

Overview and Significance

Around the world, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocate for marginalized communities, provide vital goods and services, foster social cohesion, and serve as core partners in state governance (Kramer 1981; Rubenstein 2015; Salamon and Toepler 2015). These organizations are especially important for LGBT+ and other gender and sexual minority communities.¹ This is because LGBT+ communities often experience social marginalization, are disproportionately poorer with worse health outcomes, and lack full rights and recognition from the state (Adamczyk 2017; Velasco 2018; Gmelin 2022). Moreover, they typically lack access to traditional forms of social support that rectify these challenges, like family networks or government programs (Fredriksen Goldsen and de Vries 2019). As such, LGBT+ NGOs have grown dramatically to fill this void (Gonsalves 2021). Now, these organizations contribute to the social and political advancement of LGBT+ communities around the world (Thoreson 2014).

But the broad conditions that led to the development of these organizations are rapidly changing. Namely, NGOs proliferated as a function of global liberalism (Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Indeed, the development of new international norms legitimizing LGBT+ rights brought about attention and resources to these entities (Gonsalves 2021). Additionally, *neoliberalism* called on states to outsource the administration of social services to NGOs (Kamat 2004). Particularly relevant are services related to HIV/AIDS. As this virus spread in the 1990s and early 2000s, national governments and intergovernmental organizations invested significant resources into LGBT+-serving NGOs to combat this pandemic due to their expertise and familiarity with potentially at-risk communities (Vijayakumar 2021).

But now, contentions over liberalism abound – and LGBT+ communities are at the forefront of these contentions (Ayoub and Page 2020; Velasco 2023). Many countries have implemented new restrictions on LGBT+ NGOs as part of broader efforts to curtail democracy and civil society (Currier and Cruz 2014). And, as nationalism rises, LGBT+ NGOs are increasingly constructed as “foreign agents” whose values violate the nation – especially if these NGOs have international ties (Nuñez-Mietz 2019; Pakhnyuk 2019). Moreover, global HIV/AIDS funding is in decline after many countries implemented austerity measures following the Global Recession (Katz 2014). As such, these developments reflect the current post-liberal transition within the international arena (Chaudhry 2022; Manfield et al. 2021). This transition necessitates a new understanding of how NGOs can continue to advance the well-being of LGBT+ communities under these emerging conditions.

Most broadly, this project seeks to investigate how the current, post-liberal transition affects the development and operation of LGBT+ NGOs around the world. To do so, this project proposes evaluating three distinct outcomes: 1) the scale of LGBT+ NGO sectors through rates of organizational foundings; 2) the strategic decision to leverage transnational partnerships; and 3) the organization’s primary mission (i.e., advocacy, service provision, social cohesion, etc.). As detailed below, each of these outcomes are uniquely influenced by global liberalism. Bringing insights from each outcome together, then, helps constitute a more comprehensive explanation to the larger question driving this project proposal.

This project proposes a two-year investigation into how challenges to global liberalism are transforming LGBT+ NGOs cross-nationally and over time. Foundational to this project is the Global LGBT+ NGO Database. This database is an original data collection effort led by the PI, Dr. Kristopher Velasco, and collaborator, Dr. Tara Gonsalves. This database currently has information on roughly 10,000 domestic LGBT+ NGOs from over 170 countries. This project proposes to both update this database through 2022

¹The PI recognizes the complexities of language associated with non-normative sexualities and genders (see Velasco and Paxton 2022). “LGBT+” is used in recognition of expansive understandings. For example, different communities use “LGBTI” for intersex, “LGBTQ” for queer, “LGBTT” for travesti, “LGBTs” for sassoï, while others forego explicit identity categories to instead use “SOGIE,” meaning sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

(it currently ends in 2018) and to construct new measures corresponding to each research question. Quantitative designs, including advancements in difference-in-differences, will be used to analyze these data and to provide novel, causal insights where possible.

This longitudinal study will be one of the first to explicitly theorize and test whether current contentious over global liberalism affect the foundings rates, use of transnational partnerships, and mission focus of LGBT+ NGOs. In doing so, this project will offer both new theory and data for understanding the future of NGOs and how to best organize social services for LGBT+ communities. First, this project will make a theoretical contribution by offering a framework to understand NGOs within a post-liberal world. Researchers have yet to conduct quantitative, cross-national investigations into how NGOs are responding to current global challenges. Existing cross-national research focused on organizational dynamics (e.g., new foundings, usage of transnational networks) in an era of heightened liberalism and typically ended before overt illiberal challenges emerged (Smith and Weist 2005; Reimann 2006; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). While newer work does predict the enactment of anti-NGO policies, research that goes one step further to evaluate effects is just beginning (Chaudhry and Heiss 2022; Dupuy, Ron and Prakash 2015; Heinzel and Koenig-Archibugi 2022). When turning to LGBT+ NGOs, specifically, research is even more strained (Paszat 2022). While there is a small, but growing set of literature into LGBT+ NGOs, much of this research is qualitative or bounded within case studies (Chua 2018; Currier 2014). Indeed, persistent data limitations have necessarily limited the scope of this research and hampered our understanding of these organizations (Gonsalves and Velasco 2022). Therefore, the second intervention of this project is to update and make publicly available the Global LGBT+ NGO Database. This database will allow scholars to continue contributing new insights and also give general LGBT+ communities access to information on resources that will enhance their lives.

Finally, this project focuses on organizations as a preeminent institution in modern life (Zucker 1987). Organizations both reflect their political, economic, and cultural environments but also construct meanings and create knowledge of “the way things are” (Hrebiniak and Joyce 1985). As meso-level sites of cultural (re)production, NGOs serve as “mediators of collective identity at the micro level and of sociopolitical trends at the macro level” (Ward 2008: 234). A meso-level study helps understand how the macro, structural transformations occurring within global liberalism intersects with individual subjectivities of whom these organizations serve (Bail 2014; Ghaziani 2008). Therefore, insights gained from this proposal will have implications for how scholars understand how the post-liberal transition is influencing all levels of society.

Research Objectives

This project has two primary objectives. **Objective 1 is to update and make publicly available the Global LGBT+ NGO Database.** As mentioned, the Global LGBT+ NGO Database is an original dataset led by the PI. Information includes founding date, organizational mission, contact information, and official registration status, among others, on roughly 10,000 NGOs. Publications using aspects of these data appear in top sociology journals like the *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, and *Social Forces* and social movement journals like *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*.

These data currently span from the late 1890s to 2018. An intentional, purposive data collection effort is needed to bring these data up to date through 2022. Doing so is imperative to capture both the effects of recent legal changes and to account for lags in data availability. The first component of this objective, then, is to update the database using administrative and archival data, like before, but to also incorporate a new form of data collection: organizational surveys. Administering surveys to each NGO will help validate existing data, provide new measures, and allow for the identification of previously overlooked NGOs. The second component is to build a website to access the Global LGBT+ NGO Database. This website will allow general audiences to search for the critical resources being offered. Additionally, researchers will

have access to the underlying database to further advance scholarly insights. To ensure that information available to both public and academic audiences is treated ethically, the PI will establish and consult with a Data Advisory Board comprised of LGBT+ NGO leaders from the Global North and South as appropriate.

Objective 2 is to develop and empirically evaluate a theoretical framework to assess whether changes in global liberalism affect LGBT+ NGOs within countries over time. Specifically, do disruptions to liberalism explain changes in the scale of organizational foundings, the strategic decision to leverage transnational partnerships, or mission focus of LGBT+ NGOs? Or, are changes within a country driven by alternative explanations like domestic organizational ecologies? This proposal will leverage different quantitative designs, including advancements in difference-in-differences, to assess statistical associations and causal links. Importantly, this research will address whether these dynamics vary between Western and non-Western contexts considering the characterization of LGBT+ communities as “Western” in nature (Currier 2010; McKay and Angotti 2016; Weiss and Bosia 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This proposal brings together four areas of research to construct and test a novel framework to explain the changing scales, strategies, and missions of LGBT+ NGOs cross-nationally. These areas of research primarily relate to different dimensions of global liberalism and organizational ecologies (Bush and Hadden 2019; Stroup 2022). This is because the development and operation of NGOs is inextricably interwoven with liberalism (Gonsalves 2021; Longhofer and Schoer 2010; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). But illiberal forces and hyper-liberalism’s endogenous decline are ushering in a new, post-liberal transition (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Jepperson and Meyer 2021). And “nowhere is the contrast...more apparent than in the NGO realm” (Cooley 2015: 53).

The first area of research assesses how political environments influence LGBT+ NGOs (*Political Liberalism*). For example, open, democratic societies are more likely to have more LGBT NGOs, but NGOs are more likely to leverage transnational partnerships in countries where LGBT+ rights are under threat (Gonsalves and Velasco 2022). And while political liberalism establishes citizens as part of the governance process – commonly through NGO structures – rising authoritarianism and democratic backslide diminishes space for civil society participation (Chaudhry 2022). The second area draws upon economic theories (*Market Liberalism*). States with greater commitments to neoliberal models of governance are more likely to rely on NGOs to administer services, but access to funding (whether from the state or foreign partners) can influence whether and how NGOs fill this void (Sundstrom 2006). The Global Recession ushered in an era of austerity – limiting LGBT+ NGOs’ access to crucial government funds (Dalton 2018). These funding challenges were then compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic (Roberts 2021). The third perspective turns to cultural explanations; specifically, the role of universalism (*Universal Liberalism*). Moral claims of universalism have justified the formation of transnational networks – which are important pathways for diffusing global norms that legitimize NGOs as organizational forms and LGBT+ communities as entitled to fundamental human rights (Ayoub 2016; Reiman 2006). This is because universalism provides NGOs with the moral authority to violate national sovereignty to intervene when a *universal* right or norm is threatened (e.g., fundamental human rights). But rising nationalism alters universal claims of moral authority into evidence of foreign imposition (Pakhnyuk 2019). Consequently, troves of new anti-NGO laws now limit how foreign actors can support, strengthen, and expand domestic NGOs (Bromley et al. 2018; Chaudhry and Heiss 2022; Dupuy, Ron and Prakash 2015; Heinzl and Koenig-Archibugi 2022). These laws break transnational connections, further legitimize the suppression of LGBT+ communities, and undermine the “pro-NGO norm” institutionalized within the international arena (Ayoub 2019; Bromley

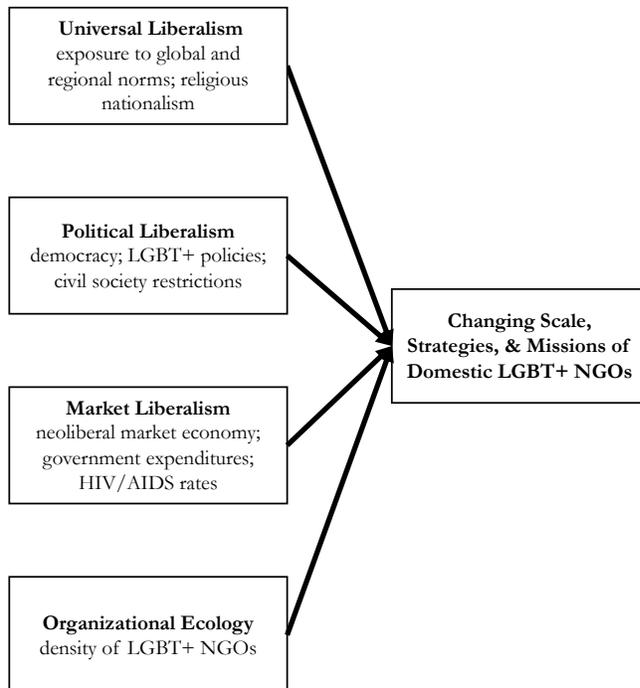


Figure 1. Conceptual Model Explaining LGBT+ NGO Related Outcomes

et al. 2018; Reiman 2006: 59). Finally, the last perspective draws on theories of organizational ecology (*Organizational Ecology*) (Hannan and Carroll 1992). As LGBT+ NGOs grew exponentially between the 1980s and early 2000s, this created greater organizational densities (Gonsalves 2021). Consequently, current changes to LGBT+ NGOs may not be the result of external threats to liberalism but, instead, may be the endogenous result of over-relying on this organizational model (i.e., *too much liberalism* itself) (Alvarez 2009; Bush and Hadden 2019; Jepperson and Meyer 2021). **Stitching these theoretical perspectives together creates a useful framework to understand the changing role of NGOs in a post-liberal, 21st century.**

Figure 1 highlights this conceptual model with example operationalizations of key constructs.

Current Proposal's Significance and Contributions to Previous Research

This project proposes using LGBT+ NGOs as an ideal site to test the above theoretical framework. Similar to other sectors, LGBT+ NGOs experienced dramatic growth in the latter part of the 20th century (Gonsalves 2021). But public discussions over LGBT+ populations are at the forefront of on-going challenges to each dimension of liberalism outlined above (Velasco 2023). Thus, these NGOs are likely to be an early, sensitive barometer into how contemporary changes within the international environment are influencing the scale, strategies, and missions of NGOs cross-nationally. A dataset of LGBT+ NGOs that expands across time and space is necessary to address these questions. This dataset currently does not exist through other means. Therefore, **Objective 1 will contribute to this area of research by updating and making available the Global LGBT+ NGO Database.** The sections below detail how the above mechanisms are likely to influence each proposed outcome.

Changing Scale of LGBT+ NGOs Foundings.

There are currently few investigations into the scale of domestic LGBT+ NGOs (Nownes 2010). Indeed, only one study moves beyond country-specific evaluations to predict cross-national variation (Gonsalves 2021). Gonsalves (2021) finds NGO foundings to primarily reflect country-level exposure to liberal world culture – which both legitimizes NGOs as organizational forms and is increasingly supportive of LGBT+ communities (Velasco 2018; see also Schofer and Lonhofer 2010). Regional resistance to LGBT+ rights, though, stifles this growth. Importantly, Gonsalves' study ends in 2009. As Figure 2 demonstrates, LGBT+ NGO foundings peaked shortly after this point and have been in decline ever since.

Why are these declines happening? To date, scholarship has yet to empirically evaluate declining rates in NGO foundings. Prior to now, most research sought to explain the *expansion* of NGOs over the 20th century and into the early years of the 21st century (Schofer and Lonhofer 2011; Smith and Weist 2005). Gonsalves

(2021) study falls within this tradition. **Therefore, being able to theorize and explain both increases and decrease in the rate of organizational foundings is a distinct contribution of this proposal.**

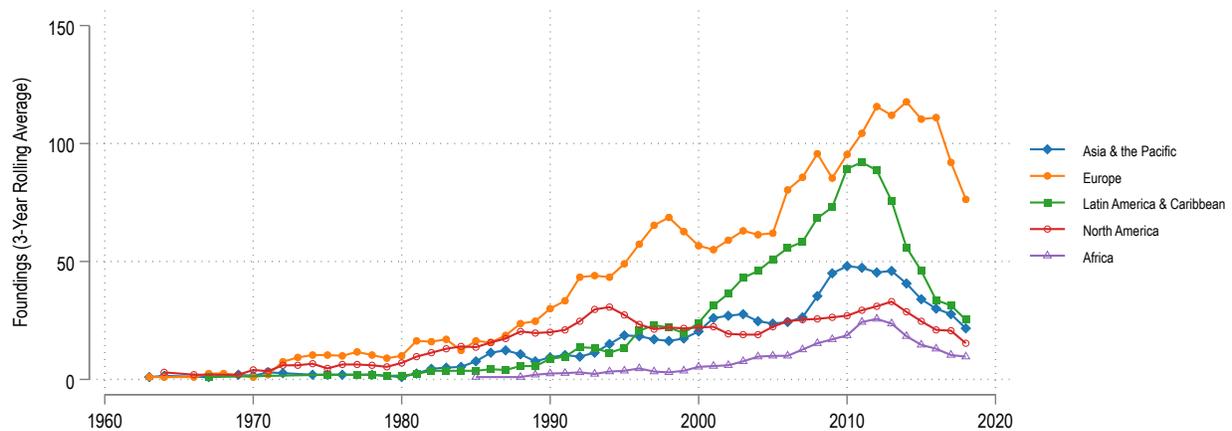


Figure 2. Changes in LGBT+ NGO Foundings, 1963-2018
Data Source: Global LGBT+ NGO Database

Considering these declines are occurring cross-nationally, turning to fluctuations in global liberalism is understandable. Still, it is important to recognize that underlying factors likely vary across regions. For example, decreases in the U.S. or other Western countries may occur endogenously due to saturation within the organizational ecologies (Hannan and Carroll 1992; Abbot et al. 2016). For example, Nownes (2010) found that as density increased, it encouraged the continued formation of more transgender NGOs within the U.S. But, at a certain point, increased density also increased competition. This led to declines in organizational foundings. While the U.S. and other Western countries are known for having large numbers of LGBT+ NGOs, making this argument plausible, it is unlikely to be operable elsewhere. This is because in most regions, organizational densities are quite low.

Elsewhere, declines may reflect disruptions to one of the three aspects of liberalism. LGBT+ NGOs have been at the forefront of greater restrictions placed on civil society (Bromley, Schofer, and Longhofer 2020; Christensen and Weinstein 2013; Roggeband and Krizsán 2021; Nuñez-Mietz and García 2017). For example, just in 2022, Uganda’s National Bureau for Non-Governmental Organizations banned the country’s most prominent LGBT+ NGOs from operating – calling Sexual Minorities Uganda “undesirable” (Nyeko 2022). Increasingly nationalistic and authoritarian regimes otherize LGBT+ NGOs as “foreign agents” – pointing to international support and the challenging of traditional gender and sexual norms as evidence (Graff, Kapur, and Walters 2019). It may also be the case that the very forces that once fueled organizational growth of LGBT+ groups are now responsible for their plateauing or decline. The relative containment of the HIV/AIDS crisis, which fueled LGBT+ organizing across many contexts, has been proposed as a reason why LGBT+ NGOs in China have found themselves in a precarious position (Hildebrandt 2018). Such “success paradox” is manifesting in the context of the Global North too; Canadian and Irish LGBT+ advocacy NGOs have found themselves in a tight spot since the institutionalization of same-sex marriage, a *raison d’être* for many such NGOs (Canon 2020; Ng 2021). Consequently, studying fluctuations in LGBT+ NGO foundings can discern which theories are most relevant across contexts.

Changing Strategies of LGBT+ NGOs.

Relatedly, which strategies do LGBT+ NGOs leverage to navigate this precarious moment? This study proposes focusing on one strategic decision: whether to leverage transnational allies or, instead, to prioritize domestic connections. Transnational partnerships are historically instrumental for the success of LGBT+

movements (Ayoub 2016). These connections transfer financial resources, foster capacity building, and assist domestic NGOs in pressuring non-responsive states via boomerang processes (Hildebrandt 2012; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Transnational networks are also critical pathways for diffusing liberal cultural values that legitimize NGOs as organizational forms (Longhofer and Schofer 2010; Schofer and Longhofer 2011) and improve policies and attitudes toward LGBT+ communities (Hadler and Symons 2018; Velasco 2018, 2020, 2023).

But what if the costs of these transnational partnerships now outweigh potential benefits? One advantage of these partnerships was the transmission of finances. Now, many countries are putting greater scrutiny and limitations on this type of funding. For example, prior to 1995, only 10 percent of the countries had enacted laws restricting foreign funding of civil society actors; by 2012, 44 percent had done so (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015). Within-country evidence has begun to emerge detailing how domestic NGOs are adjusting strategies to better align with changing legal environments. In China, a series of legal changes has strengthened the government's control of the NGO sector (Wang and Xia 2023). As a result, legal advocacy NGOs, including LGBT+ advocacy groups, were forced to reorient their agenda to better reflect that of the Chinese state; many also simultaneously adopted domestic lobbying tactics and gave up boomerang-type strategies (Ren and Gui 2022; Wang and Xia 2023). Meanwhile, while no policy was changed in Ghana, Ghanaian LGBT+ NGOs, who relied on foreign funding to assist with HIV/AIDS programs, now report greater scrutiny (Asante 2022). Environmental NGOs, which have historically thrived because of their transnational connections, are increasingly under pressure across contexts as diverse as Australia, India, and Russia to defend their mission against accusations of misplaced loyalty precisely because of their transnational linkages (Matejova, Parker, and Dauvergne 2018). Consequently, the institutionalization of transnational connections has also begun to pose symbolic liabilities to domestic NGOs, especially LGBT+ NGOs, who can be readily labelled "Western" or "foreign."

Within the West too, LGBT+ NGOs may want to focus domestically as new challenges emerge. For example, in the U.S., there has been a sweep of anti-LGBT+ laws across numerous states (Krishnakumar and Cole 2022). And there are increased anti-gender mobilizations in many European countries (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). When combined with the dynamics in non-Western contexts, this suggests a decline in transnational affiliations. **Addressing how transnational partnerships are changing due to threats to liberalism will contribute to our understanding if these connections are still viable and advantageous for advancing LGBT+ NGOs and communities into 21st century. Or, instead, these NGOs must prioritize domestic partnerships to fulfill their aims.**

Changing Missions of LGBT+ NGOs.

How do missions and priorities of LGBT+ NGOs respond to changing environments? Armstrong (2002) argues that areas more supportive of LGBT+ communities see a wider range of organization types: ranging from advocacy to recreation to service provision. Thus, more politically open spaces are likely to see the vibrancy and diversity of the underlying LGBT+ communities reflected within NGOs themselves. In politically constrained contexts, though, organizations may be forced to focus on a singular issue like providing HIV/AIDS-related care (Chua and Hildebrandt 2014). When the political context becomes more repressive, NGOs may be compelled to "rebrand" themselves in order to ensure survival, as witnessed in Ethiopia where advocacy groups had to re-register as service providers or development agencies (Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015). Culturally too, there are signs of increasing homogenization in how LGBT+ NGOs and NGO workers present their private and organizational identities, precipitated by their interactions with others in the national and transnational arena. In India, multiple studies have noted the ascendancy of trans identity in the LGBT+ NGO spaces, oftentimes at the cost of making illegible or stigmatizing localized identity expressions (Dutta 2013; Mount 2020). In Eastern Europe, sexual and gender minority agenda has come to be seen as a litmus test for whether Ukraine is adequately "Europeanized", leading LGBT+ NGOs

to adopt priorities and strategies that closely mirror their European counterparts (Husakouskaya 2018). Thus, changes in macro, environmental contexts are likely to manifest within the missions of NGOs.

Changes in political, market, cultural, and ecological contexts are likely map closely into changes in mission focus, which therefore allow us to form the following sets of expectations. As stated above, in vibrant democracies with relatively open civil society space, we are likely to witness greater variation in the missions of LGBT+ NGOs. NGOs in country settings that are better embedded in world society—which espouses increasingly progressive norms around sexuality and gender—are likely to exhibit greater variation in their range of focus as well. In more authoritarian settings, on the other hand, such variation is likely to be muted. There, we expect a higher density of service-delivery NGOs, generally perceived as being less threatening to the state, but lower levels of other types of NGOs, particularly those oriented towards advocacy. When it comes to market orientation, places with larger imprints of neoliberal economic policies are likely to have outsourced various services and public health functions, such as around HIV/AIDS, to LGBT+ NGOs. Finally, it is plausible that greater density likely translates into greater variation in mission types as groups fill niches. Where organizational density is relatively low, similar types of organizations can exist as the niche is unlikely to have been filled.

Importantly, an additional contribution of this meso-level analysis is understanding the diversity of global LGBT+ populations at the micro-level. Indeed, the needs, cultures, and terminologies associated with LGBT+ individuals are far-ranging. Comparative, cross-national data understanding these distinctions are severely limited as only a few countries use an expansive set of gender and sexual identities in nationally representative surveys (Cooley 2020). Turning to the language NGOs use to describe their mission can be one helpful way to intervene against this persistent challenge. While organizations give a particular view and may not always reflect the populations they serve, mission nonetheless do provide unique insights into these communities and their presence in the public sphere. When micro, comparative data are severely limited, this information can be particularly helpful. Therefore, an analysis of the missions of LGBT+ NGOs can go a long way in providing a comprehensive, cross-national view into various needs and realities of the underlying LGBT+ communities.

Research Plan

Data Collection for the Global LGBT+ NGO Database.

The primary data source for this project is the Global LGBT+ NGO Database – an original database collected by the PI and collaborator Dr. Tara Gonsalves. This database collects information on LGBT+ NGOs from around the world, including founding date, organizational mission/purpose, community of focus (e.g., “lesbian,” “hijra,” “travesti,” “LGBTI”), official registration, and contact information, etc. The Global LGBT+ NGO Database currently has roughly 10,000 unique organizations from 172 countries. These organizations span the late 1890s through 2018.

The Global LGBT+ NGO Database uses “NGO” as shorthand for a broad definition of associational forms (Edwards 2011). This approach is taken due to the varied legal environments governing these entities. LGBT+ associations are allowed to register and operate as charitable organizations in most countries. But 55 countries have no LGBT+ organizations with legal recognition due to either *de facto* or *de jure* bans (Daly 2018). Therefore, this database includes registered and unregistered nonprofits and NGOs. It also includes informal associations, web-based platforms, and other associational compositions. Key criteria for inclusion include autonomous standing (e.g., not a caucus within a professional organization or student group), verified existence by two independent sources, and cannot have a for-profit motive. Finally, there must be a primary focus on LGBT+ communities.²

² Many health NGOs cater to LGBT+ communities or men who have sex with men (MSM) but cannot be explicit about this work. Therefore, to circumvent this limitation, the PI relies on external information..

To create this dataset, a wide range of resources were consulted – over 200 in total.³ These sources largely fall in the categories of administrative and archival data. First, government databases of registered charities (where available) were evaluated to identify appropriate organizations based on keyword searches across names and mission statements or, when possible, governmental designation codes (e.g., NTEE classifications in the U.S.). Second, the PI retrieved membership rosters for the 91 LGBT+ international NGOs in the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. This produced a large number as International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), the leading LGBT+ INGO, has over 1,000 members. Third, the *Encyclopedia of Associations* was used to find additional organizations. Fourth, the PI utilized lists of registered NGOs through the United Nations (e.g., iCSO system) and other IGOs. Fourth, international foundations and funding agencies were searched to find domestic grantees around the world (e.g., Mama Cash, Arcus Foundation, and Astraea Foundation). Form 990 tax filings of U.S.-based foundations were used to identify grantees. Finally, membership rosters of domestic member-based organizations were used, like the Consortium of LGBT Voluntary and Community Organisations in the United Kingdom (with 200+ members) and Federación Argentina de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Trans in Argentina (with 50+ members).

Several types of archival data were also used. First, various organs of the U.N. produce reports and resolutions that listing NGOs. For example, the U.N. Development Programme Asia and the Pacific offices produced a number of country-specific reports on LGBT+ life in their “Being LGBT in Asia and the Pacific” project. Each report includes a list of domestic LGBT+ organizations within the country. Similarly, two U.N. statements by LGBT+ INGOs in 2006 and 2014 were signed by a total of 1,123 NGOs. Second, academic books and articles on LGBT+ activism, like the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of LGBT Issues Worldwide*, were searched for reference to NGOs. Older publications were especially helpful for identifying historic entities. Third, newspaper data from LexisNexis and Factiva were inspected to find references to LGBT+ organizations in every country – this was particularly helpful to find smaller organizations that may only make local news and those that were active in earlier time periods. Fourth, each organization had their website and social media accounts scanned for reference to other groups – typically under a “Partner” or “Alliances” section. Finally, the PI concluded by doing country-specific Google searches. External language experts were consulted throughout the process to minimize an English bias within the database to the extent possible.

To complete the first component of Objective 1, this project proposes updating the database through 2022 in accordance with previous strategies and including a new survey to all NGOs. The aim of the survey is threefold: 1) validate existing datapoints for NGOs currently in the database; 2) ask respondents to name partner NGOs to both understand partnership strategies and discover new NGOs; 3) ask questions to understand aspects of the organization that cannot be obtained through public records. Figure 3 summarizes this data collection process.

The design of this survey is built off Pizmony-Levy and McManus (2012) (see also Smith et al. 1998). These organizational sociologists conducted a web-based survey of 1,465 NGOs serving refugees and asylum-seekers, generally, to understand how they incorporate LGBT+ issues, specifically. Their survey yielded a 30% response rate from organizations across 100 countries. Similar to those authors, this study’s survey will be designed in consultation with LGBT+ NGO leaders (see Data Advisory Board description below). The survey will consist of four primary question blocks: administrative information, organizational

³ Many scholars are currently focused on building cross-national datasets of NGOs (Bloodgood et al. 2021; Johnson 2014). Many efforts, though, typically rely on one source of information (Egger and Schopper 2022). The current project leverages a wide set of sources to minimize bias from any one. Additionally, most of these data collection efforts are focused on international non-governmental organizations as opposed to domestic (Plummer et al. 2020).

mission and priorities, organizational strategy and partnerships, and perceived obstacles to organizational success (see Supplemental Materials for an initial draft of this survey). When possible and appropriate, this survey uses similar question wording as Pizmony-Levy and McManus (2012) and other reliable surveys such as General Social Survey. The PI will first pre-test this survey with the Data Advisory Board. Members will be asked to read recruitment materials, take the survey, and then participate in a follow-up interview. Feedback will be incorporated into the final materials. Importantly, a translation service with experience translating LGBT+ content will be hired to translate materials into Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, and Arabic. NGO leaders will have the ability to select whichever language they prefer.

Recruitment to participate in the survey will take place via email, direct social media outreach, and/or telephone. While previous studies also used paper mailings, many LGBT+ NGOs do not have a physical office. Plus, targeted mailing may pose a risk considering the U.S. origins of the mail and subject matter. Each NGO will be sent a description of the research project and a link to the survey. After initial outreach, three additional follow-ups will be sent in 3-week intervals. Because some information being asked on the survey is to validate existing information, the PI will be able to conduct basic t-test comparisons between responsive and non-responsive NGOs on relevant attributes. Significant differences in response rates will inform the generalizability of the survey data relative to the total population of LGBT+ NGOs.

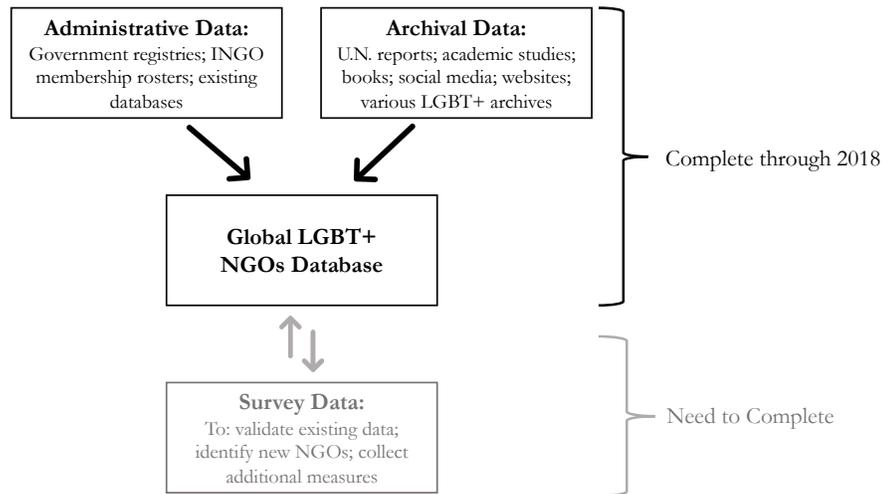


Figure 3. Data Collection Process

Data Advisory Board.

A five-member advisory board will provide external evaluation on the development of NGO survey items as well as guidance on how to make the Domestic LGBT+ NGO Database ethically and responsibly accessible to public audiences (i.e., which datapoints can be openly shared, which can be accessible to researchers via application and user agreement, and which elements are too sensitive to be shared beyond the current study). The members of this advisory board will include one individual from a large, member-based international LGBT+ NGO headquartered in the Global North, three domestic NGO leaders located in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia, and one academic specializing in LGBT+ NGOs cross-nationally employed at a U.S. institution. Each member will be compensated for their participation in this project’s development, implementation, and dissemination of findings. Council members have been identified with final agreement pending the outcome of this proposal.

Data Analysis Plan to Complete Objective 2

Outcome 1: The Changing Scale of LGBT+ NGO Foundings.

Measures. The dependent variable in this model will be the number of NGO foundings in a country-year observation. These data will come directly from the Global LGBT+ NGO Database. This project will prioritize *self-reported* founding date. Currently, 65% of NGOs have a self-reported founding date. For NGOs with missing self-reports, information will be substituted with year of official government recognition, followed by year of first record – meaning the first time the NGO was reported as existing by an external source (e.g., academic article). These additions increase the number of NGOs with a founding date to 82%.

Independent variables will be measured as follows: *Political Liberalism* will be measured as: the Varieties of Democracy’s liberal democracy index, Velasco’s (2023) LGBT+ policy index, state-sponsored religious nationalism (Brown 2020), and anti-NGO policy adoption (Bromley et al. 2020). *Market Liberalism* will be measured as: Fraser Institute’s Economic Freedom of the World index (Fraser Institute 2019), which indicates greater adherence to free-market policies, government expenditures as a percentage of GDP (Schofer and Longhofer 2011), and rates of HIV/AIDS. *Universal Liberalism* will be measured as: exposure to pro-NGO norms within the international community (Reiman 2006) and exposure to pro- and anti-LGBT+ norms at both the global and regional level (Gonsalves 2021; Velasco *forthcoming*). *Organizational Ecology* will be measured as the cumulative total number of LGBT+ NGOs founded up until the year prior to analysis and the squared value of this measure to account for a non-linear association (Bush and Hadden 2019; Longhofer and Schofer 2010). Finally, models will account for alternative explanations at the demographic level: population, education, and per capita national wealth. All independent measures currently exist either through the World Bank, United Nations, previous studies’ replication materials, or PI’s own datasets.

Analytic Strategy. Two analytic strategies will be pursued. The first strategy will use event history models to empirically test the conceptual model presented in Figure 1. These models focus on the *rate* of organizational foundings as opposed to the absolute magnitude (Tuma and Hannan 1984). The unit of analysis is the country, which may experience repeated organizational founding events over time. The PI will use an exponential model with time-varying covariates, consistent with similar studies (Longhofer and Schofer 2010; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Event history models exploit the temporal ordering of independent and dependent variables to account for reverse causation (Blossfeld, Golsh, and Rohwer 2007). These analyses will span 1980 through 2022. Although data are available earlier, most foundings occur after 1980 and this also coincides with greater confidence in data quality. Analyses will be conducted on three separate samples: all countries, just those located in the West, and those located outside the West. This is due to the characterization of LGBT+ rights as a “foreign” or “Western” creation (Ferguson 2022). Overall, this analytic strategy builds upon Gonsalves (2021) by focusing on changing *rates* of foundings within country instead of comparative, between-country differences in the absolute number of LGBT+ NGO foundings.

The second analytic strategy will more directly assess causal relationships between policy changes and rates of organizational foundings. Assuming significant associations between political liberalism measures are identified, these associations will be probed further using a difference-in-differences design (Callaway and Sant’Anna 2021). This second analysis will focus on political liberalism as the rise of policies targeting LGBT+ communities and civil society are both a likely intervention triggering changing founding rates and because the nature of these treatments are well-situated for a causal estimation (Nuñez-Mietz 2019; Pakhunyuk 2019). For this analysis, the PI will create a sample of all countries that experienced the adoption of an explicit policy targeting LGBT+ civil society such as Russia’s 2013 “anti-propaganda” law (Country B in Figure 4 represents these cases). But the adoption of these repressive policies is not randomly

distributed. Therefore, the PI will use a sample of countries that introduced a similar law targeting LGBT+ civil society but failed to adopt it like Bulgaria in 2014 as the counterfactual (Country A in Figure 4 represents these cases). After collecting these samples, the PI will assess rates in LGBT+ foundings from five years prior to the proposed policy intervention until five years after this event. Then, the PI will take the differences between these two differences to get an estimate of the causal effect of the policy going into effect against the counterfactual of no such policy intervention transpiring. These models will account for country-level confounders. Because countries can implement or propose multiple regressive policies, this analysis will focus on the occurrence most recent to 2017 – the final year where such an intervention maintains five years of post-treatment observations. **This will be the first analysis to causally estimate the effects of new laws targeting civil society organizations.**

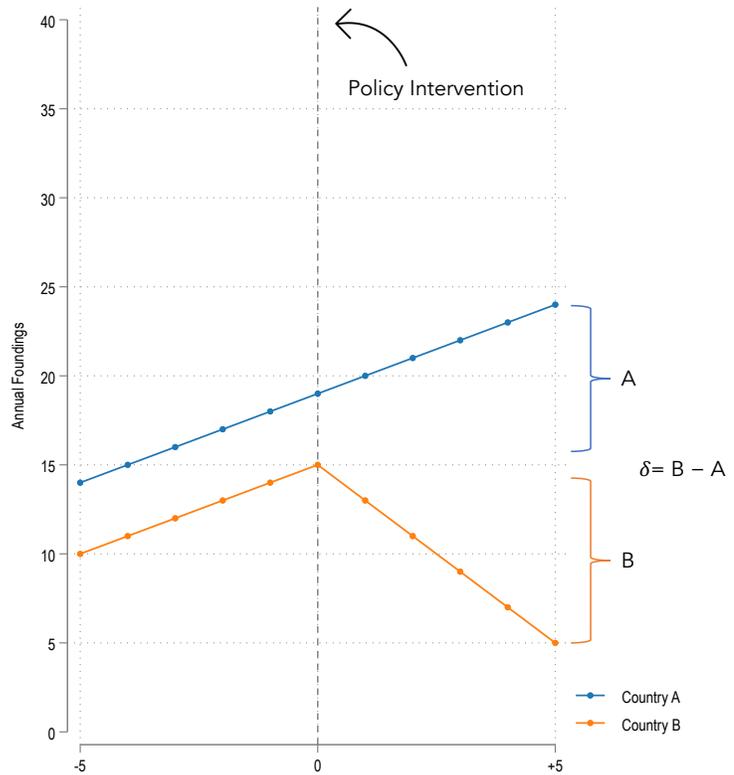


Figure 4. Conceptual Model for Difference-in-Differences Design

Outcome 2: Changing Strategies of Domestic LGBT+ NGOs.

Measures. Two dependent measures will be used to capture changing strategies regarding transnational partnerships – one longitudinal at the country level and another cross-sectional at the organization level. The first builds off Gonsalves and Velasco (2022) to use domestic NGOs’ membership within international, umbrella NGOs. INGOs serve as important network-weaving institutions (Ingram and Torfason 2010). There are 91 LGBT+ INGOs included within the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. This project will use administrative records from these INGOs to document each year an organization joined. These data have already been compiled through 2020 in Gonsalves and Velasco (2022) but only focused on Europe. Therefore, data will be updated through 2022 and expand geographic coverage. The ultimate measure will be a country-level count of the number of NGOs with an INGO membership. The second measure will be based on the organizational surveys. Organizations will be asked to name the five “primary organizations with whom you partner.” NGOs will be instructed that these can be local, national, regional, or international partners. This second measure, then, will be a binary indicator for whether the NGO named an organization that is headquartered in a different country. Independent variables will reflect the same category of measures above: *Political Liberalism, Market Liberalism, Universal Liberalism, and Organizational Ecology* – along with other alternative explanations.

Analytic Strategy. There will be two analytic strategies given the two distinct dependent measures. First, negative binomial regressions with country-level fixed effects will be used to predict country-level changes in the counts of international memberships (Allison and Waterman 2002). These models will estimate which types of changes are influencing the decision to pursue transnational partnerships and, especially, whether evidence of boomerang effects increase or not after political threats to LGBT+ NGOs. Second, a multi-level logistic regression will be used to predict whether or not an organization has a self-reported transnational partnership in 2023. A multilevel model is appropriate considering that organizational

outcomes are likely correlated due to being nested within the same country (Guo and Zhao 2000). At the country-level, the change in key predictors between 2018 through 2022 will be used to predict the dependent variable measured in 2023. This is ideal to assess how *changing* landscapes within a country correlate with transnational partnerships rather than static, between country differences. Additionally, this will minimize the limitation of reverse causality posed by cross-sectional analyses.

Outcome 3: Changing Missions of LGBT+ NGOs.

Measures. To assess the mission LGBT+ NGOs, these organizations will be classified into one of the following four categories: Advocacy, Services, Professional, and Social. Table 1 includes a brief description of the types of organizations included within each category with examples. These categories are intentionally broad to encompass the diversity of NGOs that exist cross-nationally. Classifications will be based off the NGO’s self-reported *primary* priority area or, when missing, based on an external assessment of organizational information (e.g., website, social media, newspaper description, etc.). Though some mission change occurs over time, these broad organizational classifications will be time-invariant. The PI will work with graduate students to classify NGOs to ensure greater reliability. The specific dependent variables will be four country-year counts of organizational foundings within each category (Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Independent variables will be same as above, except that *Organizational Ecology* will be measured as the number of cumulative foundings within each category type (i.e., cumulative number of Advocacy NGOs and its quadratic term predicting rates of new Advocacy foundings).

Analytic Strategy. These outcomes will be estimated using event history models like before. These models focus on the *rate* of organizational foundings from 1980 through 2022 as opposed to the absolute magnitude (Tuma and Hannan 1984). The unit of analysis is the country, which may experience repeated organizational founding events over time. The PI will use an exponential model with time-varying covariates, consistent with similar studies (Longhofer and Schofer 2010; Schofer and Longhofer 2011). Event history models exploit the temporal ordering of independent and dependent variables to account for reverse causation (Blossfeld, Golsh, and Rohwer 2007). Analyses will again be conducted on three samples: all countries, just those located in the West, and those located outside the West.

Table 1. Organizational Mission Classifications with Examples

Category	Types of Organizations	Examples
Advocacy	social movement organizations, interest groups, human rights advocacy, etc.	LGBT+ Rights Ghana, <i>Ghana</i> Transgender Education and Advocacy, <i>Kenya</i> Kampania Przeciw Homofobii - KPH, <i>Poland</i>
Services	health clinics, homeless shelters, employment services, etc.	Streha, <i>Albania</i> India HIV/AIDS Alliance, <i>India</i> OutPost Housing Project, <i>United Kingdom</i>
Professional	chambers of commerce, tourism associations, industry associations, etc.	Pride Business Network, <i>Australia</i> Austrian Gay Professionals, <i>Austria</i> Camara de Comercia GLBT Peruana, <i>Peru</i>
Social	recreational leagues, choirs, cultural groups, media, etc.	Papa y Papa, <i>Argentina</i> China Queer Independent Films, <i>China</i> Diversity Choir, <i>Vietnam</i>

Project Management, Broader Impacts, and Intellectual Merit

Project Management.

This project will be led by Kristopher Velasco, Ph.D. Velasco is a sociologist with deep expertise on nonprofit and non-governmental organizations both in the U.S. (Paxton, **Velasco**, and Ressler 2020; **Velasco** and Paxton 2022; Ressler, Paxton, **Velasco**, et al. 2021) and cross-nationally (**Velasco** 2018, 2019; Gonsalves and **Velasco** 2022; **Velasco** 2023; **Velasco** *forthcoming*). These projects include evaluating the outcomes explicitly proposed within this project: organizational foundings (Ressler, Paxton, **Velasco**, et al. 2021; **Velasco** *forthcoming*), transnational partnerships (Gonsalves and **Velasco** 2022), and LGBT+ organizational mission change (**Velasco** and Paxton 2022). Additionally, Velasco has published leading work theorizing the post-liberal transition (**Velasco** 2023). This work is published in top sociology journals like *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces* and leading organization and public administration journals like *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*, *American Review of Public Administration*, and *Administration & Society*. He is familiar with the necessary quantitative and causal methods proposed in this study (Messamore, Paxton, and **Velasco** 2021; Hoffmann and **Velasco** 2021; Hoffmann and **Velasco** 2022) and has published articles dedicated to developing new quantitative measures (Weiss, Paxton, **Velasco**, and Ressler 2019). Moreover, this project will be housed at Princeton University. Princeton brings considerable resources for broad dissemination of findings, including the capacity to build study websites, create policy briefs, fund workshops, and develop materials for distribution to the general public. So, between Velasco's independent skillset and the institutional support provided by Princeton, the necessary infrastructure is in place to oversee the successful execution of this project.

The PI will also hire and oversee graduate and undergraduate research assistants. These students will gain experience in administering surveys, preparing an original dataset, learning quantitative methods, presenting research findings, and publishing original research. Undergraduate research assistants will primarily be involved in data collection: updating of the Global LGBT+ NGO Database by going through administrative and archival records and sending surveys to LGBT+ NGOs. Graduate research assistants will be involved with preparing literature reviews, conducting quantitative analyses, presenting research findings, and being co-authors on final manuscripts.

Table 2 outlines the expected timeline to complete the various components of this 24-month project. The first year of the project will primarily be focused on data collection and analysis with the second year dedicated to writing and public dissemination.

Table 2. Project Timeline

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Data Collection	Hire research assistants Update Global LGBT+ NGO Database, 2018-2022 Assemble Data Advisory Board	Translate survey into relevant languages Administer surveys Begin using completed surveys to validate existing data and identify new organizations	Use completed surveys and Global LGBT+ NGO Database to code organizational mission and strategies			
Data Analyses		Conduct analyses of findings		Conduct analyses for strategies and mission		
Manuscript Preparation + Academic Dissemination		Submit extended abstract to American Sociological Association	Present at American Sociological Association Begin drafting first manuscript	Submit extended abstract to International Studies Association Submit first manuscript for publication	Begin drafting second manuscript Submit second abstract to American Sociological Association Present at International Studies Association	Submit second manuscript for publication Present at American Sociological Association Post open-access pre-prints and replication materials on Harvard Dataverse and PI's website
Broader Dissemination			Present at International LGBTI Association conference	Present to Queer Politics Webinar Present at OutRight Action International's OutSummit Incorporate Global LGBT+ NGO Database within "Sexuality in Global Contexts" lecture course	Contract web-designer to build a website access the Global LGBT+ NGO Database in consultation with Data Advisory Board	Prepare accessible report to distribute to participating NGOs Post data on Oxford's ourworldindata.org Launch public website by end of summer

Broader Impacts.

This project will result in broader impacts for both academic and non-academic audiences. First, for academic audiences, the PI will publish at least two manuscripts from this project co-authored with graduate students. As mentioned, the PI has a successful track-record in publishing high impact, refereed articles. Potential outlets for this project include *American Sociological Review*, *International Studies Quarterly*, and *American Political Science Review*. Second, the PI and graduate research assistants will present findings at meetings for the American Sociological Association and International Studies Association. Third, all replication materials will be made available through Harvard’s Dataverse and the personal website of the PI. Fourth, the Global LGBT+ NGO Database will be incorporated into the PI’s lecture course, “*Sexuality in Global Contexts*.” Through Princeton’s 250th Anniversary Fund for Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching, the PI will develop lessons utilizing organizational mission statements to understand the various articulations of cultures, identities, and needs of LGBT+ communities around the world. This course is taught every fall; meaning these materials will enhance the learning of dozens of students each semester. Finally, this project will result in the training and mentoring of two graduate students and five undergraduate students in the process of data collection, analysis, dissemination, and project management.

Public dissemination of this project will be intentional and multi-faceted – building upon previous community networks developed by Dr. Velasco. First, the PI will present research findings at conferences

hosted by LGBT+ NGO leaders themselves. These two conferences are the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association’s (ILGA) World Meeting – the largest international gathering of LGBT+ advocates – and OutRight Action International’s annual OutSummit – the second largest gathering of LGBT+ activists and NGOs. For reference, OutSummit 2021 included 1,300 individuals from over 100 countries. The PI previously presented at ILGA’s World Meeting in 2016. Second, the PI will present findings through the Queer Politics Webinar, a semi-monthly webinar series hosted through Princeton University for academics, politicians, activists, and general audiences interested in queer politics – and a venue Velasco presented at in 2020. Third, the PI will prepare a report to share with participating NGOs. This report will contain key information from the research project – especially detailed visualizations similar to Figure 2. Fourth, the PI will work with Princeton’s Office of Communication to translate this report into an op-ed that can be published with many major news outlets. Fifth, the PI has already been in contact with Oxford’s Our World in Data (ourworldindata.org) to showcase data visualizations of organizational foundings from this project. Finally, *to complete the second component of Objective 1*, the primary tool to create a broader impact is to develop a new website to house these data. In consultation with the Data Advisory Board, this website will primarily be a public-facing resource where individuals from around the world can search for LGBT+ focused organizations depending on their country of origin and particular need (e.g., “social services” for “transgender” communities in “Argentina”). Researchers and NGO leaders can access the underlying data by applying and signing a user agreement. The details of this agreement will be developed in consultation with the Data Advisory Board. This website will be a tremendous resource for audiences wanting information on LGBT+ NGOs and their services. This website will be housed at Princeton University and the PI’s own research funds will go toward the long-term maintenance of the service.

Intellectual Merit.

This research represents an important intervention into the study of LGBT+ NGOs and the future of civil society within a post-liberal international arena. Over the 20th century, NGOs developed to become instrumental in providing social services, advocating for marginalized communities, and working as partners in state governance. Most researchers argue that the expansion of NGOs – both in raw numbers and embeddedness throughout society – has been a function of liberalism. But global liberalism is now weakening. While new research documents a wave of anti-NGO legislation being enacted, there is limited cross-national research understanding how NGO sectors are changing as a result. Consequently, this project will develop a framework for understanding how threats to liberalism are transforming NGOs by drawing on political, economic, cultural, and ecological theories of organizations. This proposal will empirically test this framework by leveraging advanced quantitative designs, including difference-in-differences to assess causality. This proposal focuses on LGBT+ NGOs as an ideal site to investigate this post-liberal transition. This is because LGBT+ communities are at the forefront of (il)liberal contentions within the international arena. Moreover, in conducting this research, this project will develop and publish the Global LGBT+ NGO Database. This dataset has the ability to unlock a variety of insights into the cultures, needs, and operations of LGBT+ NGOs beyond the current proposal. The contributions of this research, then, will not only advance theoretical understandings of NGOs, generally, and LGBT+ NGOs, specifically, but will provide an invaluable data resource to break through persistent data limitations that hindered worldwide research into LGBT+ communities.

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