Progress for Whom?:

How LGBT+ Legal Victories Influence Foreign Spending

By U.S. Anti-LGBT+ Organizations

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Abstract:

*Prepared for the 2022 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Please do not circulate.*

Transnational networks are an important feature of modern life; forged by the broad forces of globalization that reduce physical and cultural distance between peoples (Deutschmann 2022). In addition to reshaping markets and cultivating human connections, transnational networks play an instrumental role in coordinating advocacy (Keck and Sikkink 1998). At international, national, and local scales, actors leverage transnational partnerships to exchange information and resources, nudge recalcitrant states, and influence cultural understandings of pressing issues. While research on such networks typically focuses on their ability to advance the causes of liberalism, these structures increasingly facilitate illiberal outcomes too. Indeed, decreased state and popular support for multiculturalism, gender justice, and democratic norms across geographies are partly the result of transnational work (xx; xx). Yet, regardless of the normative orientation of the advocacy efforts, developing linkages oceans away requires considerable investment. Where do illiberal networks get their funding from – and why?

Actors based in the United States (e.g., the federal government, multinational corporations, philanthropic foundations, civil society organizations, churches, or private individuals) are often a key source of funding within several transnational networks, whether illiberal or not (xx; xx; xx). To explain this financial position, studies typically focus on broad structural factors like how the U.S.’ benefits from global capitalism or enduring cultural commitments to “civilizing missions” (xx). However, in emphasizing these macro conditions, such studies can overlook the specific triggers for when and why discrete actors invest internationally. Understanding these specific mechanisms is necessary because illiberal networks are more recently gaining influence – suggesting more acute causes fueling investments rather than broad factors already in place. With this in mind, we incorporate social movement theories to argue that U.S.-based actors spread their resources across the transnational plane as domestic political opportunities change (Chapp 2019).

This relationship between political opportunities and foreign investments is seen as central for understanding the development of transnational anti-LGBT+ networks ((Nuñez-Mietz and Iommi 2017). While starting in the early 1990s, transnational anti-LGBT+ networks are increasingly effective at curtailing LGBT+ rights around the world (Velasco *forthcoming*). Though there are several sources of funding to carry out this work (e.g., the Russian Orthodox Church, the Vatican, etc.), organizations within the U.S. seem to be largest and most pervasive source of funding (xx). To explain why these U.S.-based anti-LGBT+ organziations are transnationalizing their efforts, several scholars point to the adoption of LGBT+ rights within the U.S. They argue that anti-LGBT+ actors in the U.S. shift investments internationally in reaction to rights being enacted, namely marriage equality (xx). Ugandan LGBT+ activist Frank Mugisha succinctly explains the trend: “[T]hey have lost support in their home country. Now they are looking for countries where they can dump their ideologies.” Although a common argument, evidentiary support for this causal pathway is thin. Studies either rely on subjective interpretations, like the one given by Mr. Mugisha, or descriptive reports of just a few organizations (xx; xx). Therefore, this study offers an important contribution by asking: do advancements in LGBT+ rights in the U.S. directly cause U.S.-based anti-LGBT+ organizations to redirect financial resources internationally?

We address our research question by pairing computational research designs with a novel, underutilized source of data: nonprofit tax returns. In 2008, the Internal Revenue Service started requiring U.S. nonprofits with gross receipts of over $200,000 to disclose the amount, destination, and purpose of foreign expenditures on their annual tax forms. These administrative data are thus well-positioned to address our core research question. We implement the following three-part investigation after collecting these data from 2008 through 2020. First, we determine our relevant sample of “anti-LGBT+” nonprofits based on network affiliations. Second, we then provide a descriptive understanding of how foreign expenditures have changed from 2008 through 2020. Third, we test whether changes in foreign expenditures can be directly attributable to state and federal legalizations of same-sex marriage – a policy with significant symbolic resonance that shaped perceptions of anti-LGBT+ efforts being “lost” in the U.S. during this period.

The results from our study carry important implications for understanding both the direct governance of LGBT+ lives and the financing of the post-liberal shift within the international arena. First, we find that the average anti-LGBT+ organization spent $xx internationally compared to $xx for all other nonprofits in xxyear. This is a significant sum of money – it overwhelms the $xx directed to pro-LGBT+ causes by both U.S. and international funders in xxyear (xx). Second, we provide the first large-*N,* quantitative analysis to empirically demonstrate that the advancement of marriage equality across U.S. states led U.S. anti-LGBT+ nonprofits to shift financial resources internationally. The adoption of marriage equality is associated, on average, with $xx more dollars being spent internationally and foreign expenses taking up xx% more of the overall budget. These findings underscore the importance of keeping a global referent to U.S. policy change – while marriage equality was a boon to many in the U.S., this resulted in funds going toward anti-LGBT+ efforts in all corners of the world (Velasco *forthcoming*). Understandably, those in the U.S. may note that the years following marriage equality have not been settled: new threats continuously emerge, especially for trans individuals and even marriage itself (xx). However, the sizable financial resources of anti-LGBT+ organizations make them well-positioned to engage in domestic and international advocacy simultaneously. Finally, we discuss how the tenets of liberalism that enabled illiberal, anti-LGBT+ organizations to even be in this financial position endogenously contribute to U.S. actors’ financing the current post-liberal shift.

**Explaining The Financial Role of U.S. Organizations within Transnational Networks**

Transnational advocacy networks are a critical force shaping politics around the world (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Scholars spanning multiple disciplines highlight how these relational structures affect several outcomes: climate governance, public health, digital privacy, refugee resettlement – to name a few. But conducting this work takes considerable financial resources. Actors with requisite resources, then, generally hold outsized influence. In the words of one Russian feminist:

“Our so-called independent, autonomous women’s movement is dependent on Western funding. They finance what they understand, not necessarily what we really need. Right now crisis centers are popular. How do we as a Russian women’s movement evaluate that?” (Sperling et al. 2001: 1170).

Indeed, studies on all types of transnational networks note the disproportionate financial resources flowing from the West, generally, and the U.S., specifically. Of particular attention are the consequences of these funding dynamics, such as whether allocation is (in)equitable or alters agendas and outcomes (Betsill and Bulkeley 2004; Sperling et al. 2001). While these questions are certainly important, our goal is to explain why U.S. actors allocate finances internationally in the first place: what compels them to play this role? This question receives less attention as the position of U.S. funding is assumed. Therefore, we seek to provide a more comprehensive understanding as to when and why U.S. actors shift financial resources internationally.

*(Neo)Liberalism and U.S. Actors’ Financial Positioning*

***I would characterized this as a stylized historical account***

(Neo)liberalism provides the relevant economic, political, and cultural institutions that structure the financial positioning of U.S. actors within transnational networks. To demonstrate this, we begin by outlining how global capitalism, the privatization of state services, and enduring commitments to civilizing missions uniquely interact within the U.S. to both provide actors with financial resources and the desire to spread them across the transnational plane. While others offer more detailed overviews on each individual dimension (see xx; xx; xx), our aim here is to generally introduce these concepts as to contextualize the present case. After explaining these broad, structural factors, we then draw on theories from social movement studies to offer a more discrete argument for when and why organizations re-direct financial resources internationally.

The economic positioning of the U.S. within systems of global capital is instrumental for initially providing the resources to finance transitional networks. xxU.S. sucks up money. U.S. is also influential within World Bank and International Monetary Fund to structurally readjust countries to implement policies that opened their domestic markets to U.S. multinational corporations. Xx

Next, post-1980s commitments to neoliberalism altered how the U.S. government collected and redistributed the wealth accumulating due to global capitalism. Namely, market logics extended into the privatization of state services and permitted growing wealth extracted through increased trade to foreign markets to stay within the private sector (xx). This change in governance transpired through the lowering of tax rates and outsourcing the little-remaining state funds for social services to civil society actors (xx). Additionally, individuals and corporations with greater excessive wealth accelerated previous trends of funneling money into tax-exempt philanthropic and charitable havens (xx). These simultaneous trends contributed to the explosion of civil society actors, like nonprofit organizations, to fill the space of a retreating state. Consequently, this meant that on the whole, significant sums of money were maintained and controlled by third sector organizations. While those with government contracts had limitations on how funds could be used, at a structural level, this change meant that private, non-state actors could direct significant financial resources based on personal motivations with little-to-no accountability regarding collect need.

1. The growing centrality of the U.S. within capital flows.
2. While in the early xxth century this centrality had been at the service of a developmental state, this changed radically during the 1980s.
   1. The developmental state was effectively dismantled, and tax-rates lowered. This had a twofold effect: more wealth amassed by private individuals, an expansion of the third sector to compensate for the retreat of the state.
3. Within the third sector, we can broadly distinguish between two segments: a segment that continued to rely on federal funding and was therefore beholden to both transparency requirements and political pressures [more like legal limitations in terms of not violating constitutional rights or working against them], and a second segment that relied on funding from private individuals and was exempted from reporting requirements.
4. Taken together, all these trends contribute to the consolidation of a well-funded third sector segment structurally positioned to engage in illiberal advocacy because it was shielded from legal and administrative oversight.

**Yet, still the question remains: why send money abroad?** Finally, while private organizations and individuals use this money to finance endeavors domestically, enact enduring cultural commitments to civilizing missions also compels, or at least justifies them, to spread it internationally. Whether based on secular or religious motivations, a foundational aspect of contemporary liberalism is that some values are universal to the human experience and must be protected and promoted. While this commitment today typically manifests within a secular, rights-based discourse, this commitment has historic roots to European Christians’ seeking to “save” those across their empires and within colonies (xx). Given the U.S.’ privileged position within the global arena, today, many citizens agree they have an obligation to extend these resources internationally (xx). The U.S. government’s deployment of women’s rights discourse to justify war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the rise in voluntourism and phrases like “think globally, act locally,” and the success of key social enterprises that commitment to assisting communities abroad **SUCH AS** are all direct manifestations of Americans’ commitment to deploying resources as part of civilizing missions. Certainly, these international commitments range from sincere efforts to forge solidarity with the marginalized to racialized, imperial feelings of obligation to “civilize,” “empower,” or “structurally adjust” those outside U.S. borders into a better way of life.

Several countries are woven into these economic, political, and cultural institutions of Western (neo)liberalism. Indeed, going back to the Russian feminist in Sperling and colleague’s study, Western countries are a key source for the financing of transnational networks. However, the scale and unique interactions of these institutions within the U.S. make actors based have a disproportionate role in financing transnational networks: there is more wealth due to global capitalism, more of this wealth is held by civil society actors due to privatization of state resources and lower tax obligations, and strong cultural commitments to civilizing missions compel these civil society actors to spread the money internationally. Countries that do not have these same three factors, are typically not as instrumental in funding transnational networks. But while these explanations are helpful for understanding general flows, it makes it more challenging for understanding the discrete reasons for why foreign investments shift at any given time. Draw a distinction between proclivity or something like that and changes in behavior. Understanding specific mechanisms, then, can enhance our overall understanding of the way finances move within transnational networks – something less well studied.

*Triggering Foreign Financial Investments through Changing Political Opportunities*

While the aforementioned factors help to explain the broad structural factors enabling the financial position of U.S. actors, such explanations are less helpful for understanding more discrete changes: when and why do those in the U.S. shift resources internationally? To address this question, we turn to social movement theories to understand how changes within political opportunity structures offer an acute explanation for how resources move within transnational networks.

Political opportunities are x. xx also says we should think about them as external relational fields. As mentioned, changes in international organizations, technologies make this much easier. But, regardless, changes within these field dynamics can shift investments internationally if opportunities in the U.S. seem limited. These limitations can be seen in two ways.

Types of political opportunities:

* Increasing access (but only for groups or countries where access hasbeen denied – thus a curvilinear form is suggested where low or highand routine access arenotconstitutive of favorable opportunities).
* Shifting political alignments, so that leaders need to look for newsources of support.
* Divided elites, so that authorities do not unite to suppress protest.
* Influential allies, so that protestors may find powerful and sympa-thetic supporters.
* Limited repression and facilitation, so that the movement has roomto grow and persist in its actions
* Low state strength – stronger and more centralized states are gen-erally harder to “crack” and offer fewer entry points for movementcontestation.
* Ineffective and illegitimate state repression – states that engage in in-consistent or excessive repression oftenincreasemovement successbyshowing themselves to be ineffective or illegitimate. The skill andmode of state repression is, thus, important to movement outcomes.
* International conditions and allies that support movement actorsand their goals.
* IOs make it an agenda item:
  + Focusing on this scale becomes more attractive when domestic opportunities close off – satisfied some level of gain, advancements are stifled
  + Scale shift

Some level of progress was achieved at home, so there are limited opportunities to continue this “basic” work – so efforts go abroad. Typical form of theorization. Liberal networks. Post-Cold War, bunch of money turns internally to focus on democratization, women’s rights (Sperling article), nuclear non-proliferation, etc. Because some level of security was gained in the U.S. on these fronts, move money abroad. Opportunities for success are limited due to perceptions of hostility, lost fights, or high costs to achieve goals. “Forum shopping.” Taxes here are too high. Climate efforts shift. As we describe in more detail below, this is the perspective used to understand anti-LGBT+ efforts.

Most research on transnational advocacy emphasizes the first, especially from the West/U.S. These groups have achived some level of human rights/women’s rights/etc. at home so they spread internationally. Indeed, this model is generally assumed. Take for example many governments restricting foreign funding because they think it’ll enable civil society (form of democracy), foreign influence, gay-for-pay. But again, policy gains make one turn attention abroad.

“The greater the opportunity, the more likely a movement is to both emerge and grow, and the larger the movement gets and the more resources it can mobilize, the more successful it will be.” -346

international and domestic political transformations that also helped financially position U.S. actors, especially advocacy organizations, within transnational networks. Internationally, international organizations like the United Nations and World Bank grew following World War II and then dramatically ballooned following the end of the Cold War (Tallberg et al. 2014). Just like the consolidation of the nation-state enabled national movements (Tilly xx) and empire enabled long-distance advocacy networks (Stamalov 2010), the proliferation of these international organizations enabled transnational networks and transnational social movements to also spread (Tarrow 2005). Given that the U.S. plays a central role within international organizations, especially during its peak following the end of the Cold War, this gives actors in a U.S. a uniquely influential position to establish partnerships. Moreover, U.S. actors are also more inclined to receive grants from these bodies as well (xx).

Domestically,

**U.S. Funding of the Post-Liberal Shift: The Case of Illiberal Anti-LGBT+ Networks**

We next apply this framework for understanding the present case, U.S. financing of transnational anti-LGBT+ networks, before presenting our testable hypotheses below. Anti-LGBT+ networks increasing effective. Part of a broader form of illiberalism. This is important since previous theorization on transnational networks focuses on liberalism. However, here we apply the theories presented to understand the current case.

Figure 1. So much money. Especially when compared to all other international spending by nonprofits. Why?

These organizations have a lot of money because religious actors donate a lot. Religious actors are important in these transnational networks pushing back on basic tenets of liberal democracy (civil society, free speech, non-discrimination) because of distinct beliefs around gender and sexuality. This, of course, is a bit ironic seeing that religious actors at one point helped spread liberalism, especially religious tolerance and freedom. But they’re doing as they’re always doing as explained above.

There’s also the demand side. Global Christianity is now in the Global South.

*General Overview:*

* + This money typically is assumed to fly from those supporting liberal causes. Hungary, Russia, Egypt and others implemented laws restricting foreign funding into domestic NGOs. This reinforces this image.
  + But illiberal networks on the rise – money coming from Russia, Vatican, but also U.S. like Bannon.
  + Figure 1. Here are trends in anti-LGBT+ orgs and compared to all others. SO much money. Why?
  + Typically civilizing mission goes from privileged out. Because we are saved, we will save you. Because we have human rights, we will help you. Pro-family groups are different. “Because we have failed, we are coming to you. We are still here to protect you, though, by teaching you to do what we did not.”
* *Historical Overview*
  + Religious + Illiberal networks (Not saying religious networks are inherently illiberal but there’s an increasing overlap in the case of anti-LGBT+)
    - Religious organizations on one hand associated with democracy. Promotion of individualism that enables liberal ideals. But on the other, the type of religious actors investing today from the U.S. have taken on a particular Christian nationalism – a politicized form of Christianity that supports undemocratic policies to preserve a religious-cultural ideal.
  + Religious organizations have a lot of money – in part because religious individuals obligation to tide, have higher incomes.
    - “As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, Christianity in the United States is becoming transcultural, responding to the realities of globalization by actively and intentionally engaging in activities that span borders. “ Wunthow
    - A transcultural orientation connects local commitments with churches, communities, organizations, and individuals in other countries.
    - Transcultural Christianity poses new challenges that are only now coming into view.
    - “Despite Christainity’s shifting population, a very significant share of its financial and organizational resources remains in the United States and Europe”
  + Religion:
    - Religious teachings encourage peo- ple to empathize with and help those who are worse off than themselves without regard to reciprocity or to the “distance” between them, values that may be particularly important to international giving where there are few “tangible” benefits of giving.
    - “They suggest a model in which “the type and degree of empathetic identification with the needs of others” or a “sense of we-ness” generates philanthropic behavior (Schervish & Havens, 1997, pp. 238-239)
      * Bekkers and Schuyt (2008) dif- ferentiate two mechanisms through which religion affects prosocial behavior— “conviction” and “community.” The former refers to the values that religion instills in individuals, such as concern for and responsibility toward the well-being of others. The latter captures how participation in religious institutions is likely to result in individuals being made more aware of opportunities to give and of being solicited.
  + Demand-side argument: There's also a demad side. As global Christianity shifts to the global south, the demands for resources from religious organizations exist outside the U.S. Indeed, anti-LGBT+ forces outside the U.S. seem to welcome this. In part, because they do not view these actors as imperialists. The "west" is a promoter of LGBT rights. Anti-LGBT+ actors are therefore part of the globally marginalized. The Christians seeking to protect life from the powerful global boogeyman.
  + Why do anti-LGBT+ organizations invest internationally?

Financial connections with U.S. churches make them more inclined to go along with what U.S. churches decide, among those in East Africa (Dreier 2018). However, some willingly surrendered financial assistance to assert theorlogical rejection of homosexuality

**Progressive LGBT+ Policy Gains and Changes in U.S. Anti-LGBT+ Funding**

Social movements perspective: changes in political opportunity structures. Specific research question is: how did marriage equality alter the foreign expenditures by U.S.-based anti-LGBT+ organizations? Both in terms of raw volume of dollars but also in terms of making international spending more of a budget priority.

One explanation that receives most attention without empirical evidence, though, is that there is a direct causal effect of progressive policy changes.

*“They have lost support in their home country. Now they are looking for countries where they can dump their ideologies,” Frank Mugisha.*

“Northern Christians struggling to win their battles at home look to the global South for alliesand support. This is made easier by the fact that global Christianity is once moreoverwhelmingly a Southern religion” Anderson 2011, 1589.

As mentioned, the fight for marriage equality took on a unique symbolic role within U.S. LGBT+ efforts. The adoption of marriage equality, especially at the federal level in 2015, played a significant role in shifting public perceptions on the state of the broader equality movement (xx).

Alternatively, however, it is conceivable that while qualitative and case studies highlight the importance of U.S. resources, their flows may not be increasing due to these policy changes. While U.S. money may be dominant, it is conceivable that this money comes back into the U.S. following such changes. Must re-invest domestically.

When it is studied, though, it is done from the side of those in less hospitable, poorer countries. For example, Keck and Sikkink’s boomerang models focus on how those facing mean governments seek international allies for assistance. But anti-LGBT+ networks alter this model. Instead, as the words of Frank Mugisha, anti-LGBT+ actors coming from the wealthy U.S. are “now looking for countries where they can dump their ideologies” and, presumably, their money as well. This flow of financial resources within transnational networks has yet to be systematically evaluated.

**Data and Methods**

We address our research question by leveraging a novel source of data: U.S. nonprofit tax returns (i.e., the Form 990). The Form 990 contains an immense amount of data on nonprofits, including: location, mission statement, programming activities, and a detailed set of financial data like executive compensation, revenues, and expenses. In 2016, the IRS made 1.3 million e-filed tax returns from 2010 through 2016 electronically available (about 60 to 65% of all filings). After initially housing these data on Amazon Web Services, the IRS moved the data to their own website in 2022 where the data are continuously updated. Before this release, these forms were still publicly available but primarily accessible as PDF documents. Curating these disparate forms into a single dataset of scale required significant investment.[[1]](#footnote-1) This barrier greatly hindered Form 990 utilization within academic research. Greater data accessibility, though, is now igniting new innovations for understanding U.S. nonprofit organizations and their social consequences (Velasco and Paxton 2022; Paxton, Velasco, and Ressler 2020).

These data do contain two notable exclusions. First, only nonprofits with gross receipts over $200,000 are required to submit the full Form 990 that includes a supplementary schedule inquiring about foreign expenses. While nonprofits with less than $200,000 in gross receipts can volunteer this information, they are not required to do so. Additionally, the IRS only began requiring information on foreign expenses in 2008. Second, Forms 990 exclude an important type of anti-LGBT+ actor: churches. These tax-exempt entities are not required to disclose financial information to the federal government. Understanding the financial role of churches, then, requires a separate investigation utilizing alternative sources of data. The ability of churches to evade financial disclosure has additional consequences for the present study as some anti-LGBT+ organizations within our sample change their registration from nonprofits to churches (e.g., Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Family Research Council). Changing tax-exempt designation suddenly removes these organizations’ financial data despite their anti-LGBT+ work continuing. Due to changes in registration being public record, we also separately collect this data from the IRS to assess the frequency of registration changes. We discuss potential implications for our findings below. So, although our analysis is the first large-*N* investigation into foreign expenses by anti-LGBT+ organizations, our results are only generalizable to this set of nonprofit organizations within the U.S.

Nevertheless, Form 990 data are an imperative tool for illuminating how global efforts to curtail LGBT+ communities are being financed. Both openDemocracy (2020) and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (Datta 2021), for example, use these data to descriptively track changes in U.S. anti-LGBT+ organizations’ foreign expenses and offer accompanying details on local consequences. While certainly insightful, these reports reflect how relying on manual collection of these data limits their investigative scope – the two reports only showcase 28 and 10 organizations, respectively. Consequently, turning to newly available administrative data from the Internal Revenue Service allows us to significantly overcome the persistent constraint of data availability and more robustly evaluate our research question.

*Dependent Variable.*

We measure foreign expenses in two ways: as a proportion of total expenses and as total dollars. We incorporate these two measures to determine whether the adoption a progressive policy shifts organizational priorities (by making foreign expenses a larger percentage of their budget) or changes the volume of resources (as determined by total dollars spent abroad). While these may be correlated within an organization, it is possible that following legislative defeats, anti-LGBT+ organizations see budgets increase as supporters continue their efforts – resulting in more money being spent abroad but at a similar or lower proportion of overall budget.

Data on foreign expenses comes from Part I, Line 3C, Column F of Schedule F. On Schedule F, titled “Statement of Activities Outside of the United States,” nonprofits are required to report expenses related to three types of activities: the organization’s own international operations, grants and assistance to foreign organizations and governments, and grants and assistance to foreign individuals. Then, across Parts I, II, and III of Schedule F, organizations provide accompanying information related to each activity.[[2]](#footnote-2) Relevant details include region, total expenditures, and a description of the activity or grant purpose. Schedule F, then, includes the total amount spent internationally within the tax period, but also the number of specific grants and then insightful information on where these funds are going and how they are being spent.

To calculate our first dependent variable, we divide these foreign expenses by total expenses from the current year – found on Line 18, Part I of the base form. Our second dependent variable is the raw total logged due to the skewed distribution. All financial variables are converted to real 2013 USD.

*Independent Variables.*

*State Policy Change.* We measure progressive LGBT+ policy change as the year marriage equality was passed or ruled legal (as opposed to year of enactment) in the state a nonprofit resides. These data are collected from Movement Advancement Project. We focus on state-level policy change for theorical and methodological reasons. Theoretically, this policy was primarily debated, banned, and adopted at the state-level. When the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationally in 2015, marriage equality was already legal in 33 states (xx). Given the proximity of these debates, state-level adoption is more likely to then influence how nonprofits perceive their political opportunity structure too. Methodologically, focusing on state-level variation offers us more intervention points to assess the effects of this policy switch.

*Anti-LGBT+ Organization.* Our second independent variable is an indicator for whether the organization is classified as “anti-LGBT+” or not. Rather than limiting the sample to only anti-LGBT+ organizations, we instead keep all observations which allows us to determine if changes foreign expenditures by anti-LGBT+ organizations are distinct relative to the broader field. This comparison point will lend greater credibility that any effects found are attributable to LGBT+ policy changes rather than changes to the general field.

Classifying an organization as “anti-LGBT+” is a difficult process; fuzzy and differing definitions result in loose categorical boundaries (Velasco *forthcoming*). Consequently, any classification scheme can certainly be either contested or optimized. Regardless, we take the following approach. We first develop a list of organizations that have been identified as actively working against LGBT+ communities. We identify this first list by collecting several sources: organizations deemed “anti-LGBT+” by third-party sources (e.g., the Southern Poverty Law Center, PFLAG), organizations that participated in distinctly anti-LGBT+ conferences (e.g., World Congress of Families), participate in campaigns against marriage equality at the state and federal-level by signing petitions or attending rallies (e.g., 2004 Mayday For Marriage, 2014 March for Marriage), or being designated as anti-LGBT+ in academic studies and reports (e.g., Fetner 2008). This initial set results in 657 organizations.

Next, we take a network approach to identify additional organizations with whom these initial anti-LGBT+ organizations have a financial relationship. Schedule I of the Form 990 requires nonprofits to report the specific, U.S.-based entities they give money to. For example, in 2011, Focus on the Family reported giving $30,958 to the Minnesota Family Institute for “voter registration” while the National Organization for Marriage gave Radio Vision Cristiana $25,000 for “general support.” Consequently, the Minnesota Family Institute and Radio Vision Cristiana become classified “anti-LGBT+.” After repeating this process for every year one of initial anti-LGBT+ organizations submitted a Schedule I. This process results in xx nonprofits being designated as “Anti-LGBT+” in total.

*Alternative Explanations.*

While our aim is to understand the distinct effect of marriage equality on anti-LGBT+ organization’s foreign expenses, it is imperative to account for alternative explanations that close off spurious paths. Because the effect we are interested in estimating is at the state-level, we direct our control variables here as well. These state-level controls are: gross domestic product (logged), percent of the population with college degree (associates or higher), percent of the population foreign-born, number of registered churches (logged), total number of nonprofits (logged), an indicator for whether the governor is a Republican, and state-level fixed effects. At the organization level, we only include organization-level fixed effects and then total expenses (logged) in models with raw dollars as the dependent variable.

*Analytic Sample*

*Estimation Strategy*

**Preliminary Results**

**Robustness and Auxiliary Analyses**

Frank test

Assessment of church switching and how much money that pulls out from analysis.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

1. Implications at three scales:
   1. Why is matters for understanding anti-LGBT+ networks. Important to know how the international “pro-family” movement is financed. Has all these effects but internal dynamics less studied quantitatively.
   2. Why is matters for social movements scholarship, generally.
      1. One line of research suggests that it’s only after securing success as home groups turn abroad. Or, at least, this has been the attention typically from Global North organizations. Anti-LGBT+ changes things in that it shows that rather than a reinvestment they may turn internationally.
         1. Of course, because they have so much money, they may be able to do both simultaneously – even if international expenditures as a budget priority increase.
   3. Why is matters for understanding broader global and transnational processes in the international system i.e., Illiberalism

This is only the role of U.S. Anti-LGBT+ efforts are receiving increased financial resources from other sources. This could either be from actors based outside the U.S. (e.g., CitizenGo in Spain, Russian Orthodox Church) or other U.S.-based entities besides nonprofits (e.g., churches). Regarding the latter, the plausibility of churches being a conduit for foreign investments is significant. Some research already highlights the role of (para)churches in advancing anti-LGBT+ efforts (Dreier 2018). More important for the present case, though, is that churches are not required to disclose expenditures unlike other tax-exempt entities (e.g., nonprofits). Therefore, this creates a pathway for foreign expenditures to reach external audiences while evading public scrutiny. This is relevant because organizations in our sample undergo this transformation during our observation window. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, for example, spent $23.8 million abroad between 2008 and 2014 as a registered nonprofit. However, in 2014, it re-organized into a church and stopped disclosing expenses to the U.S. government. Consequently, a significant source of funds was withdrawn from the sample just as marriage equality was being introduced. Therefore, while our analysis provides strong evidence that U.S. anti-LGBT+ nonprofits are not increasing investments following progressive change, counter to conventional wisdom, these findings shift scrutiny toward these other potential funding sources to understand the true effects of progressive policy change on the internationalization of social movements.

1. The National Center for Charitable Statistics undertook the significant task of manually digitizing all Form 990 filings from 1998-2003. Consequently, prior to the IRS data release, investigations on nonprofits requiring detailed information were limited to this era or to specific subsets of nonprofits. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Although explained simply here, see IRS reporting instructions for more detail: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i990sf.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)