



LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe

Phillip M. Ayoub & David Paternotte

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Europe has long been regarded as a unique place for the promotion and furthering of LGBT rights. This important and compelling study investigates the alleged uniqueness and its ties to a relatively long history of LGBT and queer movements in the region. Contributors argue that LGBT movements were inspired by specific ideas about European democratic values and a responsibility towards human rights, and that they sought to realize these on the ground through activism, often crossing borders to foster a wider movement. In making this argument, they discuss the 'idea of Europe' as it relates to LGBT rights, the history of European LGBT movements, the role of European institutions in adopting LGBT policies, and the construction of European 'others' in this process.

"Is Europe gay? Ayoub and Paternotte offer exceptional insights into how gay rights came to be defined as a particularly European commitment. The articles in this well designed collection show LGBT recognition politics acquired such surprising symbolic weight, as bottom up claims-making and organizing from social movements and civil society organizations are met with top-down practical policies and international political posturing by both opponents and advocates. The overall argument is compelling, as the authors show how specific meaning-making practices drew the boundaries of modern and enlightened "Europe" around support for human rights for LGBT people. The cases chosen are excellent illustrations of how such a criterion of belonging to Europe then resonates at every level from foreign policy to personal identities"

– Myra Marx Ferree

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