variables have some level of interdependency – change in one variable affects change in the other. This indicates that when interpreting the effect of civil society participation in this

analysis, I keep in mind that the level of democracy can be connected to the level of civil society. Referring back to the democratic functions of civil society presented in chapter three, it intuitively makes sense that civil society and democracy to some extents are associated with each other. Furthermore - in the exploratory stages of the panel analysis, I tested other variables to use as a measure of "democracy". They all showed approximately the same level of multicollinearity. There can be several reasons for that – but an important one is that it is reasonable to believe that states with higher levels of democracy also have higher levels of civil society participation – and vice versa. Therefore, I interpret Model 3 with some caution. While the result from this model implies that civil society participation alone largely explains variation in the dependent variable and democracy does not, the theoretical background (along with the results from the in-depth interviews) gives me reason to believe that both these variables are relevant in explaining variation in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. However, from my panel analysis, I find support for civil society being an explanation factor in variation in the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This result would not be picked up by the quantitative analysis if the indicators had been too strongly related. Followingly, I argue that European civil society can strengthen the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

Additionally, my findings on civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community are in line with the previous literature review and theory. It is in line with the notion of Europe as an "activist project" – a place where activism is influential and integrated in overarching umbrella organizations like ILGA and European Centre-Right Alliance. It is also in line with the literature on *discourse* and countermovements from the literature. It could be that parts of the explanation to why higher participating civil society correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is higher, is because civil society contributes to creating discourse and countermovements. These countermovements can increase the salience of the queer communities' struggles, and consequently increase their descriptive representation. Moreover, civil society functions *outside of* the formal political power – as the sphere between the private and the state. The goal of civil society is not to pursue political office, but to promote interests. However, the findings from the panel analysis in this study implies that there is a correlation between civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Civil society potentially influencing descriptive representation would imply that civil society participation can affect the political system to a certain degree – as descriptive representation is part of the political system.

7.3 Welfare programs and religious ideology

In model 3, two more variables are significant – universal welfare programs and "nationalistic ideology". The variable "universal welfare programs" is derived from the "social democratic civil society pattern" and is positively correlated with the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in model 3. This implies that where there are higher levels of universal welfare programs, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is higher. In this analysis, a one-unit increase in the "welfare programs" variable increases the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community by 0.37 coefficients. The welfare variable is significant in both models two and three (at the $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$ level, respectively). In the robustness check, however, "welfare programs" are significant at a $p<0.0$ confidence level. The "welfare programs" variable in this thesis is included as a characteristic of SOCS theory, corresponding with the "social democratic civil society pattern". In my analysis, the characteristic of the typology is significant, while the typology itself is not. A positively correlated welfare variable in this analysis could however imply that features of the "social democratic civil society pattern" have positive correlations with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

I find the opposite with "religious ideology" and "welfare civil society pattern". Religious ideology is not significant in either of the three models nor in the robustness check. The welfare civil society pattern is however highly significant, indicating a 0.65 increase in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community per one-unit increment. Here, two important points appear. Firstly – the typologies are included as a robustness check and are not part of model three. Followingly, the significance of the welfare typology must be handled with care. Secondly – the religious ideology points to current governance at the five points in the panel analysis. This variable does not contain information about institutionalized religion within a state, the state's degree of secularization, or which religion is being portrayed by the government. While this is not explicitly controlled for through the typologies either, the states that are categorized as "welfare civil society patterns" share certain historical characteristics, as presented in Chapter 3. Accordingly – I interpret the results on welfare programs and religious ideology in the following way: it could seem like religion and welfare programs can influence the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. These variable's effects should however be further researched.

As mentioned, the "welfare" variable is a characteristic of the "social democratic civil society pattern", and the "religious ideology" variable from the "welfare civil society pattern". The positive correlation between welfare programs and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community could exist due to several reasons that are not measured by the welfare variable itself. As Salamon and Sokolowski describe the social democratic civil society pattern stems from a nonprofit workforce that has substantial power. In these contexts, the lower classes have gained approximately the same level of power as the upper classes. This power constellation can increase the level of government funding of welfare services, but it could also affect other aspects of society. It could for instance be that marginalized people have better preconditions for running for office in states with social democratic civil society patterns – as they have a strong civil society and affordable welfare to support them. Followingly, it could be that in states with higher degrees of governmental funded welfare states, the income inequality is lower. This could mean that the citizenry views each other as more equal, and the willingness to accept opposing viewpoints could increase. Consequently, the public environment might become less hostile, and running for election as openly queer less daunting – which can lead to increased descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. I hence argue that universalistic welfare programs can increase the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. However, as content in the SOCS theory, a stronger welfare state can be a result of a stronger civil society. I hence argue that the significance of the universalistic welfare variable also indicates that a stronger civil society increases the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

7.4 Nationalistic ideology

In model 3, nationalistic ideology is positively correlated with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The confidence level is $p<0.01$ in model 3 but increases to $p<0.0$ in the robustness model. This result implies that in states where the government promotes a nationalistic ideology, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community is 0.64 coefficient higher. While the correlation coefficient is less than one, a 0.64 increase could signify a meaningful increase in descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The variable measuring nationalistic ideology is included in the panel analysis due to several reasons. This variable is not directly derived from the SOCS theory but is controlled for due to points from the literature review. In Chapter 2, I described several points that explain the inclusion of nationalistic ideology. A quick summary – LGBTI people are often marked as "foreigners" in the nationalistic discourse and are followingly viewed as "opposing" the nation. This point of

view can lead to conflict within a society, making the queer community more visible in the public eye. This visibility can increase their political inclusion, but it can also make them a more apparent subject of hate. Furthermore, in the literature review, I outlined the suggestions from various scholars, indicating that nationalistic ideology tends to rise when authorities perceive an escalation in threats against the state. In the literature, it is suggested that higher levels of threat perception and nationalistic ideology itself can negatively impact the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. However, I have yet to find previous studies on governmental promotion of nationalistic ideology and the level of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Consequently, the results from the panel analysis would be of interest regardless of its outcome, as it constitutes original knowledge.

However, the positive correlation between nationalist ideology and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community in my population is therefore both expected and unexpected. It is expected because, as previously hypothesized, a nationalistic government that is openly opposed to the queer community can increase the LGBTI community's visibility. This can make their struggles more apparent for other groups of society, and followingly increase votes for queer parliamentarians or increase the support to civil society. It is however unexpected because nationalistic ideology itself is based on a notion of "us" and "them" – and the queer community is often targeted as "them". This identity divergence could negatively impact the descriptive representation of the queer community. Furthermore, states that portray a higher level of "political homophobia" could be connected to the levels of nationalistic ideology. Political homophobia often is used in cases where the authorities use the queer community as a scapegoat, to increase their own level of control. From that perspective, nationalistic ideology could negatively impact the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Nevertheless – in this panel analysis, the correlation is positive and significant. Hence, I argue that a government eluding nationalistic ideology can increase the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community by increasing the visibility of the queer communities' struggles.

7.5 The European transnational civil society and democratic erosion

In the coming paragraphs, I focus on the challenges faced by the queer civil society when conducting interest representation. I will firstly point back to the notion made in segment 4.7 – stating that the mere existence of a close-knit transnational civil society where activists work together and support each other helps the civil society in the challenges they are facing. In this study, I was mainly interested in the *challenges* civil society faces. It is however important to

note that the transnational civil society working together is an important tool *against* these challenges. The intrinsic support within the European civil society can contribute to increased interest representation.

This is not to say that external support is unimportant for interest representation. For the queer civil society to be successful in their interest representation, they rely on a responsive state. This means that external support is vital. During the interviews, all my respondents mentioned democratic erosion as a challenge the queer civil society was facing. This decrease in available democratic quality negatively impacts interest representation of the queer community. My respondents explain how they face propaganda spreading hate speech targeting the LGBTI community, often focused on how the LGBTI community "harms children". They also explain that right-wing populism poses a grave challenge for interest representation of the queer community. Right-wing populism uses the queer community as a "wedge" – creating a "them" and "us". The "them" in this case would be the queer community. My respondents explain how they are made out to be "foreigners" and meet hostile attitudes within their states. This is in line with the points regarding right-wing populism and nationalism outlined in the literature review. Past empirical findings indicate that norms regarding sexuality and gender pose a particular threat to "national values". Consequently, political homophobia can increase. Through the interviews, I found that activists from the European queer civil society view right wing nationalism as a challenge to interest representation.

7.6 Nationalism and political inclusion of the LGBTI community through the lens of MMR

This finding from the in-depth interviews contrasts with the result from the panel analysis – where "nationalistic ideology" positively correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. Firstly - I measure slightly different dimensions of political inclusion of the LGBTI community in the two methods in this thesis. Hence, nationalistic ideology positively correlating with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community does not necessarily mean that the same association is present between nationalism and interest representation. However, these divergent findings are worth pausing with. I argue that while the findings seem opposing, they might explain the same mechanism. When the effect of nationalistic ideology is viewed from inside civil society, it is intuitive that this variable is viewed as negative. The nationalistic forces pose grave challenges to interest promotion of the queer community. The civil society viewing the nationalistic ideology as a negative might be

the cause for why it is positive in the panel analysis. If civil society continuously publicly argues against nationalistic forces, they can increase the visibility of the queer minority. If the increased visibility is met with empathy by a substantial segment of society, political support might increase. Consequently – the political inclusion might increase. This points to the potential of an antecedent confounder. It could be that in contexts where nationalistic forces and the queer civil society is vocal, and visibility arises – the degree of constituency support might be the actual deciding factor in whether the discourse leads to increased political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Explained differently - the mechanisms might not be x (civil society) in public discourse with y (nationalism) leading to z (political inclusion of the queer community). Civil society might be dependent on a high degree of constituency support for the public discourse with nationalistic forces to result in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Accordingly, nationalistic forces might be dependent on a low degree of constituency support for the political exclusion of the queer community. I hence argue that nationalism poses a challenge to the interest representation of the queer community. Keeping the findings from the panel analysis in mind, I however simultaneously argue that nationalistic ideology in government might result in increased descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

7.7 Civil society as justification

The last finding from the "erosion of democracy" label is civil society as justification. As previously stated, this category is made up of data implying that the queer civil society is met by unresponsive authorities, which diminishes their possibilities of their interest representation leading to actual political inclusion. Furthermore, my respondents point to the presence of anti-gender movement organizations in civil society as a complicating factor for their interest representation. The anti-gender movement poses a double negative. If a state has a certain amount of funding allocated to civil society, they are able to choose which voices in the civil society to support. In the states where political homophobia is high, the findings from the interviews indicate that support for anti-gender movements increases, consequently decreasing support for the queer community. Moreover - the anti-gender movement CSOs themselves have an outspoken anti-LGBTI agenda. This indicates that the stronger the anti-gender movement (and other civil society organizations opposing the queer community) get, the more grave the challenges faced by the queer civil society get.

To a certain extent, the inclusion of conservative organizations such as those in the anti-gender movement in political processes is democratic. As described in chapter two, civil society is vital in a democracy. If the government supporting antigender movements is democratically elected, and the anti-gender movement consists of the voice of the people, it can be argued that the challenges the queer civil society faces are democratic. However, the large emergence of anti-gender movements can provide a chance for politically homophobic states to avoid granting support to the queer civil society. This point is in line with the notion made by Salamon and Sokolowski. They state that the presence of civil society in a state can be used as a "justification" for not granting further forms of assistance to societal groups facing difficulties. If a state avoids conferring support to the queer civil society, but also avoids openly discouraging them, they can justify a lack of further political inclusion of the LGBTI community through the mere existence of a queer civil society. This process would arguably pose a large challenge for the queer civil society – as the existence of a queer civil society could end up functioning as "ghost politics".

However – my respondents explain not only lack of support, but also pure violence against activists and the buildings housing their CSOs. In states where the degree of violence towards the queer civil society is high, the situation is graver than in the cases where the queer civil society is "only" neglected. A community that is under the threat of violence is no longer only neglected; it is targeted. Consequently, the possibilities for interest representation decreases.

7.8 Lack of descriptive representation

When analyzing the in-depth interviews, I find that the respondents describe a lack of descriptive representation as negatively impacting their abilities to perform interest representation. Three subcategories make up the larger label of "lack of descriptive representation" – lack of political support, lack of human rights and the bureaucratic workload. These categories constitute the "lack of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community"-label based on the assumption that if descriptive representation had been higher, these categories would burden the queer civil society to a lesser extent. Had there been higher levels of descriptive representation, the political support assumably would have increased, making governments and authorities more responsive to interest representation. Increased levels of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community could make the bureaucratic burden lighter on the civil society conducting interest representation for the queer community. Increased descriptive representation could also lead to real changes in policymaking. This could

institutionalize support for the queer civil society to a larger extent, decreasing the bureaucratic workload. A smaller bureaucratic workload could free up more resources for the queer civil society to focus on actual *interest representation* – more so than gaining financial support to be able to keep their CSOs running. The lack of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community could therefore negatively impact the interest representation of the queer civil society. Besides these points, I argue that increased descriptive representation could diminish the potential usage of civil society as a justification. It could in that case be that if the sexual minority is descriptively represented, the de facto support to queer CSOs could increase. Accordingly, the challenges for interest representation of the queer community could decrease.

7.9 The role of the European union and European values

The last result I will discuss is the role of the European Union. As the geographical scope of this study is Europe, it is impossible to avoid the effects of the EU. As mentioned, I ran the panel analysis with "EU-dummies" – a variable that was insignificant. However, factors surrounding the European Union came up in several ways in the in-depth interviews. Again, the point of "threat perception" was mentioned. My respondents point to how states that became member states at the beginning of the 2000s might experience European values determined in the EU as something that is enforced on them. The notion of later member states being "invited to a party that is already started" could imply that the EU has failed to take their enlargements into consideration. Instead of finding a way of including new member states in the creation of European values, it can seem like the EU has presented them with a set of values that the newer member states must catch up with. On the one hand, this is to be expected – membership in the EU is voluntary, and candidate states must accept the conditions for accession. On the other hand, including newer member states in the formation of European values along the way could prevent this notion of "European values" as something the West is "trailblazers" for", and something the East must "catch up to". This proposed dichotomy could imply that these states experience European values as something being enforced on them. This notion contributes to a feeling of a state's national values being under threat, and of being "left behind". In the same vein, authorities can instrumentalize this sense of threat to stay in power. Being "under threat" can legitimize the need for strong leaders and further deepen the identity divergence between the "us" and "them". In this sense, the European Union can constitute a challenge for the queer community in their interest representation.

Despite this, it is important to note that my results from the in-depth interviews show a large support for the EU. Several of my respondents argue that the EU gives the queer civil society tangible talking points in their interest representation. They argue that the current accession process contributes to increase of LGBTI friendly legislation, which helps their interest promotion. Furthermore, several of my respondents argue that the situation for the queer community assumably would be worse, had the EU not been present.

7.10a Summary: which role does European civil society have in political inclusion of the LGBTI community?

In this chapter, I have answered the research question "*Which role does European civil society have in promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community?*", through two sub-research questions: *research question a*: *Does European civil society strengthen the descriptive representation of the queer community?* and *research question b: Which challenges do the queer civil society face when conducting interest representation?*

Through the panel analysis and the in-depth interviews, I find implications that the European civil society has a prominent role in promoting the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Firstly – my findings suggest that civil society explains large variations in the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community and that the transnational European civil society is pivotal in promoting the interests of the queer community. The role of civil society is accordingly important and effective. More nuanced – the role of civil society seems to be that of both increasing descriptive representation of the LGBTI community and promoting interests. As previously discussed, the queer minority is often marginalized and discriminated against. Civil society can be highly important in cases where the LGBTI community struggles to gain descriptive representation. Furthermore, both my analyses suggest that civil society is crucial for political inclusion in the face of nationalistic forces. In these cases where a government promotes nationalistic ideology, my panel analysis suggests that descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases. Based on previous literature and on my original findings, I argue that the presence of civil society as a highly visible counter-voice against nationalistic ideology contributes to this increase in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

Furthermore, the role of civil society seems to be to keep up the checks and balances of the democracy. The "queer civil society" is especially prominent in this case, as the LGBTI community often is used as a "wedge" by nationalistic forces. Followingly, they quickly land

in the core of the discourse – and can consequently function as checks and balances. That implies that in addition to being important in the case of political inclusion of the LGBTI community, the queer civil society can be crucial in the larger democratic function of ensuring checks and balances.

7.10b Future research

Building on these findings, I in this segment propose further research on the association between civil society and political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Firstly – as mentioned, the current data availability on variables regarding the political inclusion of the LGBTI community is low. That indicates a field of future research in and of itself – harvesting and creating datasets with more indexes pertaining to the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. However, there are several ways in which knowledge could be gained with the currently available data. An example could be to combine personal opinions in the constituency with the V-Dem dataset. For instance, the European Social Survey (ESS) contains several questions about opinion towards the queer community. Furthermore, it contains questions about ideological stances and social movement activities. Through aggregating the individual observations and merging them with the V-Dem dataset, increased knowledge about potential correlations between opinions in the constituency and political inclusion of the LGBTI community could be achieved. This could grant useful indications about my findings about right wing populism and nationalism, for instance. Besides this – if the researcher has the available time and resources, they could conduct a comparative process tracing on a number of states (Bennett and Checkel 2014, 7). The comparisons could be sampled through most different system designs or most similar system designs. Looking at the panel analysis, the researcher could for example compare outliers to a state with more typical data points. This could again be further researched by conducting in-depth interviews with for example actors from the legislation in these states – or with historians that could lend insights to complement the findings from the process tracing.

In this thesis, I conducted a panel analysis – which requires observations to stem from the same state at every point in time. Conducting a more general longitudinal analysis could help broaden the scope – as it would not necessitate observations on the exact same state for each point in time. This means that the timeframe of the analysis also could be increased. This potentially unbalanced data would need to be taken into consideration when analyzing the findings. However, it could be useful to grant larger insights in a field that is still under-researched.

Additionally – as discussed, including the state level of secularization and organized religion could also yield further comprehension. I also find that nationalistic ideology positively correlates with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. In future research, this finding should be investigated further. Is there a threshold for when nationalistic ideology starts positively correlating with the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community – and could there be a threshold where it starts negatively correlating? As touched on, right wing populism can be closely associated with a higher need for state control. This increased necessity can lead to democratic erosion – which could negatively impact civil society participation and political inclusion of the queer community. Currently, there is a wave of right-wing populism crashing over Europe. I hence suggest that further scholars should keep right wing populism in mind when researching the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Moreover – as mentioned, the findings from this analysis could have implications for other fields of comparative politics. This could be interesting to investigate. For instance – does increased political inclusion of women increase political inclusion of the LGBTI community? Does higher levels of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community correlate with higher levels of political inclusion of indigenous minorities?

Additionally – future research could gain further insights by conducting more in-depth interviews from a larger number of domestic contexts. The same is true regarding time – including more time points could increase the scope of the findings and increase confidence in them. A factor to keep in mind is that the growth of political inclusion of the queer community mainly started towards the end of the nineteenth hundreds. This means that analyzing for example "descriptive representation of the LGBTI community" from earlier could be futile, as there assumably would be low levels of variation between both timepoints and states. However, it could yield a further understanding of the political inclusion of the LGBTI community, the analysis kept in touch with SOCS theory – and looked at the social origins of variables that might affect political inclusion. Based on my findings, I would suggest including for example civil society participation and universalistic welfare state programs in this regression.

Lastly – further research should be conducted on newer datasets. For example, the United Nations is constructing an "LGBTI Index", that is anticipated to contain an extensive number of indexes measuring the political inclusion of the LGBTI community (Badgett 2018). Furthermore, I suggest that future research should be conducted using the datasets created by ILGA, should they become available to the public.

8. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I make the concluding remarks derived from the discussion. I start by laying forth the conclusions on research question a, before moving on to conclusions on research question b. Lastly, I present the concluding remarks on the overarching research question.

8.1 Research question a – is there a connection between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community?

In this segment, I make the concluding remarks on research question a:

> *"Is an actively participating civil society and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community connected?"*

Studied through a large N panel analysis on European countries, my findings indicate that increased civil society participation correlates with higher levels of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The high adjusted R squared when testing for correlation between civil society participation and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community alone contributes to this conclusion. Furthermore, I find that when civil society participation increases from low to high, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases by 4.28. This implies that a one-unit increase in civil society participation can increase the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community from non-existent to almost the same as heterosexuals. I find support for H1a in my analysis – as it implies that an actively participating civil society positively correlates with the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

I establish two other significant correlations. These are between levels of universalistic welfare states and nationalistic ideology promoted by a government. As discussed, there could be inherent features in a state with high levels of government-funded welfare programs that lead to increased levels of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. That means that the correlation between universalistic welfare and descriptive representation of the LGBTI community might indicate a positive correlation between social democratic civil society pattern and descriptive representation. Nationalistic ideology is also significant in model 3 – implying a positive correlation with descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. This finding suggests that when a government promotes nationalistic ideology, descriptive representation of the LGBTI community increases. This finding supports H1b. While being in line with findings from previous case studies, it provides a new overarching finding on cross-national data. Based on these results, I conclude that an actively participating civil society and descriptive

representation of the LGBTI community are connected. I also find implications that civil society participation has a large explanatory power in the variation of descriptive representation of the LGBTI community.

8.2 Research question b – what are the challenges faced by the queer civil society?

In this segment, I provide the concluding remarks on research question b:

> *"Which challenges do the queer civil society face when conducting interest representation?»*

Analyzed through original data from ten in-depth interviews, I distinguish three overarching labels that challenge interest representation conducted by the queer civil society in Europe. These are erosion of democracy, lack of descriptive representation, and the European Union. The two first labels are inherently negative – the third constitutes both assistance and challenges for the queer civil society. These findings imply support for both H2a and H2b.

My results indicate that the queer civil society in Europe is challenged by an increase of right-wing populism. Right-wing movements largely operate with a "us" and "them". The queer community is in this case viewed as "them" – and instrumentalized as a wedge to promote further identity divergence. An important tool in this identity divergence of the people seems to be the use of propaganda. Furthermore, my findings suggest that lower degrees of descriptive representation have a decremental effect on civil societies possibilities to conduct interest representation of the queer community. The lack of descriptive representation seems to become apparent through the queer civil society experiencing a lack of political support. The European Union is arguably positively contributing to interest representation through the alignment of the queer civil society. However – while I find that European values grant civil society a tangible set of norms to use in their interest representation, these norms are viewed as a threat in some states. This increased threat perception challenges the queer civil society in their interest representation – through being marked as "foreigners".

8.3 What is the role of the European civil society in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community?

Having stated the concluding remarks from research question a and b, I move on to the main research question:

"Which role does the European civil society have in promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community?"

Arguing that political inclusion consists of descriptive representation and interest representation, I contend that the role of civil society in promoting political inclusion of the LGBTI community is pivotal. The panel analysis indicates that civil society explains large variations in the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. The in-depth interviews show that there is a transnational civil society closely working together to promote the interest of the queer community. I consequently argue that civil society has a large and invaluable role in the political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

I find that the transnational European civil society has a continuous focus on promoting the interest of the queer community. These efforts are made also in cases where the CSOs are met with discrimination and violence. Based on these findings, I argue that civil society has a "substituting role" for descriptive representation. I also contend that in cases where there are higher levels of discrimination and oppression of the queer community, civil society plays an increasingly crucial role. In these cases, political inclusion is arguably harder to obtain through descriptive representation. That means that civil society becomes one of the only channels for unifying the voice of the queer community.

I argue that another main finding is the importance of nationalism and right-wing populism in the case of civil society and the political inclusion of the LGBTI community. Through the mixed methods, I find that government-promoting nationalistic ideology correlates positively with the descriptive representation of the LGBTI community. I however also find that right-wing populism and nationalistic forces are deemed a challenge within the European transnational civil society. I argue that these findings highlight two aspects of the same mechanism. A government promoting nationalistic ideology might prompt civil society to increase its efforts in interest representation – as this ideology is deemed as a threat. This could highlight the political struggles the queer community is facing and consequently might mobilize new allies in the overall population. Consequently, I argue that the role of civil society in states where governments promote nationalistic ideology is crucial for the political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

Lastly – I find that the transnational queer civil society works closely with each other across state borders. In the face of grave challenges, activists from Europe communicate and create intrinsic allyship. This allyship is created through transnational civil society organizations such as ILGA, the European Centre-Right LGBTI+ alliance, and InterPride. I argue that this alignment within the transnational civil society itself plays a vital role in promoting the political inclusion of the LGBTI community.

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APPENDIX:

Table 7: Statistical overview over all variables

Variable	N	Mean	St.dev	Min	Percentile 25	Percentile 75	Max
Year	180	2009	6.8	2000	2004	2014	2019
Descriptive representation of the LGBTI community	180	1.6	0.82	0	1	2	3
CSPI	180	0.79	0.17	0.27	0.71	0.92	0.99
Welfare programs	180	1.3	0.69	- 0.16	0.78	1.8	3
Ideology: religious	180	0.091	0.15	0	0	0.17	0.9
Ideology: nationalistic	180	0.46	0.29	0	0.25	0.67	1
Stateown	180	1.1	0.69	-1.1	0.74	1.6	2.6
Electordem	180	0.74	0.19	0.23	0.62	0.88	0.92
Accountability	180	1.1	0.84	- 1.6	0.61	1.7	2.3
Ideology	180	-0.96	1.2	-2.7	-1.8	0.35	2.2

Table 8: full operationalization of all variables in the panel analysis

Variable name	Variable name in V-Dem	Question	Page in V-Dem codebook v.12	Scale
Descriptive representation of the LGBTI community	**v2pepwrort**	*To what extent is political power distributed according to sexual orientation?*	208 - 209	Ordinal, converted to interval by the measurement model (0 = LGBTIs are entirely deprived of any real political power, 4 = LGBTIs enjoy somewhat more political power than heterosexuals)
Civil Society Participation Index	v2x_cspart	*Are major CSOs routinely consulted by policymakers; how large is the involvement of people in CSOs; are women prevented from participating; and is legislative candidate nomination within party organization highly decentralized or made through party primaries?*	51	Interval (0 = low, 1= high).
Welfare-programs	v2dlunivl	*How many welfare programs are means-tested and how many benefit all (or virtually all) members of the polity?*	165	Ordinal, converted to interval by the measurement model (0 = extremely limited welfare policies, 5 = almost all welfare state policies are universal).
Religious ideology	v2exl_legitideolcr_4	*If this state promotes a specific ideology, would you characterize it as religious?*	224	*Scale*: Series of dichotomous scales. (0 = No, 1 = Yes). Operationalized as mean in the dataset.
Nationalistic ideology	v2exl_legitideolcr_0	*If this state promotes a specific ideology, would you characterize it as nationalistic?*	224	*Scale*: Series of dichotomous scales. (0 = No, 1 = Yes). Operationalized as mean in the dataset.

State ownership of economy	v2clstown	*Does the state own or directly control important sectors of the economy?*	187	Ordinal, converted to interval by the measurement model (0=state owns virtually all valuable capital, 4=very little valuable capital belongs to the state).
Electoral democracy index	v2x_polyarchy	*To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?*	43	Interval, from low to high (0-1).
Accountability	v2x_horacc	*To what extent is the ideal of horizontal government accountability achieved?*	291 - 292	Unbounded interval scale, from low to high (0-1).
Ideology	v2exl_legitideol	*To what extent does the current government promote a specific ideology or societal model in order to justify the regime in place?*	224	Ordinal (0 = not at all, 4 = almost exclusively)

Table 9: level of multicollinearity (VIF-test)

Descriptive representation of the LGBTI community	Civil society participation	welfare	State ownership	Electoral democracy	Accountability	Ideology	Religious ideology	Nationalistic ideology
-	3.64	1.07	1.62	4.32	3.60	1.82	1.18	1.32

Table 10: Classification of states in the robustness analysis

Liberal civil society pattern	Welfare civil society pattern	Socialist democracy civil society pattern	Statist civil society pattern	Delayed democracy civil society pattern	Hybrid civil society pattern	Not part of SOCS theory-classification
United Kingdom	France	Austria	Poland	Hungary	Denmark	Albania
	Germany	Norway	Russia	Czech Republic	Italy	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Ireland	Sweden	Slovakia	Portugal		Belarus
	Netherlands	Finland	Spain			Bulgaria
			Romania			Croatia
						Cyprus
						Estonia
						Georgia
						Greece
						Italy
						Latvia
						Lithuania
						Malta
						Montenegro
						Moldova
						Poland
						Serbia
						Turkey
						Ukraine

Table 11: full overview of values on the dependent variable in the panel analysis

Country	Year	Value
Albania	2000	**0.08**
	2004	**0.32**
	2009	**0.67**
	2014	**0.78**
	2019	**1.18**
Austria	2000	**1.57**
	2004	**1.28**
	2009	**1.43**
	2014	**1.74**
	2019	**2.75**
Belarus	2000	**-0.17**
	2004	**-0.17**
	2009	**-0.17**
	2014	**-0.09**
	2019	**-0.09**
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2000	**0.60**
	2004	**0.60**
	2009	**0.60**
	2014	**0.62**
	2019	**0.49**
Bulgaria	2000	**1.24**
	2004	**1.30**
	2009	**1.31**
	2014	**1.23**
	2019	**1.39**
Croatia	2000	**0.10**
	2004	**0.58**
	2009	**0.75**
	2014	**1.13**
	2019	**1.21**
Cyprus	2000	**0.961**
	2004	**0.961**
	2009	**0.961**
	2014	**1.13**
	2019	**1.13**
Czech Republic	2000	**1.76**
	2004	**1.76**
	2009	**1.76**
	2014	**1.83**
	2019	**1.83**
Denmark	2000	**2.59**
	2004	**2.59**
	2009	**2.76**

	2014	2.76
	2019	2.98
Estonia	2000	2.17
	2004	2.17
	2009	2.17
	2014	2.17
	2019	2.17
Finland	2000	1.48
	2004	1.48
	2009	1.78
	2014	1.90
	2019	2.30
France	2000	2.14
	2004	2.14
	2009	2.23
	2014	2.35
	2019	2.82
Georgia	2000	-0.28
	2004	1.03
	2009	1.03
	2014	0.98
	2019	1.23
Germany	2000	1.93
	2004	2.23
	2009	2.36
	2014	2.36
	2019	2.36
Greece	2000	1.8
	2004	1.68
	2009	1.68
	2014	1.70
	2019	2.05
Hungary	2000	0.98
	2004	0.98
	2009	0.98
	2014	0.91
	2019	0.60
Ireland	2000	1.38
	2004	1.70
	2009	1.89
	2014	2.08
	2019	2.67
Italy	2000	1.63
	2004	2.12
	2009	2.12

	2014	**2.12**
	2019	**2.20**
Latvia	2000	**1.37**
	2004	**1.71**
	2009	**1.71**
	2014	**1.56**
	2019	**1.57**
Lithuania	2000	**0.45**
	2004	**1.02**
	2009	**1.13**
	2014	**1.47**
	2019	**1.47**
Malta	2000	**0.81**
	2004	**0.81**
	2009	**0.81**
	2014	**2.56**
	2019	**2.56**
Moldova	2000	**-0.81**
	2004	**-0.81**
	2009	**-0.81**
	2014	**-0.06**
	2019	**0.75**
Montenegro	2000	**0.32**
	2004	**0.32**
	2009	**0.52**
	2014	**0.93**
	2019	**1.19**
Netherlands	2000	**2.45**
	2004	**3.07**
	2009	**3.07**
	2014	**3.07**
	2019	**3.08**
Norway	2000	**2.09**
	2004	**2.09**
	2009	**2.09**
	2014	**2.20**
	2019	**2.93**
Poland	2000	**1.05**
	2004	**1.05**
	2009	**1.1**
	2014	**1.60**
	2019	**1.43**
Portugal	2000	**1.64**
	2004	**1.64**
	2009	**1.90**

	2014	**1.90**
	2019	**2.11**
Romania	2000	**0.32**
	2004	**0.32**
	2009	**0.41**
	2014	**0.73**
	2019	**0.82**
Russia	2000	**-0.67**
	2004	**-0.67**
	2009	**-0.67**
	2014	**-1.18**
	2019	**-1.18**
Serbia	2000	**-0.21**
	2004	**0.73**
	2009	**0.59**
	2014	**0.59**
	2019	**1.20**
Slovakia	2000	**0.76**
	2004	**0.76**
	2009	**0.76**
	2014	**0.96**
	2019	**1.20**
Spain	2000	**1.16**
	2004	**1.62**
	2009	**1.84**
	2014	**1.74**
	2019	**1.84**
Sweden	2000	**1.78**
	2004	**1.78**
	2009	**2.00**
	2014	**2.26**
	2019	**2.26**
Turkey	2000	**-0.30**
	2004	**-0.5**
	2009	**-0.5**
	2014	**-0.58**
	2019	**-0.51**
Ukraine	2000	**1.58**
	2004	**1.58**
	2009	**1.49**
	2014	**2.18**
	2019	**1.80**
United Kingdom	2000	**1.95**
	2004	**2.46**
	2009	**2.64**

	2014	**2.64**
	2019	**2.26**

Table 12: Example of a semi-structured interview guide

Question	*Purpose*
----	Presenting the project
Can you tell me a little about the organizations you've been part of, and the roles you've had there?	*Contextualization of respondent*
Which challenges did the civil society working for queer rights face when you started this work?	*Many of my respondents started their activism around the 2000s (also the starting point of my panel analysis). Asking them about the beginning of their work allowed me to gain further insights to how the field of interest representation for the LGBTI community was then.*
Which challenges is the civil society working for queer rights facing now?	*Investigating whether there is a difference on the challenges posed then and now*
What are the "wins" that the civil society fighting for queer rights have had the last twenty years, e.g.?	*Understanding more of the dynamics occurring, more so than "just" the challenges faced but the queer civil society.*
I did a regression analysis on queer rights and civil society, where I found that some government ideologies affect the relationship between civil society and queer rights. Do you have any thoughts on why different ideology affects civil society and queer rights?	*I asked about ideology in a wider sense, to avoid leading the respondent to answer about a specific ideology. I asked this question to gain information about how government ideology is viewed from the activists working from within civil society.*
Do you think that the EU influences the civil society working for queer rights in Europe?	*Followed by "in which way?", to look into how activists from the European civil society views the role of EU in political inclusion of the LGBTI community.*
EU / the west has been criticized by e.g. Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Russian forces for "forcing" their values onto "innocent countries". Do you have any thoughts on this discussion?	*Inquiring about dynamics surrounding the role of the EU in the quest for political inclusion of the LGBTI community.*
There is arguably currently a wave of right-wing populism in Europe. Do you think these movements affect the queer civil society in any way?	*Asked to gain knowledge about current events that can affect the queer civil society – and how the civil society reacts and countermobilize against these events.*
Which role does Pride marches and Pride events have in the European queer discourse?	*I included a question about Pride to ease up the interview up a little towards the end. This question allowed for the respondent to focus on the positives of Pride marches – but also allowed them to point to challenges if they wanted to,*
Is there something that you believe is relevant to the case of civil society and political inclusion of the queer community that we haven't covered in this interview?	*Letting the respondent contribute freely – and gain potential extra insights.*
Thanking the respondent for participating.	---