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Development and (re)organisation of the Czech LGBT+ movement (1989–2021)

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ABSTRACT

This article is to review the development of the LGBT+ movement in Czechia after 1989. The analytical section introduces three distinctive phases: (1) the movement's establishment and development during the 1990s, (2) the period culminating (and declining) with the adoption of the Registered Partnership in 2006, and (3) the period characterised as a restructuring of the movement towards the goal of equal parental and marriage rights. The article analyses the development and changes in the organisational structure of the movement (according to [Čísař, Ondřej. 2013. "A Typology of Extra-Parliamentary Political Activism in Post-Communist Settings: The Case of the Czech Republic." In Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 139–168]). It uncovers heterogeneity, mostly concentrated around short transitory moments in each phase which allow the establishment of short-term, often informal, self-organised organisations oriented less on transactional activism, typical for NGOs of the region and time period.

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Introduction

The LGBT+ movement and its goal of legal and social recognition and equality are rooted in broader social dynamics often considered an indication of the level of democracy and civil society development. Therefore, a discussion about the LGBT+ movement in Czechia exemplarily showcases the post-socialist and 1990s transformation experience, the adoption of neoliberal lifestyles and social structures, the slow development of civil society,¹ the "interference" of EU politics past the 2000s and the retraditionalisation efforts of the last decade.

The transition from a planned socialist (communist) society to a Western-like, capitalist civil society was a major challenge (and opportunity) in all societal areas (e.g. economics, politics, media and education but also gender and sexuality) with many unpredictable outcomes. A large body of academic literature and research exists at present on the transformation process thus far. Yet, we need to keep in mind that the development and state of the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are not homogenous (Ekiert and Kubik 2014). There are however some general patterns to be found. One is

the slow development of civil society (e.g. Celichowski 2007). The second, as Kostelka and Rovny (2019) document, is a generally lower willingness of people from CEE countries to publicly participate, namely, in protests. However, a more transactional character has been identified as typical of the way civil society is organised and how it exerts political influence (Císař 2013; Petrova and Tarrow 2006).

Specific to Czechia, many sociologists have pointed out that the social and legal transformation has lagged behind the profound, though rather successful economic transformation (e.g. Večerník 1997). Thus, the development of the transformation's civic aspects has been underwhelming (Frič et al. 2003). Still, despite an anti-NGO and EU sceptic discourse that is still strongly present in the Czech public, civil society has been developing slowly but exponentially.

Regarding the development of the LGBT+ movement, it must be mentioned that Czechia (perhaps along with Slovenia, partially Estonia, and, until the end of 2000s, also Hungary) can be considered a rather exceptional case within CEE and the post-socialist region. Perhaps this is why Czechia is only rarely included in comparative studies and volumes on LGBT+ rights, policies and movements (e.g. Kuhar and Takács 2007; Ayoub 2015). More often it is missing (e.g. Abou-Chadi and Finnigan 2019; Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Holzhaecker 2012; Sloomaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch 2016). However, this makes it an interesting case study (O'Dwyer 2013).

The aim of this article is twofold. Firstly, the LGBT+ movement has not been consistent over the past 30 years. Some periodisation has already been presented in existing analyses (e.g. Sokolová 2005; Nedbálková 2016; Fojtová and Sokolová 2013; or O'Dwyer 2013). However, the current developments, including a new agenda of parenting rights and an equal marriage campaign, have been accompanied by a notable reorganisation of the movement. The present analysis offers a sharper, more differentiated and up-to-date periodisation. Secondly, the LGBT+ movement is not homogenous. As organisations and other relevant actors and activists come and go, they professionalise or enthusiastically self-organise, associate or compete; they pursue diverse goals and address various target groups or actors. We will argue in this article that, in particular, "transitory moments" within the movement's development have given rise to actors and organisations whose forms go beyond the transactional character typical of social movements in the CEE region (Petrova and Tarrow 2006; Císař 2013).

Analytical framework and qualitative approach

The LGBT+ movement is, of course, an integral part of civil society and its development as such. However, most authors focus on the development of the legal framing or the surrounding homophobic or homonationalist discourses; if the movement's organisation is discussed, the focus is placed on the influence of the European Union – its Europeanisation (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Godzisz 2019; Bilić 2016; Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011; Swimelar 2019; Mos 2020; Kuhar and Paternotte 2018). As mentioned above, none² of these focused on or included Czechia in their analyses. Similarly to the mentioned studies, a recently published contribution in *East European Politics* by Guasti and Bustikova (2020) focuses on the development of homophobic public attitudes and the public discourse in Czechia and Slovakia with regard to the legal framework of the European Union and neighbouring countries (Germany and Austria). The (west)European

jurisdictions serve as a reference for rights improvement among Czech and Slovak LGBT+ activists and organisations and, at the same time, cause friction (and a backlash) with political and other actors (such as the Church). These studies, however, do not provide detailed insight into the internal structure of the movement, focusing rather on external dynamics.

Social movement theory specifically as a framework for analysing the Czech LGBT+ situation has been used by Vráblíková (2006) and O'Dwyer (2013; 2018). Vráblíková draws on Fraser's distinction between recognition and redistribution when analysing the internal processes (Fraser, Honneth, and Golb 2003) of Czech activism and the achievement of the movement's goal of having civil unions legally recognised (registered partnership; *registrované partnerství* in Czech). O'Dwyer (2018) uses the framework of sexual citizenship (Richardson 2017), focusing on the constraints and opportunities of LGBT+ activism and organising (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) in Czechia and Poland from 1989 to 2012. In his case study on the Czech Republic, the dynamics and friction between the NGO and the grassroots approach to achieving a change in rights is described, and the programmatic and organisational orientation of the movement's actors and organisations is distinguished (O'Dwyer 2013). We will not be using the same typology; however, the grassroots or professionalised ("NGOized") character of the movement's organisation(s) and its goal orientation will be observed.

In the periodisation of the Czech LGBT+ movement presented below, we will utilise a framework provided by Petrova and Tarow, Ekiert and Kubik, and especially synthesised and developed by Ondřej Císař. Petrova and Tarrow (2006) summarise the developments and the state of civil society in the CEE region, with its many differences and specificities compared to developments in Western societies. They coin the term "transactional" with respect to the approach civil society actors in the region take to achieve their political goals – as opposed to a participatory approach characteristic of organised movements and actions, typical of "old movements" (such as unions) and "Western" countries. Císař (2013) states, "While participatory activism refers to the ability of activism to *mobilise* individuals[...], the term transactional capacity refers to their ability to enter in *transactions* with other non-state actors as well as representatives of formal political institutions". In order to differentiate the approaches of various civil society organisations and actors Císař finds five different activist modes as shown in Table 1.

Císař positions Czech LGBT+ activism (and the movement) in the upper-right quadrant characterised by a low mobilisation capacity but high transactional capacity. In this text, I am arguing, that some of the Czech LGBT+ organisations and organised activities are of different character of activism, and thus much more diverse and less homogenous.

For Císař, *participatory activism* is based on membership organisations with relatively good access to the political system and the ability to cooperate. The organisations do

Table 1. Císař's typology of Czech activism.

		Mobilisation capacity	
		High	Low
Transactional capacity	High	Participatory activism	Transactional activism
	Low	Episodic mass mobilisation	Radical activism Civic self-organisation

Source: Císař (2013).

not mobilise citizens very often and instead use other available forms of advocacy. *Transactional activism* is usually done by small advocacy organisations with a time-varying ability to cooperate with other political actors and to promote their political goals. They often mobilise, but are unable to publicly display a high number of supporters. Rather rare in the Czech context is *radical activism*, which is based mainly on loose organisational platforms and individual activists. The ability of the paucity of radical activists to cooperate and formulate their demands is limited. “They mobilise more often than participatory activists, but much less often than their transactional colleagues” (Císař 2013). To Císař’s surprise, a considerable amount of Czech activism is done by self-organised individuals or small informal groups (*civic self-organisation*). They face a situation similar to transactional activists but in a self-organised manner. The last type identified, *episodic mass mobilisation*, is rather rare. It consists of singular short-term events with high numbers of participants, low transactional capacity and usually not hosted by a formal organisation (all cf. Císař 2013).

In order to refine the analysis presented in this text, a further typology will be employed. In a specific analysis of LGBT+ organisations and actors, Císař and Vráblíková (2012) distinguish three types of goal orientations: an instrumental orientation on rights attainment and advocacy; a public medialisation orientation, combining cultural and political topics; and an often regional subcultural orientation targeted inside the community to provide various services (social work, information about community events, etc.).

The analytical approach of this case study “navigates” the LGBT+ movement’s organisations and actors based on characteristics inherent to the types of activism and organisation presented above. We do not aspire to present an analysis of all organisations and actors for the entirety of the movement’s 30-year history; to achieve the differentiated perspective on the development of the movement and its structure, a qualitative approach is adequate. Though it is neither comprehensive nor representative, its selectivity allows us to focus on examples that differ from “the typical”, switch to a different type, or go beyond the form of transactional activism (and organisation).

To be able to position the movement’s selected organisations and actors within the typology, certain aspects – criteria – will be determined. Similarly to Císař (2013), for the purpose of the following analysis, the criteria presented by Ekiert and Kubik (2014) will be adopted. Thus, in this analysis we will further notice and discuss:

- *forms* (taking into account whether they have a formal or informal character, individual/collective membership or are self-organised; a relatively small or large³ membership and active support; are volunteer-based or have professional staff) of organising and their *durability*;
- *goals* (formulation of objectives; advocacy/instrumental, service/subcultural or media goals); and
- *behavioural patterns* (collaboration with other organisations; contentious/conflictual or accommodating/consensual approach in pursuing their goal; types of political actions used, e.g. demonstrations, petitions, lobbying, etc.).

The above-presented criteria are rather heterogeneous, and the 30-year time span of the analysis makes it almost impossible to acquire quantitative data and deploy them in an

empirically satisfactory manner. The data that provides the empirical foundation of this article was acquired using two qualitative research procedures from two sources. First, an analysis of already existing academic research and writing, accessible historical and contemporary documents produced within the LGBT+ movement, media content (document analysis or desk research, e.g. Bowen 2009), and personal interviews or email exchanges with several members of the movement. Second, the author of this text has been an involved member of the LGBT+ community since the early 2000s. In 2002–3, he wrote a bachelor thesis on a radio-based LGBT+ magazine show based on an extensive interview with a prominent activist of the NGOs *SOHO* and later the *Gay and Lesbian League (GLL; see below)*, Vladimír Hrubý. Subsequently, the author co-founded and later sat on the board of the LGBT+ organisation PROUD between 2011 and 2017, and he has, since 2013, been a member and, as of 2015, the chair of the government's *Committee for Sexual Minorities*. This, therefore, represents an insider perspective and knowledge that the author has brought to the analysis and thus is similar to the participatory research approach (see e.g. Jordan 2003). However, the author did not consider writing an analysis of the LGBT+ movement in Czechia until perhaps 2016 (even though he had written an article on the ambivalences of the Czech LGBT+ community in 2009 (Sloboda 2010)). Due to this, the data have not been collected in a systematic way, in the form of, for example, field notes. However, the author has been a research informant of other researchers (Wahlström in Peterson, Wahlström, and Wennerhag 2018; O'Dwyer 2013; Kutálková 2015), and therefore, his insider experiences and interpretations included in the following text underwent several thorough reconstructive and reflexive processes, as described by, for example, by Nicholls (2009).

The following analysis presents a case study of the organisation of LGBT+ movement that revises previous studies with a similar focus (Císař and Vráblíková 2012; O'Dwyer 2013). However, the periodisation presented here is structured based not only on the existing ideas of other authors but especially on the diversification and changes within the analysed organisations and actors of the movement.

An analysis of the development of the Czech LGBT+ movement

Studies that review and conceptualise the history of the Czech LGBT+ community and the situation of LGBT+ people already exist. This article revises them and provides a focused analysis. It also adds data of more recent (from 2013 to the mid of 2021) developments not represented in other texts. The analysis will briefly summarise the situation prior to 1989 as the starting position of the LGBT+ movement. Three periods in the development of the Czech LGBT+ movement will subsequently be introduced:

- the movement's establishment in the 1990s,
- its peak and decline in the 2000s, and
- the rebirth of the movement in the 2010s.

Besides presenting aspects typical of each period, the analysis notes certain shorter time periods labelled as "transitory". These occurred during the events surrounding the fall of state socialism (1988–90), the fragmentation of the Association of Organizations of Homosexual Citizens' (SOHO) hegemony (1999–2000) and the decline and reorganisation of the

movement after the passing of the Registered Partnership Act (2006–11). These transitory periods are interesting as they provide a more refined and detailed perspective on the movement's development.

The invisibility and dominance of sexology (pre-1989)

Of the years before the analysed period, there are two points to be highlighted. First is the prominent position and importance of sexology in the discourse on homosexuality as well as transsexuality.⁴ The Czech lands can be considered – as it was a notably German-speaking area until 1946 – a cradle of sexology.⁵ The failure of attempts by Czech sexologists to cure homosexuality throughout the twentieth century resulted in support for the decriminalisation of consensual homosexual intercourse (of people over 18 years old) in 1961. As Seidl (2012, 273ff) notes, though direct criminalisation was ended, homosexual sex was regarded as unequal to heterosexual as the age limit for heterosexual sex was simultaneously lowered to 15 years of age. Homosexuality was perceived as undesirable as well as harmful and was still considered an illness until 1993 (e.g. Sokolová 2014). Sexology had an inevitable impact on not only the sexual but also gender regimes (Connell 1987, i.e. 20) in Czechia pre- and post-1989, as Lišková (2018) documents. This provided for the movement's momentum, found throughout the whole of the 1990s and early 2000s. It still retains an influential position to this day.

Secondly, the LGBT+ movement and community must be considered discontinuous due to the huge effort of the Nazi and socialist regimes (1938⁶–89) to create a homogenous mass of citizens. This led to the invisibility of any social or bodily peculiarities. It left LGBT+ issues in the realm of sexology, thus making it publicly invisible. Moreover, a penal code reform in 1961 allowed for the criminalisation of homosexual intercourse should it be perceived as obscene or offensive. For such an accusation, no direct evidence of intercourse was needed; it was sufficient enough to provide any testimony or defamation to the police. This led to the possible blackmail of homosexuals and coercion to conform or even collaborate with the totalitarian system. Both points resulted in a closeted, (self-)stigmatised and dispossessed legacy as a starting point for the developments after 1989 (Sloboda 2010).

This closeted character was in line with the general “internal emigration” (Holý 2001) of the majority of the population during what is known as the “normalisation” of the political and social situation in Czechoslovakia after 1968. For a large portion of the LGBT+ population, this allowed a status quo to be forged (for many, unconsciously and, for some, consciously) in heterosexual family lives. For others, it represented life with a stigmatised identity, either in solitude; in an underground, anonymous environment of bathroom sex (Schindler 2013); or rare flat or pub communities prone to jeopardy from the regular or secret police (Seidl 2012). Only in the late 1980s did the first informal, mainly sexological therapeutical groups appear (O'Dwyer 2013; Císař and Vráblíková 2012; or Seidl 2012, 305ff).

This form of LGBT+ community is distinctive of most of CEE post-socialist populations, who rediscovered their LGBT+ identities only in the late 1980s or early 1990s (e.g. Krickler 1982; Kurimay and Takács 2017). It also contrasts with the revolutionary 1970s and the 1980s fight against the AIDS epidemic in the Western context, both of which were

constitutive of the Western LGBT+ movement and their sense of pride and community belonging (e.g. Weeks 2000).

The movement's establishment (in the 1990s): community life and low-key politics

The first decade after 1989 was characterised by rather extensive grassroots activity with the quick establishment of a robust organisational structure in the LGBT+ movement (O'Dwyer 2013; Císař and Vráblíková 2012). As Seidl extensively documents (Seidl 2012, 319–380), many efforts, activities, events, meetings, discussions and festivals were organised mainly for a small amount of LGBT+ people. The organisation of the Gay Man beauty contest (1992–2000) was the peak of community life (e.g. Vráblíková 2006) while magazines oriented towards the community, including the well-known title *SOHO Revue*, were published. Despite their aim to be all-encompassing community media, this never happened and many of them disappeared as quick as they appeared (Sloboda 2013). All these activities occurred primarily under the umbrella organisation SOHO, which was established in 1990 and consisted of over two dozen groups and organisations, both formal and informal, at its peak.

Fojtová and Sokolová define this time period as “voluntary invisibility” (2013, 109). However, the major dynamic of this period could be distinguished by a desire to be organised and to engage primarily in intercommunal activities. Vráblíková identifies an affirmative strategy in this period aimed at simple recognition of homosexuality. The LGBT+ community and its identity internalised and perpetuated the distinction of “They” and “Us” (Vráblíková 2006). This conformed with the still-dominant sexological discourse of the inborn nature of homosexuality as distinct from heterosexuality (Sokolová 2005, 2014).

Sokolová notes that the unfavourable media discourse on homosexuality in the early 1990s taught the LGBT+ movement “to be patient, calm, rational, compromising and above all, non-conflicting” (Sokolová 2005, 34–35) in order to gain political favour and legal achievements. With active organisations (e.g. Promluv L-Klub Praha), cultural festivals (e.g. Apriles) or community media platforms (e.g. Promluv, Alia), the lesbian community was in this time period far less organised, less numerous and, in fact, divided into adverse groups of informal and self-organised character (Kotíšová and Vampolová 2006). It also weakened the more pro-lesbian position of the movement in negotiating their agenda with the male leadership. As a result, lesbian organisations withdrew from SOHO at the end of the 1990s (e.g. Kotíšová and Vampolová 2006; Seidl 2012, 347ff; Fojtová 2011; or Sokolová 2005). This was also the case of various subculturally oriented groups, such as leisure or regional groups. To summarise, the organisation of the movement in this period started as grassroots, self-organised and regionally dispersed, with the main goal of establishing self-esteem and acquiring recognition. Under SOHO, it also acquired an advocacy orientation.

Despite vital community organising in the 1990s, there was little political mobilisation; no large public confrontations, such as marches, blockades or parades, took place. On the contrary, this period is characterised by low-key, behind-the-scenes advocacy made possible thanks to SOHO's relative financial independence, provided by the printing of the *SOHO Revue* through the state publishing house Orbis (Sloboda 2013); the aspirations

of SOHO leader, Jiří Hromada, to become a regular member of parliament (see Vrábliková 2006); Hromada's access to politicians as editor-in-chief of the magazine *Parlamentní listy* (Parliament weekly); activist Vladimír Hrubý's position as a parliamentary reporter for the public broadcaster Czech Radio (see Sloboda 2013); and allied sexologist Jaroslav Zvěřina's status as an MP for a major political party. This all allowed for a transactional, instrumental political orientation conducted by a few elites within the movement (Table 2).

The movement's peak and decline (in the 2000s): singular goal activism and fragmentation

After the dissolution of the "monopolist" NGO SOHO, the partial decline of some organisations and of the grassroots could be observed. What is more, the state funding of the LGBT+ movement via the *SOHO Revue* and HIV/AIDS prevention, which had caused the professionalisation of SOHO (one to three full-time employees) in the 1990s, was lost (Sloboda 2013; Seidl 2012, 382–386). Many authors call this period, from approx. 2000–2006, "transformative" (Vrábliková 2006; Fojtová and Sokolová 2013) – or, as Seidl labels it, "pluralistic activism". However, we argue that the period still retained its instrumental political orientation as Gay Iniciativa, formed by some of the former SOHO leaders, kept as its only goal the enforcement of same-sex civil unions and retained its public visibility (e.g. Seidl 2012, 396ff). At the same time, many regional organisations outside the metropolitan centres were dissolved or reduced their activities (except Lambda in the city of České Budějovice and STUD Brno). Still, a few other mainly informal, subculturally oriented organisations and initiatives appeared. One of them with a political agenda was the newly established (in 2002/2003) Gay and Lesbian League (GLL); despite being composed of a few organisations, initiatives and individuals, including a few former SOHO members, it was far from a large membership NGO. Its goal was to pluralise the public image of the LGBT+ movement by also showcasing lesbian women as faces in the

Table 2. Character of selected organisations in the 1990s.

	Organisation	SOHO	Promluv
From & duration	Years active Form	1990–99 Formal larger umbrella organisation with organisational membership	(1992)1994–97 At first informal, later formal self-organised small organisation
	Type of activism ^a	Transactional activism	Civic self-organisation
Goal orient.	Type of goal ^b	Subcultural (through the support of membership org.), instrumental , medialisatation	Subcultural
	Political goal	Legal and social recognition of homosexuality, later civil unions	None ; Lesbian (female) awareness and identity
Behavioural patterns	Activities	Advocacy, media activities, networking, financial and organisational support for membership organisations; Gay Man pageants	Communal, mainly cultural activities, discussions and information distribution
	Outreach	To regions via single membership organisations; wider LGBT+ community; public	To smaller lesbian and feminist communities
	Networking	Umbrella for other LGBT+ NGOs, with international relations; cooperation with politics	Isolationist, but collaboration with women's NGOs; international relations

Source: author.

^aAccording to Císař (2013) typology.

^bAccording to Císař and Vrábliková's (2012) types.

same-sex partnership agenda. Sokolová puts this even more radically and argues that the GLL represents a significant shift in visibility towards parental rights (Fojtová and Sokolová 2013) and towards recognition of lesbian women (Sokolová 2005). After several failed legal attempts (in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2000) mostly initiated by SOHO, in 2004, the GLL brought forward a version of the Registered Partnership Act, which, among other things, detailed the clear recognition of the parental rights of a person in a partnership. Burešová notes that both the government and the parliament refused the bill proposal as it was seen to be creating an institution too parallel to straight marriage (Burešová 2020). This led to a renegotiation in 2005 where both Gay Inicativa and GLL agreed with MPs on a modest proposal. This passed in March 2006 (Seidl 2012, 448ff), institutionalising same-sex partnerships outside of family law as a non-marital status, with no guaranteed widow(er)'s pension and with the explicit prohibition of adoption rights (among others; Burešová 2020).

Despite the prohibition of adoption, the Registered Partnership Act, at the same time, presuppose a possibility of a parent entering a partnership. This is attributable to GLL and the arise of many, mainly female-organised cultural activities with certain political aspirations (see Kotišová and Vampolová 2006; Seidl 2012, 399ff, and 407ff). In contrast, gay men organised around sports and internet-based awareness or dating (chat) platforms. Vráblíková sees this, together with more frequent discursive disruptions of dominant sexual understandings of homosexuality as well as the articulation of the female experience by lesbians, as a shift in the movement towards a transformative strategy more challenging to society and to the LGBT+ community itself (Vráblíková 2006). All authors mention a certain interconnection in this period between LGBT+ activists and other pro-LGBT+ actors, including gender and women studies academics and women's organisations.

However, after the Registered Partnership Act was adopted,⁷ all organisations and initiatives with political and advocacy goals, as a matter of fact, dissolved, decreased their activities or went through a generational change (such as STUD Brno or the lesbian organisation Promluv) (see, e.g. Seidl 2012, 419ff; Kotišová and Vampolová 2006), resulting in a decline of the organised LGBT+ movement. This became even more evident after the LGBT+ agenda was adopted (Beňová et al. 2007) by the Czech government's counselling body, the Council for Human Rights, through the establishment of a Committee for Sexual Minorities in 2009 (a working group since 2007), whereby representatives of LGBT+ NGOs should have obtained a relevant political and expert voice. Even public opinion surveys showed exceptionally high (about 70%) and constantly growing tolerance for the right of same-sex couples to enter civil unions (CVVM 2019). O'Dwyer (2013) fittingly notes, "The Czech example offers a clear example of how rights groups that dedicated themselves to achieving policy goals at the expense of broader social mobilization can be undone by their own success".

The period after 2006 can be characterised as one with several parallel developments. As mentioned, formal advocacy groups decreased their activity; the Committee for Sexual Minorities was established⁸; leisure organisations – mostly (male) sports oriented but also theatre groups – continued their activities but separated themselves from any political agenda (which was not the case in the 1990s); online communities were established around website platforms (lesba.cz, drbna.cz, 004.cz) and dating sites (such as iboys.cz and specific chatrooms, e.g. on xchat.cz); public television started to produce a specifically

LGBT+ lifestyle series *LeGaTo* and later *Q* (as in queer) (Sloboda 2013); research was done on lesbian families (Polášková 2007; Nedbálková 2011); and lesbian and bisexual women started to be more vocal about their female and parental experience (Fojtová 2011; Fojtová and Sokolová 2013; Nedbálková 2016).

However, from the perspective in 2021, the second part of this decade could be seen as transitory. As an example, a new lesbian self-organised organisation eLnadruhou (L²; eLsquared) was established in 2004 (and registered in 2007) with the aim to continue community gatherings, provide information and organise cultural events, such as the earlier festivals *Apriles* and *Aprilfest* (Kotišová and Vampolová 2006). However, the vibrant community of lesbian and pro-lesbian female organisations and groups retained its fragmented and often antagonistic character. The claimed⁹ aspirations of eLnadruhou's sometimes coarsely vocal leadership to unify or focus not only lesbian but also the entirety of LGBT+ activities and activism led to a several outcomes, such as the slow isolation of eLnadruhou within the lesbian community, the establishment of another lesbian/women's festival *Queer Eye* in Prague (2010) or the organisation of the *Queer Parade / Duhová vlna* (Rainbow wave) in metropolitan Brno, which took place in 2008. On the other hand, eLnadruhou acquired funding and managed to organise an activist workshop oriented towards strategic planning in 2009¹⁰ and throughout 2010.¹¹ This activity

Table 3. Character of selected organisations in the 2000s.

		Gay Iniciativa	GLL	L ²	Duhová vlna / Rainbow wave
From & duration	Years active Form	2000–2006 (2010) Formal self-organised , only few individual members	2003–6 Small formal group	2004–11 (2015) Small formal group	2008–10 Informal network of few self-organised groups and small organisations at first, later of few formal and informal groups.
Goal orient.	Type of activism Type of goal Political goal	Transactional activism Instrumental Registered partnership	Transactional activism Instrumental, medialisatation Registered partnership	Civic self-organised Medialisatation, subcultural Visibility	Episodic mass action Medialisatation, subcultural Parenting , visibility
Behavioural patterns	Activities Outreach	Lobbying, legal counselling; media relationships Prominently public and media visibility; contact with politicians	Lobbying, legal counselling; media relationships Fair short-term media visibility; contact with politicians	Community services (information, workshops, gatherings) Mainly Prague's lesbian community (festival and events' attendees)	Festival and cultural events Several hundreds of people (attendees), short-term media impact
	Networking	Restricted with some animosity by other LGBT+ actors ; maintained relations with politicians	Network of few individual activists and other organisations; created ties with politicians	Aspiration to unite, but aloof reaction ; international contacts.	Minor local collaborations; allowed to present other organisations during the festival/march; small mobilisation of allies

Source: author.

resulted in the establishment of a new advocacy NGO under the acronym PROUD (see Seidl 2012, 473; O'Dwyer 2013) (Table 3).

Namely, the organisation of Queer Parade in Brno is seen by many scholars as an important shift in the movement. We perceive it as symptomatic for the reorganisational character of the end of the time period. The organisation of this event started as an effort of two self-organized groups, that were later joined by smaller, but established entities (STUD Brno and two gender NGOs *Nesehnutí* and *Gender NORA*). The idea was not to establish a regular event, but rather a travelling event.¹² However, this effort failed. On the other hand, it was for sure an impulse for organising such an event in the capital city of Prague.

The rebirth of the movement (in the 2010s): mass-attended pride marches, a new agenda and the professionalisation of advocacy

Fojtová with Sokolová (2013) and Nedbálková (2016) see this period as an important transitive shift. And they label it as “queer”. Within the study of gender and sexualities, queer is used as a term for distortion and critique of normativity, or the absence of it, as a concept that does not want to be conceptualised, as any conceptualisation bring new normativity and new power relations with dominance and marginalisation. Though, this is of a different theoretical framing to the one we follow in this article, we partially agree with them as may be valid for the beginning of this period. We will provide evidence on the shift from eclectic, fragmented, unsteady (the “queer”), yet, vibrant – and grassroots – organisation of the movement to a rather robust and instrumental one. This is because the following analysis adds an observation of the movement’s development between 2013 and 2021 which was absent in the studies of other authors. To understand the development in this decade, we need to divide it in two partial periods.

Reorganisation, new activists, organisations and agenda

As already mentioned above, the political activity of the movement had declined by the end of 2000s. However, Jiří Hromada retained his hegemony over media inquiries regarding LGBT+ issues (and Gay Iniciativa was officially dissolved in 2010). Hromada was also a member of the newly established governmental Committee for Sexual Minorities where some activities of a transactional character took place. While new activists in the Czech capital struggled under the discursive shadow of the 1990s’ “gay president”, the grassroots movement flourished and reappeared in Brno, Czechia’s second-largest city, where the first pride march took place. This festival and pride march was organised by an informal group of mainly feminist activists. It was attended by over a thousand people, and one of its prominent topics was parenting. It was followed by Queer Pride in Tábor, a small city in South Bohemia, which was organised by queer, feminist and generally grassroots activists. Another Queer Parade took place again in Brno in 2010 and was excessively supervised by the police as the first parade in Brno had been badly handled and attacked by a handful of right-wing extremists. The two later marches/events were attended by only a few hundreds of people.

However, Nedbálková points out that, in this period, the dominant sexological discourse of difference was replaced by a human rights discourse (2016, 219). Looking at

the organisation of the movement, this period can be characterised by the following: (a) the establishment of new networks – informal groups which swiftly evolved into formal organisations – such as PROUD¹³ and Prague Pride, student societies in Brno, Prague’s Galibi and Charlie (later OLLOVE in Olomouc) and new trans groups like Transfusion (later Trans*parent); (b) the emergence of a new type of activist, often from academia or the NGO sector, usually with a gender studies and feminist background or at least a greater gender sensitivity beyond the activists of the 1990s; and (c) the appearance of new topics on the agenda (see Fojtová and Sokolová 2013, 119) – aside from parenting,¹⁴ there was also the goal of equal partnership recognition; the need to treat LGBT+ at the workplace, ageing, and adolescence with dignity; sensitivity towards hate crime and hate speech; improvement in the media representation of LGBT+ people and issues; and also inclusion and recognition of trans issues.

The new political emphasis was also reflected in the Prague Pride march that took first place only in 2011. This, compared to other metropolises in the CEE region, was quite belated (O’Dwyer 2013). Originally, Prague Pride had been intended as a commercial party and cultural event (that the “gay metropole” of Prague deserves). But, it gained political content immediately due to several factors: Lesbian women who articulated the topics of double marginality and homoparentality become main organisers; Czesław Walek, a lawyer with experience in human rights and the civil sector, was elected as the festival director (after the departure of two gay initiators, a flight attendant and a marketing expert); and the then Czech president and conservative economist Václav Klaus and his officials used negative rhetoric, vocalising LGBT+ people as deviant and claiming it was not “pride” but arrogance to bother the majority with a shameful LGBT+ lifestyle. This especially fuelled the political dimension as well as the mass attendance of LGBT+ but also non-LGBT+ people at the festival and its march (Peterson, Wahlström, and Wenhag 2018, 59–63).

This transitory period can be summarised by only semi-formally organised mass events – Pride parades – which took place in Brno (2008) and Prague (in 2011). Their goal was to mobilise a large amount of people, open a new agenda and gain media visibility. Whereas the grassroots efforts in Brno declined after a less successful second attempt (in 2010), the success in Prague led to the establishment of an NGO, which in the following years acquired an undisputed advocacy character and robust organisational structure. This grassroots activist dynamic of becoming NGO-ised was identified by O’Dwyer (2013) not only within the 1990–2006 period but also for the time period after 2011.

Professionalisation of advocacy

One of the main reasons for the foundation of PROUD was the realisation that the government’s Committee for Sexual Minorities has only limited abilities to set agendas, pursue action and achieve goals. Even when there was a ministry for human rights and equality from 2007–10 to 2014–17. During the abovementioned workshops for activists organised by eLnadrouhou, some of the already active (mainly in GLL) and some new activists determined that an advocacy-oriented LGBT+ NGO as a counterpart to politicians, political parties and governmental institutions was needed. Therefore, PROUD was established as an umbrella organisation for individual and organisational members; moreover, it

was established without a leading personality (a “gay president”) but a board of seven equal representatives. At its peak (around 2016) the organisation had over 15 active individual and five organisational members (incl. eLnadruhou, Charlie, Prague Pride, STUD Brno and Gender Studies, the largest women’s organisation). Between 2013 and 2016 it acquired funding – mainly from non-Czech sources (such as the Open Society Foundation, ILGA-Europe, Norwegian/EEA Funds and the US Embassy) – and employed two part-time staff.¹⁵

Since its foundation, PROUD has focused particularly on the enforcement of step-child adoptions. By getting the support of over two dozen MPs, PROUD managed to submit an amendment of the Registered Partnership Act to the Chamber of Deputies in 2013 and again (after its dissolution) in 2014. This was supported by the rather successful public and media mainstreaming of the normalised image of an ordinary and loving lesbian (and less gay) family, highlighting the main argument of a child lacking the legal securities of its real, social, though non-biological parent. On the other hand, the media normalisation of the lesbian/gay family was accomplished with the deliberate absence of public discussion over the associated controversial issues. Less was said about the right of the child to its unknown biological parent (usually a sperm donor) or about constellations of more than two parents. Topics such as the legalisation of surrogacy or accessibility of IVF for single women and thus lesbians were avoided (see Hašková and Sloboda 2019).

The previous period saw the prohibition of individual and couple adoptions written into the Registered Partnership Act as a compromise (Vráblíková 2006). It had also not been possible to achieve general adoptions for registered partners through the legislative process in this period either. Therefore, the tool of strategic litigation was deployed. A lawsuit was filed against the Czech state on behalf of a gay man in a civil union whose application for adoption (of a child from institutional care) was refused. In June 2016, after a few years of court proceedings, the prohibition was repealed by the Constitutional Court.

Though it has been stated that LGBT+ activists were avoiding controversy in public and media discussions that could contaminate the normalised image of homo-parental families, this was not the case for their opponents. One of the argument types used was warnings of slicing the pie tactics which would result in undesired future demands for equal marriage or recognition of polygamous relations. This, on one hand, correctly describes the transactional approach, an approach of small steps, as Waaldijk puts it (2001), towards the broader goal of full recognition and equality. On the other hand, it frames the victims of conservative (heteronormative) values and politics as a perpetrator of social decline. Populists have also used xenophobic arguments vocalising what was seen as the outlandish – EU, Norwegian or American financed projects and imported values – a character of the issue.

Despite PROUD’s advocacy and media efforts between 2013 and 2017 and the collection of almost seven thousand petition signatures supporting the step-child adoption, members of parliament (especially and paradoxically from the strongest and historically most pro-LGBT+ rights party, the Social Democrats) did not regard the issue important enough to get even a first reading in the Chambers of Deputies of the amendment. Furthermore, the 2017 elections were approaching and a campaign for equal marriage was in preparations. The movement’s – and PROUD’s especially – goal of step-child adoption was

not achieved; advocacy for this cause stopped in early 2017, and the activities of PROUD declined in other areas as well.

Because of funding opportunities,¹⁶ the equal marriage agenda was set as a goal. Besides Prague Pride and PROUD, other NGOs joined forces: the international human rights organisation Amnesty International, the ecumenical organisation LOGOS (established in 1990/1993 but until recently not politically active) and the queer film festival Mezipatra (established in 2000); later the NGO Queer Geography joined the consortium. In April 2017, after yearlong preparations, the equal marriage campaign *Jsmé fér!* (It's only fair),¹⁷ with the moderate claims of "Same love, same partnership" and "Marriage for all" was started. Since then, it has managed at various events to engage the LGBT+ community from across Czechia, collected an impressive seventy thousand petition signatures (submitted to the parliament in May 2018), achieved wide media coverage, and, finally, lobbied the support of over forty MPs and submitted an amendment to the Civil Code allowing for the marriage of same-sex couples. The campaign has employed several part-time staff (incl. community manager, or lobbying coordinator) and ongoingly succeeded in acquiring funding from, e.g. Open Society Foundation, individual donors, but also European Commission. As of this writing (February 2021), it is still unknown if this initiative will be successful.¹⁸ But the general presentation of a mass LGBT+ movement and their many allies toward this end-goal of equal marriage could be considered. However, this "all or nothing" approach has caused some backlash both in the media (see Guasti and Bustikova 2020) and legally: A constitutional amendment protecting marriage as a bond between a man and a woman was submitted by 37 MPs in June 2018.

The above-presented descriptions of the internal processes amend the political analysis of public discourse by Guasti and Bustikova, who stressed:

[For] challenged mainstream parties [... who] lost issue ownership of the LGBT issue. [...] Stalling becomes the best strategy for cutting (potential) losses. [...] Given the changing nature of public support and alliances, the Czech LGBT community is set on a path toward full equality, but LGBT foes are mobilising as well. Adoption and same-sex marriage constitute the last frontiers of LGBT rights in the Czech Republic. At a legislative level, however, the support of a mainstream party is essential for any legislative change. (2020, 11)

A similar professionalisation of activities and management happened in Prague Pride. Despite a membership of just 16 individuals, the NGO's activity was very effective and able to mobilise a large volunteer base for the purposes of the pride festival and march as well as the peer-to-peer online counselling project "S barvou ven" (Show your colour) – the pride week and final march is attended yearly by several dozens of thousands of people.

Since 2014 PROUD, and later Prague Pride, thanks to funding (e.g. EEA/Norwegian Funds or Open Society Foundation), have been working on projects concerning educational activities (at schools) and training for professionals (social workers, teachers), coming out and the LGBT+ youth agenda, and, in collaborations with the elderly agenda (with the topically biggest Czech NGO Život90), hate crime and hate speech (with In-Iustitia), HIV/AIDS prevention (with ČSAP) and trans issues (with Trans*parent). However, it should be noted that since 2018 PROUD has been in a "low-maintenance mode". It has stopped its educational projects at schools and participation in public

debate cycles. Its training of professionals and legal counselling, and its lobbying is now done under the management of Prague Pride.

As an interesting phenomenon, we would like to mention the emergence of Alt*Pride (now Act Pride) established in 2017 as an informal, self-organized platform that aspires to criticise and offer a queer, radical alternative to the mass, consumerist and instrumental character of Prague Pride festival. For three years, they have offered an alternative (more queer, more radical, leftist) program to Prague Pride. However, they have organised a group that joined the main Pride march.¹⁹

Developments regarding trans rights, almost invisible in previous decades, is worth a final analytical note in this article. The current primary organisation, Trans*parent, started as a small, informal, self-organised grassroots group with rather radical goals. The radicality concerns both public stakeholders as well as the community itself.²⁰ The “transgender” or “queer” part of the trans* community that Trans*parent²¹ represents has produced a progressive discourse that has especially challenged the normativity of the sexological discourse surrounding trans(sexuality), even in the 2010s. On the other hand, the “gender-binarity-conform” part of the trans* community at the same time provides a counterforce to progressive “transgenderists” (PROUD 2015), and hereby endangers political goals through internal frictions which come across as untrustworthy to possible allies. Yet, the instrumental political strategy that Trans*parent eventually took has produced some relevant political outcomes. As a result, the Ministry of Health hosted a workshop on less restrictive legislation in January 2016. In 2019, an amendment was prepared by the Ministry of Justice which would allow administrative sex change without compulsory surgeries. Beside ministries, the key stakeholders are Czech sexologists (Jahodová 2011), and trans* activists have initiated individual discussions with them – an approach that is instrumental and far from being radical. However, the blocking of the amendment by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and a persisting controversial approach to trans* and gender non-binary topics by media and the new counter-discourse of populist politicians indicate severe challenges to an instrumental, low-key approach that need not be as influential and, therefore, is not as suitable as that of “gay and lesbian topics” (Table 4).

Discussion and conclusion

The development of the Czech LGBT+ movement represents a case study different from Western or Northern Europe or that of the United States. Were we to consider the multiple decades-long routes to the legalisation of same-sex partnerships in pioneering Denmark or the Netherlands, the Czech development does not seem that delayed. Yet, the starting situation in 1989 was profoundly different. Moreover, the Czech case is rather dissimilar to most other post-socialist countries, especially to Poland and the Balkan countries with their strong religious and nationalist opposition, even to the “fraternal” Slovakia. Despite the common transition from totalitarian state socialism to a free market and civil society. In the CEE and post-communist region, perhaps the development of Slovenia, Hungary (in its first two transformation decades) and, due to recent positive developments, Estonia could be likened. However, comparative data on the development of the movements’ structures are not available.

Though the Czech experience shows a few declines – a severe one following the achievement of registered partnership in 2006 and a rather mild one with the recent

Table 4. Character of selected organisations in the 2010s.

Organisation		PROUD	Prague Pride	Trans*parent
From & duration	Years active	2011–present	2010–present	2015–present
	Form	Small formal org.; few individual and few collective members	Formal organisation with small membership but larger volunteer capacity	Originally informal, soon formal, small organisation
	Type of activism	Transactional activism	Participatory activism (festival volunteers and participants; state-wide petition actions); Transactional activism (lobbying)	Radical activism at first, transactional activism
Goal orient.	Type of goal	Instrumental, medialisation	Subcultural, medialisation, and (since 2015) instrumental	Subcultural, instrumental
	Political goal	Primarily parental rights, systematic change in other areas (education, labour market); change of media depiction of LGBT + issues	Visibility, mobilisation, marriage rights	Recognition (both social and legal) of self-determination approach
Behavioural patterns	Activities	Advocacy (lobbying), media relation; Community activities (discussions), students' education, training of professionals	Cultural activities (festival) with mobilisation , community activities (counselling, information), education; advocacy	Community activities (e.g. picnics), advocacy, media visibility
	Outreach	Mild community; higher media outreach	Mass public visibility ; considerable part of LGBT+ community	Average, mainly into (LGB)T+ community
	Networking	Partially competitive (for funding) with Prague Pride ; collaboration with other NGOs; ILGA-Europe member	Partially competitive (for funding) with PROUD; collaboration with other NGOs; international contacts.	Strategic collaboration with advocacy NGOs ; solitude; international contacts

Source: author.

failures of step-child adoption legislation and equal marriage legislation – it can be positively evaluated as constantly developing towards greater social and legal recognition. As O'Dwyer (2013) notices, the movement is in both its “cycles” (1989–2006 and after 2011) transforming from a grassroots to a more formally organised (NGO-ised) character. The Czech movement is, for the most part, formally organised and consists of smaller, temporary organisations and groups, with heterogeneous goals and activities. Only a few are politically oriented, and they are often externally funded, which allows for the at least partial professionalisation of the NGOs. As Císař (2013) assumes of such transactional activism, the lower the mobilisation capacity and instrumental goal orientation, the higher the capability to succeed. This seems to be proving right, as the higher visibility of step-child adoption, and the higher mobilisation and visibility of equal marriage have not brought political success yet.

The presented analysis shows a certain level of organisational heterogeneity, which indicates – three more radical and often less organised – moments: 1999/2000, with a higher level of mobilisation, and 1988/1990 and 2008–11. Further, Císař (2013) categorises Czech LGBT+ movement as transactional activism. Although, most of the organisations take this approach, the analysis shows organisations of a different approach, such as episodic mass mobilisation (Queer Parade in Brno), civic self-organisation (eLnadrouhou) or

hints of participative (partially Prague Pride) and radical activism (Alt*pride, and initially Trans*parent).

One of the reasons for such development is that Czech society lacked (and still lacks) a hostile opposition to LGBT+ people and their rights, as was typical during the “Western” development (mainly in the 1970s) and has become evident in other post-socialist countries in the last few years (e.g. Kulpa 2014; Kováts 2017; Korolczuk and Graff 2018). The current demeaning discourse and politics rooted in the neoconservative backlash, has in Czechia so far only a marginal presence, mainly at the political and discursive level, as Guasti and Bustikova (2020) document. There could be several reasons tendered for that. One of them is the underdeveloped transitive (civil) society as mentioned in the introduction to this article. Second is that in Czechia there are marginally present or more shallow sentiments rooted in clericalism (compared to Poland or Slovakia) or machist-nationalism (e.g. Hungary, Russia) which are strongly homophobic (Kimmel 2003). As a third, we have to look specifically at politics. The neoconservative populism that especially carries homophobic rhetoric is weaker in Czechia in comparison to countries such as Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Russia, or Bulgaria (e.g. Kubik and Mole 2020).

Therefore, no radical, mass-organised LGBT+ movement has been necessary yet. However, if the instrumental political strategy (or political ignorance of non-advocacy organisations) used until now should fail, if the current organisational structure collapses after running out of financial and personnel capacities, what will the future development of the movement look like? If the backlash becomes stronger and neoconservative populists will wield more discursive and especially executive political power, will the organisation of the current movement fail and will have capacities to restructure? Will another transitory moment come? Will a new but again instrumentally and transactionally oriented (re)organisation of the movement appear? Will the agenda be politically co-opted (by, e.g. the growing liberal Pirate Party) as it was in 2006 (and after) and will pass in the coming election period? Or will a far more radical mass and grassroots activism be needed to tackle populist and neoconservative discourses and politics? The developments after the parliamentary elections in 2021 will provide answers to that.

Notes

1. Civil society is understood as the space between the private sphere, the state and the market. It is an area of civil and political participation, associations among people organised to varying degrees with a common goal (usually a change in the quality of life), a space of civic engagement or space for public debate (for a profound discussion, see, e.g., Cohen and Arato 1999).
2. With the exception of Nedbálková’s chapter on lesbian parenting under the Czech sociopolitical situation included in Kulpa and Mizielińska’s 2011 book *De-Centering Western Sexualities*.
3. We do not consider size a decisive and accurate characteristic since besides labour unions and professional organisations (such as a Chamber of Commerce or doctor’s or teacher’s associations) NGOs are generally relatively small. However, we will differentiate: individual or self-organised groups of up to approx. five active members; small organisations with around or over 10 active members or associates; and larger organisations with 20–25 ongoing active members and associates.
4. Communist medicine was progressive in the surgical and hormonal treatment of transsexuality.

5. For example, plethysmography (or phallometry) for the detection and measurement of homosexuality or pedophilia was invented (e.g., Freund 1988) and until rather recently used (i.e., within the asylum process) in Czechia.
6. Seidl (2012, 105ff) and (Nozar 2013) documented a vibrant LGBT+ community during the First Republic (1918–38) and even the period prior to that.
7. For an analysis of all six efforts to legislate same-sex partnerships between 1997 to 2006, see the text of law theorist Jan Wintr (in Seidl 2012, 429ff) or Burešová's 2020 book *Rodičovství a partnerství gayů a leseb v českém právu* (Gay and lesbians parenting and partnership in Czech law) (2020).
8. Its agenda was embodied in the analysis of the state of the LGBT+ minority in the Czech Republic (Beňová and et al. 2007).
9. Information acquired within a message exchange via Facebook Messenger with the director of eLnadruhou, Tereza Mikšaníková, 1. 3. 2021.
10. Information available here [1. 3. 2021]: <https://www.elnadruhou.cz/cz/novinky/357-odborny-seminar-pro-aktivisty/>
11. Information available here [1. 3. 2021]: <https://www.elnadruhou.cz/cz/novinky/438-terminy-skoleni/>, or <https://www.elnadruhou.cz/cz/novinky/533-skoleni---zaklady-financniho-rizeni-a-fundraisingu/> etc.
12. Information acquired from one of the organisers of Brno Parade via FB messenger communication, 7. 3. 2021.
13. PROUD is an acronym for Platforma pro rovnoprávnost, uznání a diverzitu (The platform for equality, recognition, and diversity).
14. In 2008, in Brno, a topically focused NGO Stejná rodina (Same family) was established. It started to collaborate with PROUD, resulting in the “handing over” of their brand (Facebook and webpage) for the purposes of PROUD's step-child adoption campaign.
15. See the Annual Reports of PROUD, available on their website [1. 3. 2021]: <https://proud.cz/oproutu/dokumenty.html>.
16. In 2015/2016, Prague Pride's leader Czeslaw Walek took a scholarship in the United States. There, he visited various LGBT+ NGOs and pursued rather successful fundraising activities among possible individual US donors for the Czech equal marriage campaign (Available [1. 3. 2021]: <https://www.facebook.com/czechfulbright/posts/czeslaw-walek-director-of-prague-pride-fulbright-masaryk-ngo-alumnus-talks-to-eu/10157986667052861/>).
17. See <https://www.jsmefer.cz/english>.
18. In November 2018, the first reading in the Chamber of Deputies started. There was a long list of MPs wishing to express their opinions, and, due to lack of time, it was postponed. The same pattern took place in March 2019, and finally, two years after that, the reading was closed with successful vote. However, to step in force, the second reading and voting for a third reading in the parliament will have to take place. Subsequently, it will be followed by a hearing and voting within the (rather conservative) upper chamber, the Senate. Finally, the amendment must be signed by the president. The president however has already stated he would veto it. Similarly, as in the case of registered partnerships in 2006, a veto override would have to take place in the Chamber of Deputies. This process is very unlikely to be finished before new parliamentary elections in fall 2021. Thus, the novelisation would have to be resubmitted in the new Chamber of Deputies, and pass first reading again.
19. More on this action see (accessed 8. 3. 2021): <https://www.alt-pride.cz>.
20. The trans* community was and still is organised mostly around therapeutic groups, and it has in recent years expanded to the online space. Besides groups initiated by sexologists for therapeutic reasons, groups were formed around the Transforum platform (since 1998; Spencerová 2006) and, more recently, (2017) the NGO Trans*parent. Though Spencerová talks about fragmentation in the 2000s, there is evidence that the Internet allowed the creation of online community groups.
21. It was preceded by the self-organised (two-member) Transfusion organisation (established 2013) which supported (together with PROUD) a complaint by ILGA-Europe and TGEU against Czech Republic for violating the European Social Charter by legally requiring the

sterilisation of trans* people. The complaint was recognised as justified by the Council of Europe in 2015 and has (administrative) consequences for the Czech Republic.

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