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# SMOOTH OPERATORS?

## Ambassadors' Engagement in Pride parades

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# Abstract

Ambassadors waving rainbow flags participate in Pride parades in many capitals around the world. However, within existing scholarship, ambassadors are dominantly portrayed as facilitative of smooth state relations by acting, speaking and dressing in a discrete and non-confrontational manner and carefully avoiding interference in domestic affairs of the host state. By proposing a theoretical framework of an ideal-typical ambassador, this thesis seeks to study if ambassadors are moving away from the prior diplomatic ideal, or if their participation – even in contexts where LGBT+ rights are highly contentious – in Pride is considered compatible with existing diplomatic norms.

To answer this question, the thesis applies a qualitative approach and relies on two kinds of data: interviews with ambassadors and social media communication by ambassadors on Pride parades. Using a comparative case study design, the study analyzes how ambassadors engage in Pride parades in the LGBT+-friendly context of Copenhagen and LGBT+-unfriendly context of Sofia.

The findings show that ambassadors dominantly comply with prior diplomatic ideals when participating in Pride parades, but that they also deliberately transgress diplomatic norms. Supporting LGBT+ rights, but not always participation in Pride parades, is seen as a diplomatic responsibility, certainly in EU states that do not fully comply with EU regulations. Their engagement in Pride is, against dominant perceptions, not restricted by the notion of intervening in internal affairs, since within the EU, these rights transcend the confinement of domestic politics.

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# Introduction

Pride marches and parades emerged in the United States in the early 1970s to commemorate the Stonewall Riots<sup>1</sup> in 1969. Since then, they have spread globally and influenced lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBT+)<sup>2</sup> movements around the world. Using a variety of protest elements such as music, disguises and bright colors, marchers celebrate the history of the LGBT+ movement, manifest the diversity and unity of LGBT+ communities and make demands for civil rights. As annual ritual celebratory events, Pride parades have come to provide visible manifestations of LGBT+ movements, attracting thousands and in some cases millions of participants and onlookers. Growing steadily in size, Pride parades have come to include not only activists and civil supporters, but also a range of corporate and government actors. Among the latter, bilateral ambassadors increasingly participate in these marches, publicly expressing their support for the LGBT+ community. For instance, in the Hungarian political environment increasingly hostile to LGBT+ rights, thirty ambassadors issued a joint statement relating to the upcoming Budapest Pride parade in 2021. In the statement, the ambassadors express their support of LGBT+ rights in Hungary and condemn any kind of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (U.S. Embassy in Hungary 2021). In addition to the statement, numerous ambassadors joined over 10,000 marchers at the Budapest Pride parade in July of 2021 (Aljazeera 2021). Instead of the business outfit considered as standard for ambassadors, many wore casual and colorful clothes and waved rainbow flags at the march. In similar ways ambassadors and diplomats participate in Pride parades and marches in many other capitals around the world.

Such practices by ambassadors present a puzzle for diplomacy scholarship. In diplomacy scholarship, frontline diplomats – envoys placed at embassies abroad – are commonly portrayed as enabling smooth interactions between states. The overarching aim of diplomatic work is, as pinpointed by Neumann, “to create consensus and find ways of making processes come together in a way that will cause as little friction as possible” (Neumann 2012, 16). To ensure a smooth and effective organization of international interactions, ambassadors are supposed to follow strict scripts of diplomatic practice, simply “greasing the wheels” (Adler-Nissen 2015, 23). Accordingly, diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup> In response to a routine violent police raid at the Stonewall Inn bar, a gay bar on Christopher Street in New York, on June, 28, 1969, the visitors of the bar, supported by lesbians and gays living in the area, fought the police and the raid developed into a riot. The riots are widely regarded to constitute one of the most important events leading to the gay liberation movement. In the following months various events and demonstrations were organized by lesbian and gay activist to protest against discrimination, police and anti-gay violence.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, I choose to use the short acronym LGBT+, defined as „Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or otherwise queer/ questioning“ to refer to the entire spectrum of diverse gender identifications and sexual orientations.

behavior, language and clothing are supposed to be discrete and non-confrontational. What is more, as defined in Article 41 of “The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations” from 1961, ambassadors are not to interfere in domestic politics of the host state (United Nations 2005). According to this set of regulations on diplomatic work, the sphere in which ambassadors are supposed to act is clearly delimited from internal affairs. Ambassadors are thus seen as continuously balancing a line between promoting the sending state’s interest and avoiding encroachment in sovereign affairs of the host state.

Crossing the line between promoting the interests of the sending state and meddling in the domestic politics of the host state can lead to repercussions for state relations, including retaliation by the host government or even the expulsion of the diplomat. For instance, in February 2021, Russia expelled three European diplomats from Sweden, Germany and Poland for joining demonstrations in support of opposition activist Alexei Navalny, who was sentenced to jail earlier that week (Rainsford 2021). Another recent example is the decision by the Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan to declare ten ambassadors as *persona non grata* after they had issued a joint statement calling for the release of the jailed activist Osman Kavala. The expulsion was later revoked, after the embassies reaffirmed to abide by diplomatic convention not to interfere in domestic affairs (Gall 2021).

Participating in Pride parades and supporting LGBT+ rights can be one such balancing act for diplomats. Whether this is so depends in part on the domestic context of the respective Pride parade, however. Since the international environment in which LGBT+ rights are negotiated and promoted is polarized and conflicted, participation in Pride marches and parades takes on different meaning in different contexts. In some states, LGBT+ rights have come to enjoy wide legitimacy and are subject of human rights protection, entitling those in question of state recognition and protection. LGBT+ rights are met with a strong opposition in other states, whose governments commonly portray support of LGBT+ rights as a Western encroachment in internal affairs. Thus, some states offer only little or any legal protection and support of LGBT+ individuals. Within the European Union (EU), member states are, as stipulated in Article 6a of the Treaty of Amsterdam, legally obliged to respect LGBT+ rights and to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (European Union 1997). Yet, even in the EU, there is now polarization on the status of LGBT+ rights. An ambassador’s participation in Pride in a LGBT+-friendly environment may thus be a considerably different phenomenon than participation in a more hostile context.

Two examples of this can be seen in the Pride parades in the capitals of Bulgaria and Denmark. Denmark provides some of the most extensive LGBT+ rights in the world and has even historically been regarded as a frontrunner of gay and lesbian activism (OECD 2020). Since the first official Pride march in 1996, the parade has become firmly established and now includes various organizations and institutions. In 2021, for instance, the Danish Crown Princess acted as patron for World Pride. In contrast, the first Pride march in Bulgaria was held in 2008, the year after Bulgaria

joined the EU. Marchers have throughout the years been faced with counterdemonstrations and even violent attacks (e.g. ILGA-Europe 2020). Although the Bulgarian government has adopted the EU legislation on the protection of LGBT+ individuals, scholars attest to holes in legal protections and a disconnect between law and public sentiment as well as anti-gender campaigns that amplified in recent years (Darakchi 2019).

The standard view within diplomacy scholarship pictures ambassadors as facilitating smooth interactions between states according to carefully scripted practices. According to this conceptualization, ambassadors are supposed to be bland and neutral in their behavior, language and dress – a conceptualization, however, that ambassadors seem to deviate from in practice when participating in Pride parades, wearing colorful clothes, waving rainbow flags and issuing joint statements in support of Pride. Given the discrepancy between diplomacy literature and practice, in this thesis I take a close look at the participation of ambassadors in Pride parades in bilateral contexts. Are some ambassadors moving away from the prior diplomatic ideal, or is their participation in Pride – even in contexts where LGBT+ rights are highly contentious – considered compatible with existing diplomatic norms? This is the main question this study seeks to address. The general aim is thus to thoroughly examine ambassadorial engagement in LGBT+ rights promotion on site and to further investigate how this type of diplomatic engagement relates to traditionally conceptualized ambassadorial norms within diplomacy literature. By drawing attention to this type of engagement, the thesis expands the focus on frontline diplomats. Thereby, it aims to contribute to the discourse on and theoretical reflection of changing norms around ambassadors.

The remainder of the thesis is divided into six sections. The first part provides a review of previous literature on LGBT+ rights in international politics, Pride parades and diplomacy to locate the phenomenon of ambassadors' participation in Pride parades within existing scholarship and define the contribution of this study. The next section presents the theoretical framework. To analyze diplomatic engagement in Pride parades, I construct an ideal-typical ambassador relating to three types of norms of a) non-verbal interaction, b) verbal communication and c) visual appearance. Following that, the research aim and questions are building on the analytical framework further specified. After that, the research design and methods used in this thesis for gathering and analyzing the empirical material are discussed. The subsequent section presents the analysis following the research questions. In the final section, the results of the analysis are summarized and perspectives for future research are discussed.

# Literature Review: Previous Scholarship on LGBT+ Rights, Pride Parades and Diplomacy

This thesis draws on various strands of literature in the investigation of ambassadorial engagement in LGBT+ rights in bilateral contexts. First, I will shortly address previous research on a) LGBT+ rights in international politics and b) Pride parades and then turn to c) diplomacy scholarship. While each separate line of research is well developed, I contend, there is not sufficient study of foreign diplomats' engagement in local LGBT+ rights issues and of ambassadors' roles in representing their sending state's position on LGBT+ rights more generally. Given the increasing polarization around LGBT+ rights, this is an urgent gap in knowledge.

## LGBT+ Rights in International Politics

The advancement of LGBT+ rights and politics has received increasing scholarly attention in the past few years. As LGBT+ rights have come to be recognized and adopted by an increasing number of nation states, that started to address and promote issues of LGBT+ rights alongside LGBT+ movements at the global level, this has sparked discussions about sexual rights in various academic disciplines, leading to a growing body of literature on LGBT+ rights in international politics (Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel 1999; Altman 2001; Ayoub 2016; Blasius 2001; Delatolla 2020; Edenborg 2020; Lind 2014; Picq and Thiel 2015; Tremblay, Paternotte, and Johnson 2011).

One line of previous literature on LGBT+ rights within international politics focuses mainly on the diffusion of policies that affect the LGBT+ community since the 1990s. Kollman and Waites (2009, 1) note, that the strengthening of the global LGBT+ human rights movement and its access to international human rights bodies has led to an increase of the human rights framing of LGBT+ politics in numerous national settings, which they term as the "human rights turn" of LGBT+ rights.

Following the allocation of LGBT+ rights within a human rights frame, LGBT+ rights have been further critically discussed in previous research with regards to their influence on relations between states and global power structures. States have become increasingly expected to position themselves in relation to LGBT+ rights, as their status within the global political context is being measured in accordance with their degree of tolerance. The process in which states connect tolerance for homosexuals to the idea of what constitutes the nation, Puar (2007) termed as "homonationalism". Puar claims that in the United States homosexuals have gone from being associated with death and as a threat to a nation to becoming entwined to ideas of life and the nation's sustainment. Homo-



tolerance has become part of what makes up the public image of the nation, while non-tolerance to sexual minorities becomes incompatible with this image.<sup>3</sup>

According to Delatolla (2020), however, the use of sexuality as a normative measurement of social advancement and civilization within politics and governance is not novel to contemporary global politics. Rather, he argues that it has helped shape European interactions with the Global South since, at least, the late eighteenth century. By tracing discourses through both historic accounts and contemporary ethnographic field notes Delatolla shows that the politics of sexuality, and particularly homosexuality, produced a standard of civilization, that continues to be of relevance in facilitating a normative division in the international system. This position mirrors the debate on women as standards of civilization. As Towns (2009) has argued, female political empowerment has become entwined with notions of civilized societies and noted that Western civilizations pride themselves on these advancements.

Moreover, previous scholarship has found that a geopolitical divide around LGBT+ rights – or a “World War LGBT” (Rohrich 2015) – has emerged. While support for sexuality rights has become a norm for both influential Western powers and developing democracies, a rare process of international norm polarization of the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) rights norm has developed (Symons and Altman 2015). Within this process of international polarization, the SOGI rights norm has not diffused to different degrees between countries and yielded different steps of internalization but a counter-norm has emerged. Two opposing groups of states and civil society actors have thus formed and adopted conflicting norms, dragging others into compliance with either of the positions. According to Altman and Symons, international resistance to the sexuality rights norm appears to be deepening.

Similarly, Lind (2014) and Edenborg (2020) observe that while LGBT+ rights have made important accomplishments, the globalization of the LGBT+ rights discourse opens up possibilities for states to instrumentalize LGBT+ rights for different purposes. In reaction to the promotion of LGBT+ rights by some states, there are numerous homophobic and transphobic responses, as for instance the prominently debated cases of “anti-propaganda” law in Russia and “anti-homosexuality” law in Uganda show.

In sum, there is a growing international polarization on the status of LGBT+ rights. In this development, states have emerged as increasingly visible and decisive actors in taking either progressive or homophobic stances in order to position themselves internationally.

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<sup>3</sup> The United States were the first country that included LGBT rights protection under its foreign policy goals. While giving a speech at the United Nations in Geneva in 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that “gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights”.

## Pride Parades

Next, the literature review will present prior research on Pride parades. This field of research is diverse in its theoretical approaches, methodologies and geographical perspectives (Gruszczynska 2009; McFarland 2012; McFarland Bruce 2016; Peterson, Wahlström, and Wennerhag 2018; Stella 2013; Tamássy 2019).

Academic research on Pride parades is mainly conducted through a number of country case studies, with a large part of studies focusing on LGBT+ parades in the US (Ghaziani 2008; Ghaziani and Baldassarri 2011; McFarland 2012; McFarland Bruce 2016). Processes of Europeanization and globalization of LGBT+ activism have, however, provided numerous venues for Pride organizers in Europe and across the globe to interact and coordinate activities, resulting in a diffusion of ideas and action repertoires globally. Consequently, the body of literature on Pride parades has widened its geographical perspective in recent years and come to include Pride parades in various localities around the globe (e.g. Barrientos et al. 2010 on Chile; Bilić 2016 on Serbia; Brickell 2000 on New Zealand; Djordjevic 2015 on Serbia; Duggan 2010 on Northern Ireland; Gruszczynska 2009 on Poland; Han 2018 on South Korea; Krstić, Parry, and Aiello 2020 on Serbia; Lundberg 2007 on Sweden; Mason and Lo 2009 on Australia; Mažylis, Rakutienė, and Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė 2014 on Lithuania; Payne 2020 Mexico; Scott 2017 on South Africa; Stella 2013 on Russia)

In addition to these single case studies, there is a growing body of works with a comparative perspective on Pride parades in different states (e.g. Ammaturo, 2016; Browne, 2007; McFarland Bruce, 2016; Tamássy, 2019), interrogating the differences and similarities in Pride parades in aspects such as protest strategies or media coverage. Even though these studies use a range of different theoretical approaches, such as social movement theory (Gruszczynska 2009; McFarland 2012), intersectionalism (Scott 2017), queer theory (Browne 2007; Lundberg 2007), spatial theory (Ammaturo 2016), discourse analysis (Tamássy 2019) or new institutionalism (Mažylis et al. 2014), most studies are methodologically based on a qualitative approach drawing on observations, interviews and printed or digital materials. An exception to this is the comprehensive study of Peterson, Wennerhag and Wahlström (2018), using both data from surveys of Pride participants and qualitative interviews with parade organizers and key LGBT+ activists to examine similarities and differences between eleven Pride parades.

In light of the diverse geographical landscape, many studies have found that although the US American LGBT+ scene has been influencing LGBT+ movements all over the globe, protest dynamics and the mobilizing strategies are distinct and vary depending on national, cultural, political and institutional contexts (McFarland 2012; Peterson et al. 2018). Pride performances and political goals pursued by Pride participants are shaped by specific structural conditions and take thus different

forms in each locality. As Stella (2013, 479) pinpoints, Pride parades are to be regarded “as an open-ended signifier whose local interpretation is ultimately dependent on the wider sociopolitical context”.

Pride parades are, however, linked across different environments and despite significant differences in socio-political contexts through “cultural anchors” (Peterson et al. 2018, 84), namely the idea of pride, the format of a parade and the iconography of the rainbow flag. Even across national and cultural contexts the cultural anchors provide, what Ghaziani and Baldassarri (2011, 179) have called, “a thinly coherent foundation”. Moreover, scholars have noted the distinct protest elements that pride participants make use of, such as party, fun, play and the carnivalesque, in order to challenge gender and cultural norms and political conditions (Gruszczynska 2009; Lundberg 2007; Peterson et al. 2018).

At the center of the foundation of Pride parades is the collective coming out process, which is linked to liberation and emancipation (Ayoub 2016; Ayoub and Paternotte 2014; Peterson, et al 2018). By numerically occupying politically symbolic streets and squares and both collectively and individually expressing their sexual and gender identities at the parade, marchers question and actively challenge the traditionally dominating heterosexual norms in society. Manifesting their presence within public spaces enables the marchers to affirm and enact their own subjectivity, lending parades a fundamental political force (Peterson et al. 2018, 6). The enactment of visibility allows the individual marchers to develop a temporary collective identity and emerge as a collective political actor. However, as Peterson et al. (2018, 21) remark, the political messages performed in a parade are diverse as multiple individuals and groups partake in this performance, making Pride parades polyvocal manifestations.

Previous studies have further found that among the participants of Pride parades are not only people that identify as LGBT+, but also other people that express their solidarity with the LGBT+ community (Gruszczynska 2009; Peterson et al. 2018; Tamássy 2019). According to Peterson et al., (2018) the increasing mobilization of “friends of Pride” is a relatively recent phenomenon, which started first with the human rights shift in discourses on LGBT+ rights.

In their detailed examination of allies of Pride, Peterson et al. point to the category of “organizational friends”, who nowadays make up a significant proportion of Pride parade participants. Organizational friends of Pride are defined “as organizations that act (or wish to act) as supporters or allies of the movement, but which do not have LGBT issues as their primary goal” (Peterson et al. 2018, 144–45), such as private businesses, public employers, political parties as well as other organizations. Peterson et al. note, that within the sample of their study, all parades were supported by organizational friends, even though to a different extent. Peterson et al. argue that a main factor influencing the participation of different types of friends is the character and political context of a certain Pride parade. The support of outsiders is regarded by interviewed Pride organizers and key

activists as a major asset for the movement and most of them had developed specific strategies to mobilize friends of Pride (Peterson et al. 2018, 180).

Furthermore, Peterson et al. find that in many cases parades depend on sponsorship of investors to cover the rising organizational costs. The growing participation and sponsorship of companies and businesses, however, has caused both participants and scholars to criticize a loss of political power of Pride parades and to mourn the increasing commodification, giving rise to the term “rainbow washing” (Browne, 2007; Gruszczynska, 2009).

Other studies have shown that the presence of such organizational friends, borrowing the term from Peterson et al., had a legitimating effect of Pride events in LGBT+ unfriendly climates. Tamássy (2019) notes, that in Hungary during a period of years Pride parades were legitimized through the participation of for instance multinational companies, famous people as well as ambassadors. Moreover, Ayoub briefly notes, that at the Warsaw Equality March in 2005, foreign diplomats and parliamentarians intentionally joined the march to protect the marchers of violent attacks through their presence (Ayoub 2013, 82-83).

While this line of literature provides general insights into how the engagement of various external actors, briefly mentioning ambassadors and diplomats, in Pride parades has been discussed, it does not adequately analyze how ambassadors engage it Pride nor does it take into account how the engagement can be understood relating to the traditionally assumed role of frontline diplomats. To bring attention to these aspects, I will turn to diplomacy literature.

## Diplomacy

The last part of the literature review focuses on diplomacy scholarship. Although there is an ample literature on diplomacy that examines contemporary diplomacy and diplomatic practices from various theoretical perspectives such as gender, culture, visibility and digitalization (e.g. Aggestam and Towns 2019; Constantinou, Sharp, and Kerr 2016; Cooper and Cornut 2019; Pouliot and Cornut 2015), foreign diplomats’ engagement in LGBT+ rights promotion on site has not been studied sufficiently in existing literature.

Recent scholarship on diplomacy has placed increasing emphasis on the study of “frontline diplomats”. The activities of these envoys, posted to a foreign capital and stationed in an embassy, have become regarded as constitutive of international politics (Cooper and Cornut 2019, 301; see also Adler-Nissen 2015; Cornut 2015; Jezierska 2021). It is through foreign diplomats that states interact with foreign governments, multilateral and non-governmental organizations, thus communicating and negotiating the national interest on site. Among frontline diplomats, ambassadors have the highest diplomatic rank. As “embodiments of their states” (Cornut 2015, 389) they serve as

key figures in the representation and promotion of their sending countries and government policy abroad.

While literature on diplomacy has traditionally mainly focused on peaceful conflict resolving among states, more recent scholarship points to a shift in the character of ambassadors' work (e.g., Cooper and Cornut 2019; Pouliot and Cornut 2015) as well as the figure of the ambassador (e.g., Towns 2020). Instead of mainly white and male ambassadors, there are increasingly people of different sexes (Towns and Niklasson 2017), classes and races who hold ambassadorial postings. Moreover, ambassadors are more directly involved than before in the representation and promotion of their country's values and interests, which has come to include new types of activities and tasks in the host country (Heine 2013). Besides contacts with other diplomats and state officials, ambassadors interact with non-state actors (see polyilateral diplomacy, Wiseman 2010), as well as local civil society (Jeziarska forthcoming), business organizations and media. Furthermore, new communication technologies such as social media allow ambassadors to engage directly with foreign audiences (digital diplomacy see Bjola 2016; Cull 2013; Jeziarska 2021; Melissen 2013), which is argued to be increasingly important in undemocratic and de-democratizing contexts, where official media is controlled and government censored (Cooper and Cornut 2019, 316). These new forms of diplomacy, as the literature points out, make diplomats and resident missions more visible in domestic contexts.

Some scholars argue that as a consequence of the more direct involvement in the representation and promotion of their country's values and interests diplomats take on a more political role (Adler-Nissen 2015; Jeziarska forthcoming). While ambassadors are often portrayed as "neutral mediators" (Neumann 2012; Sending 2015), Adler-Nissen (2015) notes that, in fact, they often "take sides", aligning with carefully selected actors. Particularly in cases where the values and interests of the sending country do not match with those of the receiving country, this may cause more conflicts in diplomatic relations.

Looking into prior scholarship on how LGBT+ rights are internationally promoted, a systematic account of how ambassadors – those who carry out and shape foreign policy on site – engage in the promotion of LGBT+ rights, has not been part of a research agenda so far. Previous studies show that individual states and international organizations such as the EU conceptualize LGBT+ rights promotion in their foreign policies and engage in the promotion of LGBT+ rights. The EU as an international organization has been in the focus of scholarly attention in terms of how it promotes equality policies in its external relations and through its accession process, especially in the Eastern European region (Muehlenhoff 2019; Sloopmaeckers 2020a). These studies highlight how LGBT+ rights promotion serves as a tool in constructing EU's identity, emphasizing the processes of othering that norm promotion relies on. Additionally, another line of this literature has focused on how individual states and governments engage with international LGBT+ issues and how LGBT+ rights

promotion is conceptualized within foreign policies (e.g. Nogueira 2017 on Brazil; Farmer 2020, Chapter 6 on United Kingdom; Rohrich 2015 on the US).

There are some observations in these studies that are useful for the purpose of this thesis. For instance, Rohrich (2015) notes that US efforts to promote LGBT+ rights abroad were under the Obama administration mostly based on bilateral diplomacy and development assistance, using US embassies abroad as a primary tool to implement the strategy. While Rohrich's research examines the effectiveness of this strategy, the focus of this thesis is on how frontline diplomats implement these policies abroad.

Additionally, other studies examine the sites of intervention and the receivers of LGBT+ rights promotion (Muehlenhoff 2019; Swimelar 2017; also Ayoub 2016). This literature underlines the often ambiguous and rather limited results of international involvement or interventions by for instance means of conditionality for a broader societal diffusion of norms despite the formal adoption of a more LGBT+ friendly legislation and policies. While the effects of LGBT+ rights promotion are obviously important to consider, the thesis will be limited to the sending perspective of how ambassadors are engaged in LGBT+ rights promotion.

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Summing up, the participation of foreign diplomats in Pride parades should be understood against the backdrop of an increasing polarization of LGBT+ rights internationally, which facilitates new forms of state policies. Literature on Pride parades, on the other hand, emphasizes local conditions that shape the performance of Pride parades and the increasing participation of "friends of Pride". Even though scholarship on diplomacy points to a more direct involvement of ambassadors in the promotion of the sending state abroad, foreign diplomats' engagement in local LGBT+ rights issues and the role of diplomats in Pride has, however, not been examined. This thesis aims to fill this gap by investigating ambassadors' participation in Pride parades in bilateral contexts. By analyzing how the diplomatic engagement in Pride relates to the traditionally assumed role of ambassadors, this study contributes to academic discussions on changing norms around ambassadors, bringing the strands of literature together.

# Theoretical Framework: Diplomatic Norms and the Ideal-Typical Ambassador

In this chapter, I take inspiration from previous research on norms within international politics scholarship as well as theoretical literature on norms and visibility within diplomatic practice, to build a suitable theoretical framework for the analysis that this thesis aims to conduct. In creatively combining these strands of literature, I carve out tools that will be put together into an analytical framework. Thereby, I do the analytical work of developing a theoretical framework that will guide the thesis' analysis of ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades.

More concretely, based on the diplomacy literature on norms, I will construct an ideal-typical ambassador to study how the conceptualization of ambassadors and standards of appropriate diplomatic behavior within diplomacy literature relate to actual diplomatic practice. In the first section I will thus provide a cursory discussion of main approaches to norms within international relations (IR) scholarship. In a next step, I will apply the IR definition of norms on so-called "Practice Theory"-oriented diplomacy research to identify norms of diplomatic work. Building on previous literature on diplomacy and formal protocol guides to diplomacy, I will work out how an ambassador is ideal-typically supposed to be relating to three types of norms: those of non-verbal interaction, verbal communication and visual appearance. Lastly, I will discuss how the enactment of these norms, and thus the ideal typical ambassador, has to be adapted contextually and lay out my theoretical expectation of how ambassadors may modify the form of their engagement when supporting LGBT+ rights.

## Norms in International Politics

There is an ample interest in approaching norms theoretically within contemporary IR scholarship (Checkel 1997; Cortell and Davis 1996, 2000; Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Elkins and Simmons 2005; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Towns 2012; Wiener 2007, 2008; Winston 2018). While the concept of norms is addressed by both constructivist and rationalist approaches to the study of IR, this thesis follows the constructivist school of thought. There is also an enormous amount of empirical literature that seeks to identify, describe and analyze the emergence, diffusion and effect of norms in the international system. Despite the versatility of approaches and conceptual differences, there is general consensus on the importance of norms and their powerful behavioral effects in international politics, highlighting the study of norms as crucial for understanding the fundamental dynamics of political life (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 916).

Within IR scholarship, norms are commonly defined, building on Katzenstein's widely used definition of norms, as "social standards for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996, 5). Following this definition, norms thus refer to the recognition of relations between specified behaviors and a stated identity. More specifically, norms embody, as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 891) point out, a quality of "oughtness" and a shared moral assessment that differentiate norms from other kind of rules. By outlining and defining notions of "appropriate" or "proper" behavior, norms channel and regularize behavior, thereby limiting the scope of possible actions. Because norms by definition embody a "logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 1998, 951), norms have a prescriptive character and change the ways most actors behave.

Moreover, more recent approaches underline a crucial component of what norms are and do in the international political system (Towns 2012). Towns points to the inherent dynamics of norms of drawing and generating social hierarchies among states and other actors. As norms help set the terms for what can be said and done as a certain kind of actor, they also outline what has to be said and done in order to be regarded as a certain kind of actor. By setting out standards of behavior and thus defining what is regarded as normal and desirable, norms also set the terms for what is abnormal and undesirable behavior and provide the means for classifying those actors that do not meet a norm as deficient and inferior. In this sense, according to Towns, norms are essentially about value; they validate certain kinds of behavior for specific sorts of actors and devalue other sorts of behavior. Thus, norms do not simply standardize behaviors, norms simultaneously help differentiate and set up hierarchical orders among actors (Towns 2012, 187).

Summing up this far, within IR scholarship, norms are conceived as setting out social standards for the appropriate behavior of a given actor (state or non-state) and by doing so, norms inevitably shape relations and constitute hierarchies among actors.

## Norms in Diplomacy

Turning back to diplomacy, there are profound implicit and explicit expectations – i.e., norms – about how ambassadors involved in bilateral diplomacy are supposed to behave and look and how diplomacy is supposed to be practiced. These expectations, either in form of formal rules or more informal norms, are most tangible for ambassadors, i.e., diplomats of the highest rank. I will carve out these rules and norms by excavating how ambassadors are ideal-typically portrayed in diplomacy literature and in diplomatic protocol guides, in order to then be able to examine how well this ideal type captures ambassadors' actual actions and behavior (with respect to Pride). An ideal type is a constructed ideal that provides a simplified description of a phenomenon by highlighting certain



elements of observed reality (Esaiasson et al. 2017). The aim in constructing an ideal type is thus not to identify an ideal ambassador in the sense of being excellent or average, but to point out distinctive features in the conception of ambassadors.

In order to do that, I make use of empirical diplomacy literature and formal guides to diplomacy. The seemingly universally expected rules and conventions of modern diplomacy are anchored in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations from 1961. Formal protocol rules and prescriptive guides to practice of diplomacy further specify the international standards of diplomatic work and outline the rules of proper conduct. To furthermore discern more informal and uncodified norms placed on ambassadors, I also draw on scholarship on diplomacy.

Within the diplomacy literature, so-called “practice turn” scholars are interested in assessing international politics through the daily activities of diplomats, their concrete practices, repertoire of actions and networks (Adler-Nissen 2014; Cooper and Cornut 2019; Neumann 2002; Pouliot 2016; Pouliot and Cornut 2015; Wiseman 2015). Noticeably, these studies often leave discussions on norms in diplomacy outside the scope of interest, sometimes expressly. Yet, this approach grounds on an understanding of practices as “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding” (Schatzki 2001, 2). Accordingly, practices cannot be seen as an isolated event or a unique performance, but per definition imply regularity and repetition in time and spaces. As a new theoretical development, the practice approach in diplomacy literature with its focus on “the creation of standards and interactions between states and organisations within institutions, sites, and activities” (Cooper and Cornut 2019, 304) is clearly mirroring analyses of norms.

Building on Judith Butler and in line with Towns (forthcoming), I contend that practice oriented diplomacy research – though in many studies not explicitly stated – essentially studies norms within diplomatic activities. As Butler (1993) has pointed out, practices are enactments of norms. Practices thus stand in a recursive relationship with various norms. As every individual constantly enacts and refers to norms in practice, norms are repeatedly reproduced and performed. The citation and repetition of norms, however, also includes miscitations of already existing norms in practice that produce small changes and bring about something new.

Considering this, I thus argue that empirical research on diplomatic practice, assessing standards of daily diplomatic activities, essentially rests on a similar foundation as IR approaches to international norms. A reading of practice research on diplomacy and guides and protocols of diplomacy will thus enable me to identify central norms guiding the daily activities of diplomats. By pointing out the norms that underpin diplomatic work, I will assess how ambassadors, according to this literature, are supposed to ideal-typically behave and how diplomacy is supposed to be practiced.

## **Identifying Norms of Diplomatic Practice and the Ideal-Typical Ambassador**

As Neumann (2012, 16) and others have contended, the main aim of diplomacy is to enable interactions and smooth relations. What is more, diplomats – especially frontline diplomats – are often portrayed as simple messengers between political entities, who enable peaceful interactions among states, contributing to a smooth organization of the international political system while at the same time upholding the interests of their sending country (Jeziarska forthcoming). Diplomacy, in this view appears, as a politically “empty practice”, as diplomats are simply “greasing the wheels” (Adler-Nissen 2015, 23). Consequently, this common ideal, often repeated in diplomacy research and reflected in self-portrayals of diplomats, dictates a discreet and supposedly politically neutral mode of conduct for ambassadors, carefully mediating the relations between different parties, while neither taking sides nor interfering in other states’ internal affairs (Adler-Nissen 2015).

Outlining an ideal of how diplomacy is supposed to be practiced, these accounts create powerful reference points to which practitioners feel obliged. To study how this notion is reflected in norms of diplomatic behavior, I will distinguish between three sets of norms, relating to (1) non-verbal interaction, (2) verbal communication and (3) visual appearance of ambassadors, which together will be used to analyze diplomatic practice. The distinction between the three sets of norms is an analytical one. In reality, these types of behavior and the norms structuring them overlap, as e.g., visibility is a form of communication and communication is a form of interaction. However, separating them analytically will allow for a more nuanced discussion, including highlighting instances of alignment or clashes between the various types of norms. Further, norms are contingent on context. For instance, the “appropriate” enactment of norms of diplomatic communication can take different forms depending on audience and setting. I will thus first outline the style and manner that these norms prescribe and in a second step, assess how the ideal type, constituted by these norms, is adaptable to different contexts.

### ***Diplomatic Norms of Non-Verbal Interaction***

A first set of norms of modern diplomacy centers on non-verbal interaction of diplomatic actors. Acting on behalf of their state, ambassadors move within a meaning-laden context, commonly referred to as “diplomatic culture”. Diplomatic culture, understood as the “overarching structure that constrains the behavior of states and their diplomats” (McConnell and Dittmer 2016, 105), is infused with formal rules of non-verbal interaction to allow diplomats from different countries to interact with each other in a “safe manner” (Faizullaev 2014, 278). Diplomatic interaction, that is the actions ambassadors take upon each other, are thus shaped and conditioned by many codified rules and procedures. By strictly

following defined scripts of interaction, the ideal-typical ambassador is supposed to serve as an empty vehicle through which the state operates.

The ideal-typical ambassador interacts according to diplomatic protocol and etiquette, in which the exact form and procedure of diplomatic interactions is set out in writing. Together, protocol and etiquette provide the ambassador with both a basic social framework and hierarchy to follow and as such have a commanding role in regulating the components of diplomatic interaction (Gherasim 2019; McConnell and Dittmer 2016). These formalized rules clearly define the scope and repertoire of “appropriate” interactions. The ideal-typical ambassador knows the rules of precedent and procedure, appropriate forms of interaction and shows good manners and courtesy conduct in diplomatic encounters. By strictly following this predefined set of ritualized and scripted interactions, the ideal typical ambassador appears as neutrally facilitating the smooth conduct of relations between states – there is little room for inventiveness and individuality. He/She does neither take actions on his/her own outside the defined frame nor does the ideal-typical ambassador express personal affection in interaction.

The specific role of protocol and etiquette in facilitating the ideal-typical ambassador’s interaction can be illustrated with the example of hosting a formal event at the embassy (U.S. Department of State n.d.). Besides carefully planning the seating arrangement of the guests according to rank, diplomatic protocol and etiquette prescribe in detail how the ambassador is supposed to welcome the guests, how to sit while eating, where to place the napkin and even how to make a toast. Interestingly, even flags are regarded as a part of diplomatic interaction and subject to elaborate rules on their usage. During bilateral meetings for instance, flags of the represented states need to be represented equally in the number and size both in the lobby and in front of the building since these, as national symbols, visually interact when placed next to each other (Faizullaev 2013).

In the last few decades, new tasks have been added to the diplomatic remit, encompassing interactions with foreign governments and publics through holding meetings, workshops, giving interviews to the local media, organizing dinners, receptions and cultural events (Adler-Nissen 2016). Ambassadors thus no longer just interact with other diplomats and state officials, but also engage more extensively with business actors, media, civil society organizations and general publics (Jeziarska forthcoming). Even in these more informal and less ritualized interactions the ideal-typical ambassador complies with the norms of conduct and expectations of acting as an “intermediary with no distinct political agenda” (Jeziarska forthcoming, 2) by not taking sides. On the one hand, the ideal-typical ambassador does not deviate from what the sending state stands for. On the other, she/he is cautious not to intervene in the domestic politics of the host state, e.g., by openly meeting with opponents of a government or other actors that could be perceived by the host government as provocative.

Concluding, the ideal typical ambassador interacts according to a set of definite patterns of interaction, which are outlined in protocol and etiquette. By effacing signs of a personal agenda through strict compliance with scripted rules and norms of interaction the ideal typical ambassador is conceived as a neutral conduit of the sending state. What is more, the ideal-typical ambassador is not to meddle in the internal affairs of the host state. The diplomat is thus not to throw his/her support behind actors whose political stances diverge or oppose the host government's position.

### ***Diplomatic Norms of Verbal Communication***

Diplomacy is also commonly associated with a distinctive form of verbal communication (Constantinou 2018a), including both written and spoken language. Serving as “neutral messengers of the national interest” (Adler-Nissen 2012, n.p.) of the sending state, ambassadors enable states to enter into conversation with each other. To appropriately instantiate the verbal conduct of a state, the ideal typical ambassador is required to adhere to the rules and conventions of diplomatic communication that is underpinned by codified as well as uncoded norms of conduct (McConnell 2018). These outline a specific style and form of communication for the ideal type ambassador to take on in order to supposedly neutrally deliver the sending country's message while not offending the host state.

The particular manner and form of communication, which the ideal-typical ambassador is supposed to adopt, is based on a “common script” (McConnell 2018, 370). This script entails both a range of conventional expressions and idioms, but also restricts what and how something can be articulated. In terms of content, the ideal typical ambassador only expresses the viewpoint of his/her country, saying “neither too much nor too little” (Cohen 1981, 32) and does not make personal statements. To neutrally convey a standpoint and not offend the host nation, he/she is supposed to use a restrained manner of speaking and language that is characterized by courtesy and constructive ambiguity (Jönsson 2016). Courtesy – or “the art of saying pleasant things to people you hate” (Jönsson 2016, 82) – contributes to upholding the smoothness of diplomatic communication. By using constructive ambiguity, denoting the deliberate usage of vague language, such as understatements or circumlocution, the ideal typical ambassador is able to avoid provocation of the host state by allowing for multiple interpretations of the message (Jönsson 2016). Rules and norms of diplomatic language further outline appropriate forms of how something can be communicated. Besides direct conversations, these commonly encompass oral speeches, written communiqués, demarches, non-papers and press releases (Oglesby 2016). By adhering to the common script of diplomatic communication the ideal typical ambassador is regarded as neutrally communicating on behalf of the state.

With technological advancements in digital communication during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new means of public communication have been integrated into the repertoire of diplomatic communication (Constantinou 2018b; Cooper and Cornut 2019). This “mediation of diplomacy” (Pamment 2014), has greatly expanded the forms of diplomatic communication and made communication by ambassadors public, not least with the usage of social media becoming a standard practice in embassies (Cooper and Cornut 2019). In these new forums, diplomatic communication has taken on a slightly less formal and more personal tone (Oglesby 2016; Cooper and Cornut 2019). By sharing information on social media like Twitter and Facebook and commenting on on-going events, work-related issues and cultural topics, ambassadors can engage with a potentially global audience and enter into exchange with them. While new forms of communication may seem livelier and more engaging than traditional diplomatic communication, the ideal-typical ambassadors still conform with the guiding norms of diplomatic communication in terms of neutrality. She/he uses a considerate vocabulary and non-abrasive manner of communicating and does not deviate thematically from what the state stands for. In addition, the ideal-typical ambassador does not side with a particular view in these forums either or provokes the host nation.

In sum, the ideal-typical ambassador adopts a specific style of communication to serve as a neutral mouthpiece of the sending state. This style of communication is characterized by a non-abrasive vocabulary, moderated tone and a rhetorical style that mitigates confrontational messages. The ideal-typical ambassador strictly follows the common script of communication and effaces personal views to only convey the message of the sending state.

### ***Diplomatic Norms of Visual Appearance***

Relating to and complementing the aforementioned norms in diplomacy, a third set of norms can be discerned relating to visual appearances of ambassadors. By serving as “sensible evidences of the state” (Faizullaev 2013, 94) abroad, ambassadors’ dress and appearance is a visual expression of the state. The ideal-typical ambassador must thus appear in a manner that is both an appropriate embodiment of the state, while also accepted as presentable by the hosting state (Neumann 2019). Due to its symbolic meaning, the visual appearance of ambassadors is subject to many norms as well as formal protocol rules specifying a limited set of appropriate ways of visually embodying the state. Meeting these expectations and carefully managing visual appearance according to norms and regulations is thus an essential part of ambassadorial work (Towns forthcoming).

There are clear standards for how ambassadors are to appear in order to competently represent a state. Within Western settings, appearance norms are dominantly structured by androcentric, formal and elegant Western upper class clothing styles (Towns forthcoming). The basic

theme of the ideal-typical ambassador's appearance can thus be pinpointed as a well-groomed conservative elegance. It needs to be well-groomed in the sense of being subtle; dress, hair and accessories are not supposed to attract too much attention or direct focus to personal characteristics or the clothing style of the ambassador, but need to allude to the overarching notion of neutrality.

Interestingly, compared to the above-described norms of non-verbal interaction and verbal communication, there are distinctly separate visual gendered appearance norms, distinguishing male and female ambassadors in a binary manner. While the ideal-typical male ambassador usually dresses in a Western business suit, serving as a uniform with slight variations such as tie or bow for different occasions, the demands for women are more diverse (Towns forthcoming). The ideal-typical female ambassador generally sticks to resembling counterparts by wearing e.g. pant suits, dresses or skirts and blouses. These gendered expressions appropriate for embodying the state are further accentuated both by a limited range of color for apparel – with male ambassadors' attire being mostly confined to grey, dark blue and black shades – as well as through similar styles of short haircuts and mostly clean-shaven faces or short beards for men. For the ideal type female ambassador, appearance standards are slightly less uniform. She has a slightly broader palette of colors to pick from, but opts with regards to make-up, hair, nails or jewelry, for a subtle and staidly considered appearance (Towns forthcoming).

These limited appearance standards, specified within protocol and etiquette, leave very little room for personal clothing preferences or tastes. As such, the regularized appearance norms serve to neutralize the individual by coating him or her within a clearly defined style of clothing. This style is what is considered within Western diplomatic cultures both an appropriate and neutral appearance. Dress and appearance within diplomacy function thereby as a crucial indication of the ability one has in competently and unbiasedly representing the state. The ideal-type ambassador does not disrupt the conformity that should be practiced by ambassadors by appearing over- or underdressed, standing out with flashy clothes in bright colors and cuts or an unkempt appearance.

To conclude, for the ideal-typical ambassador, there is only a certain style considered appropriate for visually embodying the state. The basic theme of this style is well-groomed, bland and conservative elegance. To appear as neutral and smooth, the ideal-typical ambassador dresses according to gendered standards and does not show his/her personal expressions of taste and style with regards to clothing.

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To structure the following analysis based on an analytical framework, the ideal-typical ambassador relating to these three sets of diplomatic norms is summarized in the following way. The general image that emerges from this depiction is the *smooth operator*.

**Table 1: *The Ideal-Typical Ambassador: The Smooth Operator***

<b>Diplomatic Norms of non-verbal interaction</b>	<b>Diplomatic Norms of verbal communication</b>	<b>Diplomatic Norms of visual appearance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-confrontational style of interaction</li> <li>- All kinds of interactions signal neutrality in internal country matters</li> <li>- Avoids interactions that appear as support for government oppositional/critical groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses courteously vocabulary</li> <li>- Has restrained manner of speaking</li> <li>- Mitigates confrontational views through rhetorical style</li> <li>- Does not express personal views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appears well-groomed, bland in colors and cuts of clothing and accessories</li> <li>- Portrays conservative elegance</li> <li>- Follows gendered appearance standards</li> <li>- Does not show his/her personal taste with regards to clothing</li> </ul>

## Contextual Variations in How Ambassadors Enact Diplomatic Norms

In this section, I point to the fact that diplomatic norms – which constitute the ideal-typical ambassador – are always contingent on the specific context in which they are enacted. In order to perform in a diplomatically appropriate manner – i.e., smooth and neutral –, the ways of expressing neutrality in interaction, communication and visual appearance have to be adapted to a specific context. Performing as a neutral and smooth ambassador can thus be expressed differently depending on the situation. Therefore, the ideal-type is adaptable to different contexts and can thus take different forms in implementation.

However, since the ideal-typical and the forms of interaction, communication and visual appearance are so highly scripted, nuances in expressions are significant and even small deviations from a norm can be read as faux pas. Take for example the international debate that emerged after Ursula von der Leyen (President of the EU Commission) and Charles Michel (President of the European Council) met with Turkey’s president Tayyip Erdogan. Von der Leyen was consigned to a socially-distanced sofa opposite Turkey’s foreign minister whom she outranks (Stavis-Gridneff and Gall 2021). This was widely seen as a break with diplomatic protocol and a deliberate slight. What the incident and the discussions surrounding it underline, is how highly scripted and formalized diplomatic actions are and the importance that is put on such regulations. Even small deviations from ritualized forms and expressions (intended or not) are perceived as signs of disparagement and an

offense both to the diplomat and the nation (or in this case organization) one represents, causing international attention and possibly affecting state relations.

In order to remain neutral and smooth, ambassadors have to adapt to local contexts – how diplomatic norms are enacted will vary according to what is politically taken-for-granted and what is politicized as contentious in any given context. In contexts where LGBT+ rights are legally enshrined and supported by the government, expressing support is not controversial and is thus no problem in the smooth interactions expected of ambassadors. In contrast, in contexts where LGBT+ rights are not legally supported and opposed by the government, expressing support is likely seen as a political act and as meddling in the host country's domestic affairs.

Based on the analytical framework of the ideal typical ambassador, systematic questions, developed both inductively and deductively, can be posed to the empirical material to operationalize the analytical framework. While the ideal type enables us to understand the abstract idea of neutrality and smoothness in ambassadorial interaction, communication and visual appearance, it is not clear what neutrality and smoothness specifically mean and how they are implemented in practice. Hence, the following questions can be posed: What kind of non-verbal interactions do ambassadors engage in when participating in Pride parades and with whom? How do they verbally express themselves on the issue? How do they dress and visually appear when participating in a Pride parade? Do these actions align with or diverge from the ideal-typical ambassador postulated in diplomacy literature? If the latter is the case, how do ambassadors legitimize this deviation?

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Summing up, the assessment of norms regulating diplomatic work, as presented in the table above, will guide the analysis of ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades to investigate whether and how the ideal type ambassador is enacted in ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades. While this set of norms imparts highly scripted forms of interaction, communication as well as visual appearance of ambassadors, it also requires adaption to specific contexts. As such, these norms have to be carefully maneuvered. In light of the increasing polarization of LGBT+ rights internationally, ambassadors' adaption of common diplomatic norms may differ contextually when supporting LGBT+ rights. In the following chapter, after setting out the specified aim and research questions, the methods for carrying out this analysis will be discussed.



## Specified Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to describe and analyze the participation of ambassadors in Pride parades and their support of efforts to enhance LGBT+ rights in different contexts. One part of this aim is to map out, which states' ambassadors participate (or not) in Pride parades. Another part of this aim is to use the ideal-typical ambassador – the theoretical figure developed in the previous chapter by a close reading of prior scholarship – to investigate if the notion of what an ambassador is and does differs from the expectations of diplomacy scholars as well as to assess if this varies contextually. To further examine how the engagement of ambassadors in Pride Parades corresponds with the ideal-typical ambassador, the thesis also examines how ambassadors themselves view and legitimize their engagement in terms of professional ideals. Consequently, in line with the aim of the thesis, the following research questions can be posed:

1. Which states' ambassadors participate and which do not participate in Pride parades (in Copenhagen and Sofia)?
2. How do ambassadors engage in Pride parades and what kind of actions do ambassadors carry out as part of their engagement? More specifically, in light of diplomatic norms and the ideal-typical ambassador, what kinds of (a) non-verbal interactions; (b) verbal communication, and (c) dress and visual appearance do ambassadors deploy when participating in a Pride parade?
3. How do ambassadors themselves account for and view this type of diplomatic engagement in terms of diplomatic norms?
4. How does the engagement of ambassadors in Pride parades differ between a LGBT+ friendly (Copenhagen) and a LGBT+ unfriendly context (Sofia)?

# Research Design and Methods: A Comparative Case Study of Ambassadors' Engagement in Copenhagen and Sofia Pride

In the following, the case selection and methods used in this thesis are discussed. A qualitative approach building on a comparative case study design was chosen to explore ambassadors' engagement in LGBT+ rights on the occasion of Pride parades in two capitals of the EU. To identify the extensive set of actions conducted by ambassadors as part of their engagement and to further investigate how ambassadors themselves view and legitimize this type of engagement in relation to their role as diplomats, interviews with ambassadors were conducted and online communication by ambassadors regarding this engagement was examined. The gathered material was analyzed using a thematic analysis research approach. Additionally, limitations of this study are addressed.

## Research Design: A Comparative Case Study

For an examination of the notion of how an ambassador is ideal-typically supposed to be, this thesis applied a qualitative approach. Since ambassadors' engagement in issues of LGBT+ rights has hitherto received only sparse academic attention, the exploratory approach of this study is particularly useful to shed light on the specific forms of engagement in issues of LGBT+ rights and to contribute to a more nuanced conception of diplomatic practice.

Based on the theoretical expectation that the form of ambassadorial engagement is shaped by the status of LGBT+ rights in a certain country, a comparative case study design has been chosen to explore the contextual variation of how ambassadors enact diplomatic norms. Making use of a comparative case study allows for an intensive reflection on the relationship between the empirical observations concerning diplomatic engagement and the theoretical conception of diplomacy and thus to evaluate the meaning of this diplomatic practice for diplomacy research (Blatter and Haverland 2012). A comparative case study design also allows to break down complexity of the phenomenon and to develop context-sensitive knowledge about the chosen cases (Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016), and hence to assess potential similarities and differences in how ambassadors support LGBT+ rights in specific contexts. The chosen cases serve thereby as a basis of "an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units" (Gerring 2009, 7). As such, the chosen cases can be seen as representative of "a broader class of phenomena or events" (Vennesson 2008, 226), that is, ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades in an increasingly polarized environment.

## Case Selection: Copenhagen and Sofia Pride 2019 and 2021

To capture the larger international polarization around LGBT+ rights, two countries within the EU were selected. The choice of cases was thus informed by the polarizing dynamic of LGBT+ rights and inspired by the “most different system design” rationale (Steinmetz 2021). I thus differentiated between LGBT+ friendly and unfriendly country contexts, following a distinction in Peterson et al. (2018; see also Wilson 2013). These categories are not homogenous and there is variation in intensity of (un)friendliness towards LGBT+ rights between countries in either group. However, the notion “is sufficiently fluid as to allow for comparisons and substantive difference” (Wilson 2013, 7). Based on this classification, a LGBT+ unfriendly and a LGBT+ friendly EU country in which ambassadors had engaged in Pride parades were outlined as cases for this thesis to capture the greatest variation between ambassadors’ engagement. To identify two concrete cases for the study, I applied the criteria outlined by Peterson et al. (2018) for classifying states as LGBT+ friendly or unfriendly and modified them to data available to this study. In their categorization Peterson et al. consider both the political context and the cultural context of a state.

To access the political context of EU countries, the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map and Index 2020, providing a comprehensive overview of the legal and policy practices concerning the situation of LGBT+ people in 49 European countries divided into six thematic categories, has been taken into consideration (ILGA-Europe 2020). Based on this mapping, a number of countries within the EU qualified for possible cases for study, such as Poland, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria as LGBT+ unfriendly contexts and Malta, Belgium, Luxembourg and Denmark as LGBT+ friendly countries. Between these possible cases, the selection was narrowed down by considering the cultural context of these states. While Peterson et al. (2018) consider public opinion and the level of hate crimes to operationalize the cultural context, the exact number of hate crimes is difficult to identify and can only be estimated as official data on this is not consistently recorded. Since laws and policies concerning hate crime and hate speech are captured in the ILGA-Europe Map, I only used public opinion to account for the cultural context. Considering public attitudes on LGBT+ people in the 2019 Eurobarometer study on discrimination in the EU (European Commission 2019), the choice fell on Bulgaria and Denmark as these two countries were outliers in terms of highly negative and highly positive public opinion respectively compared to the other possible cases.

Though there is no comprehensive mapping of where ambassadors have engaged in Pride parades, an Internet search assessing websites of embassies accredited to Copenhagen and Sofia confirmed that ambassadors from various countries had participated in recent years and publically communicated their engagement in Pride events in both cities and that the cases were thus eligible for study (see for example for ambassadors’ engagement in Sofia Pride 2019: <https://en.sofiapride.org/2019/06/04/statement-of-support-for-sofia-pride-2019-by-more-than25->

[embassies-and-international-organisations/](https://www.facebook.com/EmbassyOfSwedenInCopenhagen/posts/2354604544654882/) or in Copenhagen Pride 2019: <https://www.facebook.com/EmbassyOfSwedenInCopenhagen/posts/2354604544654882/>). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Pride parades have not been held physically in Copenhagen and Sofia in 2020. Therefore, I chose to examine ambassadors' engagement in the Pride events that took place in 2019 and 2021, turning to ambassadors that were posted at this time.

With regards to ambassadors' engagement in Pride events in these two cities, I focused on ambassadors sent from states who have a LGBT+ friendly legislation based on the expectation that ambassadors from these states are in general more inclined to support LGBT+ rights abroad. The same ILGA-Europe report was used for assessing LGBT+ friendly legislations among sending countries (ILGA-Europe 2020).

## Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews and Online Communication

To capture the whole set of actions conducted by ambassadors, the thesis rests on two forms of data sources. The thesis mainly relied on interviews conducted with ambassadors that were posted in 2019 and/or 2021 in Copenhagen and Sofia. Additionally, I also examined online communication by ambassadors about their engagement on official Twitter and Facebook accounts to increase the validity of the study. The forms of data sources were used to balance each other as a form of methodological triangulation (Bryman 2012; Esaiasson et al. 2017; Roulston and Choi 2018).

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

In order to detect what kind of actions ambassadors conduct as part of their engagement in Pride parades as well as to closely study how they view and position this type of diplomatic engagement in relation to their role as diplomats, qualitative in-depth interviews with ambassadors were carried out. Since knowledge about ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades and the meaning they ascribe to these actions is so far limited, interviews were the preferred research method to track and identify how the engagement is configured and shaped (Esaiasson et al. 2017). Conducting interviews with both ambassadors sent from LGBT+ friendly states, who had engaged and ambassadors from LGBT+ friendly states who had not engaged in Pride parades in the two capitals was most suitable to gain a balanced understanding of the engagement and its meaning for the conception of diplomacy (Allen 2017). This strategic choice further served to scrutinize variation in the engagement of individual states between the sites of study, such as ambassadors from the same state engaging differently in Bulgaria and in Copenhagen.

As the interviews were carried out with ambassadors themselves and focused on the form of their engagement as well as their perspectives on it, the interviews can be categorized as informant interviews. The selection of informants for the interviews was determined by the principle of purposiveness (Esaiaasson et al. 2017, 267). In terms of criteria for the choice of interviewees, these were defined as that informants 1) had the rank of ambassador and 2) were sent from states that have a friendly LGBT+ legislation.

The interviews were designed as semi-structured interviews. These kinds of interviews are structured around a framework of themes to be discussed, but allow the interviewer to adapt the order of the questions to the interviewee's answer. As a result, this method allows for the conversation between interviewer and interviewee to evolve more dynamically and new ideas or topics to be brought up and follow-up questions to be asked during the interview. By doing so, the risk of the interviewer making inaccurate interpretations or having a negative impact on the validity of the results has been reduced (Roulston and Choi 2018). As such, the organization of interviews was not completely structured beforehand and the technique provided an adaptive format for examining the interviewees' individual forms of engagement and perspectives. By preparing an interview guide (see Appendix 2), in which the leading topics and main questions were summarized, the quality and flexible flow of the interviews was ensured. The interview guide was structured around the following themes: 1) general forms of engagement, 2) engagement in terms of interaction, communication and visual appearance and 3) reflection on being an ambassador at Pride parades.

The expectation was that approximately between five to ten qualitative semi-structured interviews with ambassadors posted in each of the sites of study would need to be conducted to reach saturation, meaning the indication that on the basis of the collected data further interviews will not contribute to new perspectives (Esaiaasson et al. 2017). In total, ten interviews were conducted, after which saturation was reached. The interviews were divided equally between ambassadors posted in Copenhagen and Sofia. Four of the interviewed informants were men; six were women. The full list of interviewees is included in the Appendix 3. In the analysis direct quotes have been used, but according to the informed consent agreement all quotes are anonymized. Random numbers have been assigned to the interviews, so that when quotes are used, they cannot be traced to the individual.

The interviews were conducted during summer 2021. All interviews were held via video calls due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions in place. The interviews were held in English and lasted about 40 minutes. Before the interview started, each interviewee was asked for their consent to participate, the permission to record as well as informed about the voluntary nature of the participation in the study. The interviewees were further given detailed information on the confidentiality of the study in terms of both data storage and the usage and purpose of the data. All

interviews were sound-recorded and transcribed afterwards to guarantee the accuracy of the collected data.

## **Examining Online Communication**

To find out how and to what extent ambassadors and their embassies use online communication around their engagement in Pride parades and LGBT+ rights, online communication channels by ambassadors have been examined. This data has been collected in two steps. First, both the official Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts of the interviewed ambassadors were manually identified. While Twitter is usually the most analyzed medium within digital diplomacy (Gilboa 2016; Jeziarska 2021), this study also considered Facebook and Instagram posts. This choice is motivated by the fact that Twitter limits posts to 280 characters, while Facebook allows for longer comments with up to 8.000 characters, giving users more room to express their views. Additionally, blog sections on official embassy websites were, if available, located. Moreover, ambassadors were asked during the interviews if they had used other forms communication as part of their engagement in Pride parades, such as through giving interviews or writing debate articles. Instead of focusing on one platform, as commonly the case in digital diplomacy research, the selection of a variety of online communication media served to provide a more comprehensive overview of the communicative forms of engagement.

Second, social media posts on Twitter and Facebook and blog posts relating to Pride parades during the year 2019 and 2021 were collected. Posts were retrieved from Facebook and Twitter in June 2021 by using the data fetching tool Facepager. Instagram posts and embassy blogs were searched manually. In total, 28 relevant social media posts were archived. With regards to Twitter and Facebook posts, the main focus was on the original posts issued by the embassies. Comments to posts and reposts were thus not collected since the focus of the thesis is not an evaluating the effect on the engagement, but rather on mapping its forms.

## **Online Research for Mapping Ambassador's Participation in Pride Parades**

To map which states' ambassadors participated and which did not participate in Pride parades, simple online research has been conducted. Since information on ambassadors' participation in Pride parades is not officially registered, I first mapped the diplomatic missions accredited to Bulgaria and Denmark based on the diplomatic lists. These periodic publications, usually issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contain contact details of all foreign diplomatic missions and list the names of the heads of missions as of the date the document is released. After that, I manually assessed each resident embassy's websites. If the website had a blog or archive section with a search function, I searched for

"Pride", "parade" or "LGBT". Since this method did not generate any relevant results, I additionally examined posts on Facebook and Twitter that were tagged with the hashtags "#SofaPride", "#CopenhagenPride" and "CopenhagenWorldPride" and limited the search results by setting a time frame to 2019 and 2021, using advanced search function settings. Posts that were issued by either an official embassy account or the ambassador were collected. Since ambassadors participate in Pride parades in different ways, e.g. by signing a public statement or by joining the march, the participation was based on the gathered posts determined with different criteria.

## Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The data gathered through interviews and internet searches of online communication was analyzed by applying a Thematic Analysis (TA). This approach is regarded to provide a high level of theoretical flexibility, but also "flexibility in terms of research question, sample size and constitution, data collection method, and approaches to meaning generation" (Clarke and Braun 2017, 297). As such, the research method is capable to facilitate a comprehensive and yet thorough account of data, and makes thus for a useful approach to analyze the research questions guiding this thesis.

I used the step-by-step approach of conducting a TA as illustrated by Nowell et al. (2017) to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis process. Nowell et al. structure the analysis process into the following six phases: 1) Familiarizing with the data; 2) Generating initial codes; 3) Searching for themes; 4) Reviewing themes; 5) Defining and naming themes and 6) Producing the report. While presented as a linear, six-phased method, Braun and Clarke (2006) have pointed out, that the analysis process is actually an iterative and reflective research activity that involves a constant back-and-forth movement between the phases.

According to this model, I started by repeatedly reading the data, looking for meanings and patterns in the material and noting down ideas and theoretical reflections. Under precise consideration of the content I revisited the entire data systematically in the second phase and identified interesting aspects in the material that qualified as a basis of themes between the interviews and online material and applied codes to these sections of text. After initially coding all data, I developed a list of different codes developed on the basis of the data and organized potentially relevant data extracts into themes. I thus worked both inductively and deductively. As suggested by King (King 2004), I started out having a few predefined codes relating to the analytical framework of norms in diplomatic practice, but later added inductively generated themes to ensure that the developed themes were grounded in the data itself and not entirely influenced by my own preconceptions. These themes were reviewed and tested in the fourth phase, making sure that the themes accurately reflected the meanings

evident in the data as a whole. The emerging themes were in the fifth phase further defined and modified until I was able to clearly and succinctly outline the scope and content of each theme. In this phase the data has been read through again and coding scrutinized. Based on themes that have been developed, the findings are presented in the following analysis chapter.

## Considerations and Limitations

Several limitations of this thesis need to be addressed. As this thesis applied a qualitative approach, no firm conclusions can be drawn on how common and widespread ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades actually is. A comprehensive mapping of ambassadors' activities in Pride parades is beyond the scope of this thesis, which is limited in time and resources. However, qualitatively examining the two cases of ambassadors' engagement in Copenhagen and Sofia Pride served to track and identify the specific form of engagement and to relate the actions to conceptions of diplomacy within diplomacy literature.

Additional limitations with regards to the qualitative approach of this thesis can be further located in the analysis process of the data, which left scope for research bias. I worked both inductively and deductively in the analytical assessment of the data and I used two forms of data collection in order to counteract preconfigured ideas about ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades. Further, by interviewing both ambassadors that had participated and ambassadors that had not participated in Pride parades, a diverse depiction of the engagement was ensured.

Applying a case study design and examining the two cases of ambassadors' engagement in Copenhagen and Sofia Pride entails further limitations concerning the generalizability of the findings. Conclusions drawn from these cases may not be transferable to other settings since, as research on Pride parades highlights, Pride parades are shaped by local dynamics, in turn influencing who and how people participate. Research on Pride parades must thus be attentive to local contexts (Stella 2013).

With regards to using informant interviews as a source of data collection a main limitation can be located in the bias of informants depicting the engagement. The interviewed ambassadors might over- or underplay their engagement during the interview. Since available data on engagement of ambassadors is limited, it was not possible to triangulate all data gathered through interviews with other sources than those of ambassadors themselves. However, by strategically choosing ambassadors in one LGBT+ friendly and one unfriendly context, it was possible to get insights from various perspectives and to identify similarities and differences in the accounts.



Regarding online communication of ambassadors on their engagement in Pride parades, a limitation can also be noted relating to language. Embassies use different languages in running their Facebook and Twitter accounts. While most accounts examined in this study are run in English, the embassy of Norway in Denmark posts in Norwegian. Since the researcher has proficient reading comprehension of Norwegian, relevant posts could be included in the analysis.

Moreover, there are possible limitations with regards to the accuracy of the mapping of ambassadors' participation in Pride parades. While I'm confident that the ambassadors of the states that are listed as participating have actually participated in that way, there are possibly more ambassadors that participated but did not publicize their engagement. The option of sending out a survey on participation and non-participation in Pride parades to all diplomatic missions in Copenhagen and Sofia could have potentially served to detect more cases. That option was ruled out due to its extensive time investment and the expectation of scarce responses. The mapping is thus supposed to provide a general overview but it does not claim to be comprehensive.

## Analysis: Diplomatic Engagement in Pride Parades

The work of ambassadors posted to the capitals of Denmark and Bulgaria is similar in some respects, but also characterized by differences. As diplomatic sites, Copenhagen and Sofia host approximately the same number of diplomatic resident missions with a total of 71 and 69 missions respectively. As of May 2021, there are 93 ambassadors accredited to Bulgaria<sup>4</sup>, with 63 being resident and 30 non-resident (Bulgaria Diplomatic List 2021). Of those 93 ambassadors, 31 present as female (34%) and 62 as male (66%). In Copenhagen, on the other hand, 98 diplomatic missions are currently run by an ambassador<sup>5</sup> (Denmark Diplomatic List 2021). Thereof 54 ambassadors are based in Copenhagen and 44 not residing within Denmark. In terms of gender ratio between the ambassadors in Copenhagen, 73 ambassadors present as male (74%) and 25 (26%) as female.

Moreover, both states are part of the EU and thus connected through EU law, its political institutions and social and economic policies. Bilateral diplomatic relations between Denmark or Bulgaria with other EU member states are substantially influenced by the common legal and normative framework of the EU and take thus always place in a larger multilateral context of the EU (Smith 2016).

Yet, despite these commonalities, ambassadors stationed in the two capitals are faced with different political contexts in their work. While both Denmark and Bulgaria have a parliamentary democracy, the political orientations of these two states diverge. Denmark has close ties with its neighboring Scandinavian countries, making Nordic cooperation central in many aspects of state relations. Denmark further scores high in protecting democratic processes and civil liberties (Freedom House 2020). Bulgaria, on the other hand, displays patterns of unstable governments and high corruption problems. Several studies have reported continuing deterioration of democratic governance after 2009, citing reduced media independence, stalled reforms and abuse of authority at the highest level (Freedom House 2021).

If ambassadors engage within these contexts in Pride parades and LGBT+ rights, they further do that in different LGBT+ rights situations with different trajectories of Pride parades. Denmark has traditionally been characterized as progressive and liberal in terms of attitudes regarding sexuality and had already in the 1950s-60s one of Europe's most visible homosexual organizations (Shield 2020). The country still continues to perform better than the OECD average in addressing the legal and social challenges faced by LGBT+ people (OECD 2020). According to the official website of Copenhagen Pride, the march was established in 1996 and has since then been held annually

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<sup>4</sup> Not counting 54 missions that are currently not headed by an ambassador.

<sup>5</sup> Not counting 73 missions that are currently not headed by an ambassador.

(Copenhagen Pride). Starting as a small event, the march has in recent years turned into a week of events such as debates, workshops and cultural events surrounding LGBT+ rights and attracted thousands of participants. However, the tradition of the march reaches even longer back (Shield 2020). As part of transnational solidarity with the riots in New York, Danish activists organized a first gay pride demonstration in Copenhagen with reference to the Christopher Street Day already in 1971, which by the end of the 1970s had become an annually held demonstration.

In contrast, the first Pride march in Sofia was held in 2008. While only around 200 marchers participated in the first march, the parade has increasingly attracted more participants over the years. Similarly to Copenhagen Pride, alongside the march, various sport events, film screenings and exhibitions are organized (Sofia Pride). According to various reports, the parades have throughout the years been met with significant opposition, counterdemonstrations and even violent attacks (e.g. ILGA-Europe 2020). Since homosexuality and independent social movement organizations were prohibited by law under the communist regime, the first official lesbian and gay organizations were established in the early 1990s (Roseneil and Stoilova 2011). Since then, a number of actors on the lesbian and gay scene have emerged and come to include youth, queer, lesbian and bisexual women's organizations and groups, contributing to a greater visibility of the LGBT+ community in Bulgaria. The introduction of a positive legislation in Bulgaria to protect LGBT+ people, however, is regarded as directly related to the EU accession process in 2007 and the conditionality exercised by the EU (Roseneil and Stoilova 2011). While the Bulgarian state has been taking on board the new European norms about sexual orientation discrimination, scholars and activists point to gaps in protection and inconsistencies in implementation. For instance, same-sex marriages are still not legally recognized. In their latest report, ILGA-Europe found that hate speech against LGBT+ individuals both on social media and by politicians has been gaining traction in the last year (ILGA-Europe 2020). Also, anti-gender campaigns have grown, especially since debates about the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Bulgaria (Darakchi 2019).

The specific Pride events that are under examination in this thesis took place in June 2019 and 2021 in Sofia and in August 2019 and 2021 in Copenhagen. While 7.000 people participated in the Sofia Pride march in 2019, the march in 2021 attracted around 10.000 participants, making it the largest Pride parade in Bulgaria so far. In Copenhagen, on the other hand, it is estimated that over 300.000 people attended the Parade in 2019. In 2021, Copenhagen hosted the World Pride<sup>6</sup>, which was initially supposed to take place a year earlier, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic had to be postponed until the following year. Since health restrictions were still in place, the march was split up in six parts, each starting at different points with a limited number of 1.000 participants each. Participants

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<sup>6</sup> World Pride is a rotating event, usually the world's largest Pride event, that is organized by InterPride, an international association of Pride coordinators, promoting LGBT+ issues at the international level. The host cities of the World Pride are selected by InterPride.

had to register as a group in advance; individuals were not allowed to join the march. All four marches were embedded in a program consisting of various events and activities, such as concerts, film screenings, seminars and talks, art exhibitions and sport events.

## Mapping Ambassadors' Participation and Non-Participation in Pride Parades

To begin with, this section establishes an overview of which states' ambassadors participated in the Pride events in Copenhagen and Sofia in 2019 and 2021. In many cases, the exact participation is difficult to determine since information is not officially registered. The following mapping is compiled to the best knowledge of the researcher based on the data available; mistakes can, however, not be completely ruled out. A detailed mapping of the participation including non-participation of all accredited missions is provided in Appendix 4.

### Sofia Pride 2019

On the occasion of the Sofia Pride parade in 2019, a group of 23 ambassadors, both main and co-accredited, and three international organizations issued a Statement of Support<sup>7</sup>. The letter was signed by the following states' ambassadors:

#### Participating States

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America

### Sofia Pride 2021

In 2021, on the official Facebook page of the Sofia Pride, digital greetings by 21 ambassadors were published, in which the ambassadors affirmed their support of LGBT+ rights and Sofia Pride. The ambassadors of Belgium, Brazil, Israel, Slovenia and Croatia, who had joined the Statement previously in 2019, did not participate in 2021. Despite not previously partaking, the ambassadors of Italy, Portugal and Switzerland did participate in 2021 and verbally expressed their support of LGBT+

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<sup>7</sup> The statement can be accessed here: <https://en.sofiapride.org/2019/06/04/statement-of-support-for-sofia-pride-2019-by-more-than25-embassies-and-international-organisations/>

rights and Sofia pride in a short film. In sum, the following states' ambassadors released a video statement:

### **Participating States**

Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States of America

### **Copenhagen Pride 2019**

In Copenhagen, the following states' ambassadors are believed to have participated in the Pride march, based on social media posts on Facebook and Twitter. Ambassadors of all these states posted in Bulgaria also engaged in Sofia Pride both in 2019 and 2021.

### **Participating States**

Australia, Canada, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America

### **Copenhagen World Pride 2021**

In 2021, Copenhagen was hosting the World Pride. The same ambassadors that had joined the march two years before documented their participation in the World Pride march.

### **Participating States**

Australia, Canada, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America

In terms of how ambassadors and the states they represent align when it comes to participation in Pride parades, differences can be discerned. According to social media posts, the ambassadors of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States participated together in the Copenhagen Pride march both in 2019 and 2021 as well as the ambassadors of Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland. The participation is thus not staged as representatives of the whole diplomatic community marching together, but rather as two separate groups of states joining forces. These alliances are based on regional and cultural ties and were also actively displayed during the march, for instance with a banner by the Nordic embassies. Of all diplomatic missions accredited to Denmark around five percent take part in Pride.

Ambassadors of these states also engaged in both years in Sofia Pride. There, however, they were joined by a number of mostly European ambassadors and the ambassador of South Africa. Here, the participating ambassadors make up ca. 14-16% of all diplomatic missions accredited to Bulgaria. While there were changes among the countries participating, the core countries that participated alongside those previously mentioned in the Sofia Pride in both years are Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, South Africa, Spain and the Netherlands. No distinct alliances between the participating ambassadors of certain countries can be discerned. The participation is rather conceivable as one group of foreign representatives, particularly with regards to the joint statement in 2019, giving more emphasis to the diplomatic support as an overarching alliance of foreign representatives.

The changes in the constellation of participating countries are an interesting phenomenon, whose examination is beyond the scope of this thesis. Changes might be caused by practical reasons, such as vacancies in the ambassadorial post, but could also indicate alterations in positions towards LGBT+ rights of the respective states and their foreign policies.

Even though one could expect that more ambassadors participate in Pride in the LGBT+ friendly context of Copenhagen, since showing support is no problem with regards to the smooth interaction expected of ambassadors, more ambassadors joined Pride events in Sofia. As I will show below, ambassadors posted to Copenhagen do not see the participation in Pride as a priority since LGBT+ rights are widely supported, whereas ambassadors in Sofia argue that there is a need to manifest their support of LGBT+ rights.

## Forms of Diplomatic Engagement in Pride Parades

Based on the information gathered through the interviews with ambassadors, the diplomatic engagement in Pride parades is in many cases initiated by the organizers of the Pride parade. In the words of one ambassador, the engagement is thus best described as a “reactive mode” (Amb\_DK\_10). Indeed, almost all of the interviewed ambassadors that had engaged in Pride parades stated that they were contacted and asked by the Pride organizers to participate or contribute in a certain way. Another ambassador explained that: “The organizers contacted ambassadors. I don’t know if they contacted everyone, but I know that my predecessor has been involved with this group and been part of the Pride parade before. So they contacted a number of ambassadors asking them to participate” (Amb\_BG\_7). Similar to this experience, a few ambassadors reported that when starting their post, they took over a network of contacts from their predecessors and stressed that they were following in the footsteps of their predecessors when engaging in Pride parades. One ambassador remarked:

When I arrived, one of the very first things I did, you know, it was already an established ... so we've doing this for years. So I just jumped in as the new ambassador, of course just taking over the baton, sort of carrying it on. So I don't really know how that happened. I don't know how many years the [name of country] embassy has participated in the parade here in Copenhagen, I don't know. But we are in close contact with Pride people here in Copenhagen, so it's an established contact. It's just being kept up. (Amb\_DK\_6)

Thus, according to these statements, diplomatic engagement in Pride parades follows established patterns over time, which in many cases had been developed before the interviewed ambassadors took up their post.

While the engagement is instigated by Pride organizers, the interviewed ambassadors stress that there are in most cases no clear directives concerning Pride parades from the headquarters of the sending states. None of the interviewed ambassadors stated that they had received concrete instructions, specifying how to engage in Pride parades at the place of their posting. While some ambassadors mentioned that they were encouraged by their Ministries to participate in Pride parades, arrange events related to Pride and would in case of uncertainty consult with their headquarters, others contended that it was entirely left up to their discretion to decide on their participation. "We have considerable discretion as heads of mission because it is considered that we, you know, we are the experts on the grounds. We are in the best position to assess" (Amb\_BG\_9). Hence, while there is no literature that comprehensively analyzes the power relations between ambassadors and the MFAs, ambassadors seem to have leeway for handling their engagement in Pride parades.

## **Non-Verbal Interactions at Pride Parades**

The diplomatic engagement in Pride parades comprises a variety of non-verbal interactions. As for the ideal-typical ambassador, all these kinds of interactions are supposed to be smooth and signal neutrality in internal country matters. The interviews suggest that in many cases, rather than joining the actual Pride march, ambassadors engage by organizing a range of events and activities alongside the official Pride program. Events the ambassadors bring up during the interview are for instance receptions at the embassy premises, art exhibitions, film screenings or bilateral meetings between local LGBT+ and Pride organizations with groups of the sending state. These events thus include interactions with a range of different actors. One ambassador called this sort of activities the "soft power or cultural support" (Amb\_BG\_5) of Pride parades. The ambassador further explained: "Because as an embassy you sometimes get subsidized events and so on. So I had artists coming from my country to attend these meetings, these small festive events", which according to the ambassador are "very, very current – I've seen among my colleagues" (Amb\_BG\_5). For the organizations of this sort of events, ambassadors draw on their resources and networks to generally support the work of Pride and LGBT+ organizations. Especially in the context of Copenhagen World Pride, several

ambassadors resorted to this form of soft power engagement and explained that they were asked by the MFA to organize an event in conjunction with Pride. As another ambassador noted: “This year is a little bit different, because it’s the World Pride, which is taking place in Copenhagen. We got an urgent request from [name of capital] to do something else, so we will be having a different kind of activity in the context of the World Pride” (Amb\_DK\_10).

Such events are usually held on the embassy premise or other official public spaces, such as museums or town halls. While it cannot be established in detail for all the events how and with whom the ambassadors interacted, the ambassadors are usually able to decide on the program and whom they invite. As one ambassador planning for a reception at the embassy noted:

It’s going to be very colorful, very interesting to see. And of course that’s a political statement, but that’s completely in line what my country stands for. So that’s ... I can say that I’m doing my job. [...] It’s nothing controversial in [name of sending country] at all. Then we really can do something. So you have to be careful, always make reflections - who’s organizing? If you organize it yourself, then it should be okay. (Amb\_DK\_4)

According to this statement, these kinds of events are considered to be in scope of appropriate interactions, thereby demarcating the line of internal affairs of the host state. By organizing and hosting events themselves in conjunction with Pride, ambassadors are able to steer the program, thus making sure that events align with the sending state’s position and importantly, to avoid unplanned encounters with actors who might be seen as provocative by the host government. The soft-power engagement seems thus to allow ambassadors to balance the line between promoting their states interests and interference in sovereign affairs.

These sorts of events and activities usually require funding. Several ambassadors mentioned their willingness to engage, but that they due to limited financial and personal resources did not have the possibility to provide this kind of support. In this case, some ambassadors found alternative ways of expressing their support. For instance, one embassy showed its commitment to the LGBT+ community despite limited resources by flying the rainbow flag at the embassy. The ambassador explained: “We even have a flag, the rainbow flag, which we would hang out when there is a specific day but we are not participating because we are really tiny. But we are wholeheartedly behind the movement” (Amb\_DK\_3). While protocol with regards to flying rainbow flags at the embassy differs between states, with some states permitting their embassies to hoist the flag and others explicitly banning it, all interviewed ambassadors that displayed the flag at the embassy assured to comply with the respective state’s protocol. A hoisted rainbow flag at the embassies’ flagpole carries strong symbolic meaning, signaling support of the LGBT+ community and flown next to the sending country’s national flag also visually represents the state’s alignment with LGBT+ rights.

Besides the soft power engagement, five of the interviewed ambassadors had also participated in Pride marches in Copenhagen and Sofia. In light of diplomatic norms of interactions,



this setting is clearly not compatible with diplomatic norms and the smooth interactions expected of ambassadors. At Pride parades, marchers challenge the status quo of cultural and gender norms and protest, though to differing degrees, political conditions (Peterson et al. 2018). By joining these marches ambassadors express support of these messages. Thereby, the ambassadors engage in interactions that appear confrontational and, in an LGBT+ unfriendly context, as support for government oppositional or critical groups.

All interviewed ambassadors declared that they did not march on their own, but participated together with other ambassadors or diplomats in the parade. While the joint participation was according to the ambassadors not officially planned in advance, the ambassadors were quite aware of who else would be participating. According to one ambassador:

You more or less know who is going there. So you know your colleagues, so of course you phone them or you ask them when you see them: Are you going there? What are you doing? Will you attend? And then you have already a quite clear picture before you're going there. So it's not a very isolated individual decision. (Amb\_BG\_5)

The collective appearance of the ambassadors was also maintained during the actual march. The ambassadors did not spread out, but walked together – as one ambassador emphasized – “as a group of embassies” (Amb\_DK\_6). The ambassador went on to explain that “Not all ambassadors are necessarily here this Saturday in August, but those ambassadors that... I was always there, but, yeah, the diplomats, we are a group and sometimes we also have local employees that want to join.”

Since ambassadors, especially in an LGBT+ unfriendly context, transgress diplomatic norms, when participating in Pride parades, the collective participation could serve as a protection. If the host government would criticize these actions, individual ambassadors are less exposed as criticism is directed towards a larger group of foreign representatives.

The exact placement in the parade between floats and other groups is described as a “freestyle coordination” (Amb\_BG\_7). One ambassador in Bulgaria explained that the pride organizers usually want the ambassadors in the front part of the march whereas in Copenhagen, according to one interviewee, the ambassadors were placed somewhere in the middle, “not at the front and not last” (Amb\_DK\_8). It can be deduced that in Sofia diplomatic support is seen as an asset by Pride organizers, as literature on Pride has also shown (Peterson et al. 2018) and is given more weight than in Copenhagen.

Moreover, in Bulgaria, a segment in the official program was dedicated to diplomatic support. Before the march, a small group of ambassadors was invited to come on stage of the Pride festival to express their support. According to the interviewees, after the ambassadors were welcomed on stage by the moderator, the Deputy Head of the US mission delivered a short speech in Bulgarian on behalf of the present diplomats while the other ambassadors “just stood there, smiled, waved” (Amb\_BG\_9). The diplomatic support was thus literally given center stage in Sofia.

When it comes to other non-verbal interactions during the march than walking with colleagues, the ambassadors did not have much to say. As one ambassador put it: “We’re just a bunch of embassies walking there” (Amb\_DK\_6). Yet, some reported that they had brought flags with them to the parade. While some recounted having their sending country’s flag with them, others carried the rainbow flag or both. One ambassador in Bulgaria emphasized that s/he did not carry the rainbow flag personally: “I was not carrying that but they [referring to staff of the embassy] did, I think” (Amb\_BG\_7). Abstaining from waving the flag personally can be interpreted as a sign of cautiousness of the ambassador. In Copenhagen, the Nordic embassies had also joined hands before the parade and prepared a banner, saying “Nordic Embassies for Equality” in big white capital letters against the background of the rainbow flag, which was carried by several ambassadors during the march. In this context, one ambassador remarked that the embassies had “participated every year behind that banner in the Pride parade in Copenhagen” (Amb\_DK\_8). The participation of those ambassadors is thus not only conceivable with regards to the states they represent, but also in terms of a broader regional alliance of Scandinavian countries.

None of the interviewed ambassador stated that they were dancing, chanting or engaging with other Pride participants. Based on these accounts, ambassadors seem to have kept an overall low profile and participated rather smoothly. While the participation of ambassadors in Pride parades is not a given place for ambassadorial presence, ambassadors still enacted diplomatic norms, that is a non-confrontational style of interaction, when walking rather quietly with other ambassadors and diplomats in the march. The ambassadors conformed to this context by bringing flags. Some cautiousness can be discerned among the interviewed ambassadors. For instance, they made sure not to engage on their own, appearing as a group, and some of them restrained from waving the rainbow flag, leaving this more contentious symbol to lower ranked diplomatic staff. Except that the ambassadors in Sofia were invited on stage and marched in the front part of the parade, not distinct differences in the interactions can be identified.

An aspect worth highlighting is that none of the ambassador, besides the soft power engagement, instigated measures on their own account. The option of taking a proactive approach and driving own initiatives was firmly dismissed by one ambassador: “Why would the [name of country] embassy alone start a campaign? We don’t do that. That’s not our job” (Amb\_DK\_3). This position reflects norms of non-verbal interaction with regards to not sticking out by taking action on one’s own outside the scope of formalized interactions (McConnell 2018) and additionally underlines that if ambassadors transgress diplomatic norms, they make sure to do so as a group.

## Verbal Communication on Pride Parades

Ambassadors engage further in Pride parades by verbally expressing themselves on the issue. In both written and spoken language, the ideal-typical ambassador would not express personal views and communicate by using courteously vocabulary, a restrained manner of speaking and a rhetorical style that mitigates confrontational message. Do ambassadors comply with this ideal, when commenting on Pride parades?

Diplomatic communication on Pride takes mainly place on various social media channels. While one ambassador stated during the interview that the embassy had not the capacity to run social media accounts, most of the interviewed ambassadors referred to the embassies' Twitter and Facebook accounts as their central tools for communicating with publics. Besides, some also use LinkedIn and Instagram, though less regularly.

Three of the interviewed ambassadors did not communicate on social media about Pride parades. The other ambassadors issued on average between one or three posts relating to Pride parade per year. The thematic analysis demonstrated that the posts can be divided into two categories. Approximately one third of posts mark the upcoming of Pride in the host state. The second category consists of posts that publicize activities ambassadors engaged in relating to Pride. Most posts are accompanied by one or several pictures, displaying generic images of Pride, pictures of rainbow flags or of ambassadors at the events.

Concerning the style of language, it is noteworthy that posts in both categories are concise and written in a cheerful tone. Within the first category, the focus is dominantly on the festive aspect of the Pride parades as for example Tweets like "Wishing everyone a wonderful #Pride2019 in Sofia today. #Human Rights for all" (2019-06-08 @SwedeninBG) illustrate. In posts of the second category, the participation of ambassadors in different events is briefly announced or documented. The posts are usually not longer than one or two short sentences and provide only basic information. For example, the Norwegian embassy in Copenhagen posted on Facebook "Today the Nordic embassies march behind a joint banner in the World Pride parade, for equal rights for all" (2021-08-21 Norges ambassade i København). Occasionally, the posts include emojis of the rainbow and the ambassadors sending state's flag.

Both in terms of content and style, ambassadors comply with the script of diplomatic communication. Other than these types of posts, ambassadors do not use their social media channels to engage in additional ways in Pride. They do not critically discuss LGBT+ rights and their status in the host country and express their support of Pride parades by generally endorsing equal human rights or by referring to their sending state's stance on LGBT+ rights. Advertising mostly ambassadorial activities, the posts have mainly an informative character. By publicizing ambassadors' participation

in events on social media, the posts further serve to reproduce the engagement and create additional visibility.

Besides communicating on social media, in 2019 ambassadors in Bulgaria textually engaged in Sofia Pride by issuing a joint statement of support<sup>8</sup>. In the statement 23 ambassadors and three international organizations declare their support of Sofia Pride and their commitment to defend LGBT+ rights. According to the interviewed ambassadors, the statement was initiated by the Pride organizers, who reached out to the diplomatic community and asked, if they were willing to make a joint statement. The letter was published on the website of Sofia Pride and signed in alphabetical order of the ambassadors' sending states. The addressee of statement is not specified.

In light of diplomatic forms of communication, this statement presents an exceptional means of diplomatic communication as it is issued by a group of ambassadors together. The collective stance of the ambassadors is made explicit through the common usage of the pronoun "we". While making statements on behalf of the state is part of the repertoire of diplomatic communication, making a statement as a group of ambassadors, using the special status they have to draw attention to a certain topic, is not. When asked about the statement, all interviewed ambassadors noted that they only had issued such a statement with regards to Pride.<sup>9</sup> This may appear as an insignificant formality, but within diplomatic contexts, such small changes from ritualized forms of communication carry meaning. While supposed to serve as messengers of the respective state, the ambassadors jointly take a stance and express their support as a group. Such a statement might be seen as a provocation by the host government, but again, by speaking up as a group, the participation of many serves as a protection.

Except for its unusual form, a fine-grained reading of the statement establishes that the statement in terms of content and language aligns with diplomatic norms of communication. The statement is written with factual terms and support of LGBT+ rights is based on explicit references to international documents and laws such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, the statement is broad in its message, as it considers the "LGBTI community around the world", thus not directly commenting on the situation of LGBT+ people in Bulgaria or confronting the government. While the ambassadors express their "serious concern" regarding discrimination of LGBT+ individuals, the criticism is muted as perpetrators and discriminatory policies within the Bulgarian context are not directly singled out. At the same time, the language used is uplifting, which as one ambassador pointed out, was central when drafting the statement:

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<sup>8</sup> The statement can be viewed here: <https://en.sofiapride.org/2019/06/04/statement-of-support-for-sofia-pride-2019-by-more-than25-embassies-and-international-organisations/>

<sup>9</sup> Such statements by ambassadors have also been published prior to 2019 in Sofia and are in a similar manner also issued in other countries.

Of course I wanted to sign it. But it was clear for me that we had to sign something that was positive in the tone, and something that, you know, gave broader recommendations and a, you know, recommendation to how tolerance should be dealt with. So that's what we did. It should not be, you know, very confrontational. Nor in the language, the language should be round and kind of easy-going. (Amb\_BG\_7)

Directly addressing the principles of diplomatic communication, the ambassador confirmed the statement's compliance with rules of diplomatic communication.

Instead of issuing a joint statement of support of Sofia Pride in 2021, the ambassadors reported that they were asked by the Sofia Pride organizers to film short video messages, which were published at the Sofia Pride Facebook site. Unlike the statement, the videos were not coordinated in advance by the ambassadors together, but prepared and filmed individually. All five ambassadors interviewed in Bulgaria participated in sending digital greetings to Sofia Pride. Thematically, the messages of these videos are very similar and mirror the statement from 2019. The ambassadors are filmed individually, each making a short statement, in which they underline their sending state's support of LGBT+ rights and convey their support of Sofia Pride. They speak in a moderated tone, do not take personal views or offend the Bulgarian government. Overall, the ambassadors stick to diplomatic norms of communication in their videos messages.

When asked about other forms of communication besides social media to further engage in Pride parades during the interviews, none of the ambassadors mentioned talking to local media or writing debate articles. Rather than actively seeking additional ways of communication, several ambassadors argued that they had not been approached by local media, illustrating the reactive mode of the engagement. Another ambassador explained the absence of verbal engagement by ambassadors on this matter as a fear of stealing attention: "They [the media] haven't been particularly interested. So I mean, if they would talk to us, I wouldn't mind. But, I mean, we are not the focus of that day at all. And it's not for me to take any focus away from those who should have the focus on that day much more" (Amb\_DK\_6).

In terms of differences, ambassadors posted in Copenhagen did not publish a statement of support or send digital greetings to Copenhagen Pride. Hence, the communication on Pride parades was more extensive in Bulgaria. The specific measures were, according to the interviewed ambassadors in Sofia, all instigated by the Pride organizers, creating additional visibility. One ambassador offered an explanation for why these kinds of actions are used in other countries, but were not requested of ambassadors in Copenhagen. According to the ambassador, these measures are taken "in countries where it is necessary to confirm those rights" (Amb\_DK\_10) and thus to "put pressure on the local government, which is hostile towards LGBTI issues". Apparently, this was not seen as necessary in Denmark.

## Dress and Visual Appearance at Pride Parades

Ambassadors usually move in contexts in which Western professional business attire is considered an appropriate and smooth style to visually embody a state. In light of this narrow band of acceptable appearance standards, how do ambassadors dress and manage their appearance when participating in Pride parades?

When asked about their choice of clothing for participating in the Pride march and the event on stage, the interviewed ambassadors described a similar style of dress overall. Supported by pictures on social media showing the ambassadors at Pride parades, the style of the outfits in both sites of study can be pinpointed as colorful and casual attire. Many sported jeans or short trousers, athletic shoes, t-shirts combined in some cases with a cardigan or an outdoor jacket. This type of apparel differs from usually worn pieces of clothing, which the ambassadors acknowledged: “Yeah, it’s different from what I would wear when I’m an official ambassador going to official meetings” (Amb\_DK\_6). While the apparel is obviously more relaxed compared to usual diplomatic appearances, what strikingly stands out in the pictures is the colorfulness of the garments, which ranges from light orange trousers over pink shirts to purple trainers. In terms of both color and style of clothing, the ambassadors clearly diverge from the diplomatic norms of visual appearance. Interestingly, the ambassadors also emphasized during the interviews the intention to collectively wear clothes in the color of the rainbow: “And we all made sure we had some bright colorful clothes on” (Amb\_DK\_8). Wearing colorful clothes as a group served to underline the collective appearance of ambassadors marching together as a group, but also to create visibility. What is more, it is noteworthy that both male and female ambassadors dressed in similar colors of clothes, running counter gendered clothing norms in terms of distinctive sets of colors for male and female ambassadors.

Besides more relaxed and colorful clothes, the usage of accessories by some ambassadors further underscores difference from the ideal type. While the ideal-typical ambassador usually makes use of carefully selected and deployed accessories to mark the exclusiveness of the position one has, when marching in Pride parades, ambassadors used characteristic Pride items. Not only did ambassadors dress colorfully, they also wore hairbands, flower wreaths, rainbow scarves and badges. One ambassador recounted:

We had also these flower wreaths made from plastic, not real flowers though, with the rainbow colors on it. [...] And we all had the parade colors, you know, we had hairbands or t-shirts or something with the parade colors, so we were quite visible, the Nordic embassies, in the parade. So yes, we did decorate ourselves with the rainbow colors and of course the big banner that the Nordic countries had – we had that, too. (Amb\_DK\_8)

According to the ambassadors, they used these props to “to signal our support” (Amb\_BG\_9). Diplomatic support was further expressed visually, as already mentioned above, by some ambassadors

holding the rainbow or their sending states' flag and banners. As such, the visual appearance of ambassadors alludes to both the representation of individual states and the alliance of these states standing together.

Yet, despite sharing the same palette of colors in their appearance, ambassadors follow gendered appearance standards. None of the interviewed ambassadors used cross-dressing, customs or other props, which is commonly done by pride participants (Peterson et al. 2018). Even though transgressive with respect to the ambassadorial norms of visual appearance, compared to other Pride participants' appearances and clothing styles on that occasion, the ambassadors are conservative in their appearance and do not challenge gendered appearance norms. One ambassador pointed out: "As I said, I would choose some more colorful clothes on that day, yeah. But we are not, I am not doing all this make-up and wig and all that... I'm me, yeah. That's not for me to do" (Amb\_DK\_6). Hence, while ambassadors rework diplomatic appearance norms with regards to style and color of clothing, they still conform to norms central to the ideal type, that is a gender binary appearance.

In addition, ambassadors still opt for a subtle appearance in the sense of not standing out as the "fun group" (Amb\_DK\_6) – or its opposite. While it was not for the ambassadors to dress up in costumes, wearing the traditional diplomatic uniform was neither considered an appropriate option. The appearance, though different from what the ambassadors usually wear, is still staidly in the way that accessories and other props do not arise overly attention, complying in this regard with norms of the ideal type. The ambassadors do not appear over- or underdressed, but rather aim to be in tune with the situation. One ambassador explained the choice of clothing and the need to adapt to the situation:

You know, I mean normally when I work I'm wearing a shirt and a tie like now. But I thought for a gay parade that would be a bit out of context. So I took on the t-shirt instead. I thought that was more, you know, that was more in tune with what you want to do on that thing (Amb\_BG\_7).

To conclude, ambassadors participating in Pride marches rework diplomatic appearance norms by adjusting them to the context of a Pride parade. While being more colorful and casual in their appearance, ambassadors still adhere to an overall conservative appearance in the context of a Pride parade. They do not draw overly attention to their visual appearance by using flashy accessories such as wigs or costumes and stick to gendered appearance standards. Distinct differences in the visual appearance of ambassadors between Copenhagen and Sofia cannot be discerned. Yet, the ambassadors create a collective appearance as a group of state representatives and embassies by sharing the coordinated accessories and banners.

## Ambassadors' View on the Engagement

The ambassadorial engagement in Pride parades aligns, as analyzed above, in parts with diplomatic ideal of diplomacy literature, but also entails modifications of diplomatic norms. How do ambassadors themselves account for and explain their engagement?

When reflecting on the general engagement, the ambassadors were in agreement that Pride parades provide an opportunity to create awareness of the LGBT+ community. The engagement is thus explained as a form of providing support. By actively using their position in society, the ambassadors are able to draw attention to the situation of LGBT+ people. As one ambassador in Bulgaria remarked: “Basically, I think, for the people here, it’s probably most important for them that we try to be visible” (Amb\_BG\_7). Needless to say, if an ambassador attends an event organized by LGBT+ organizations, it helps increase legitimacy. Thinking of the contestation of Pride parades in earlier years in Bulgaria, another ambassador noted more fundamental aspects of the support. Serving as a “diplomatic wall” (Amb\_BG\_5), offering literal protection, ambassadors were able to secure that the marches could take place, which has also been observed in previous literature (Ayoub 2013).

Even if it’s slightly dangerous, well it’s always less dangerous for diplomats than for people marching and the organizers. We come, we leave. And so we have diplomatic immunity, which others don’t have. It’s kind of a shield to have these events go through. (Amb\_BG\_5)

At the same time, the engagement is legitimized as opportunity to generate visibility of the sending state and to advance its position. Several of the interviewed ambassadors highlighted the soft power engagement in Pride, such as organizing receptions or film screenings, as a convenient way to brand their state as LGBT+ supportive. While expressively avoiding participating in Pride marches, one ambassador openly stated:

Like World Pride, I’m doing a big reception at my residence and I will invite the whole community ‘cause in Denmark it’s not a controversial thing. [...] I will also brand [name of country] as, you know, modern, defending people’s rights and of course then you take the opportunity and do something and you get visibility. That, rather than going, if there is a manifestation, I don’t think, it’s not a place for an ambassador these manifestations. (Amb\_DK\_4)

The notion of nation branding was also present in less outspoken perspectives. One ambassador turned the argument around, saying that s/he “just didn’t want to miss the opportunity to represent my country in an event where I think we should be represented” (Amb\_BG\_1), also implying that if the ambassador had not participated in the Pride parade, it would have casted a shadow on the country. What is more, put this way, the participation itself is presented as a norm for ambassadors. According to this view, ambassadors of states with a LGBT+ friendly legislation ought to represent their country at Pride and express support for LGBT+ rights, even in environments hostile to LGBT+ rights.



When it comes to the participation in actual Pride marches, the views on the engagement, however, diverged. Some ambassadors objected to participating in Pride parades and other demonstrations fundamentally: “No, I don’t do demonstrations. I have never been to a demonstration I have to say” (Amb\_BG\_2). Another ambassador elaborated more detailed on the concerns of participating in demonstrations and Pride parades:

It might be misinterpreted and as such, I personally and also with some colleagues we would not participate in demonstrations. Nor would we send any of our staff to try monitor what is happening. I think, if demonstrations are taking place, the press afterwards would be interesting enough to learn about what was going on without having to go yourself. (Amb\_DK\_3)

Suggesting that participation might be seen as meddling in domestic affairs, some ambassadors did not consider joining marches as compatible with their role. Yet, for others, the participation in Pride parades is, in the words of one ambassador, “almost common practice by now” (Amb\_BG\_5). The ambassador observed that “more and more, embassies from – again I hate to use these words, but it’s a fact – from Western and Northern Europe, which are the most sensitive, I think, to these issues, they are almost automatically there” (Amb\_BG\_5).

Interestingly, the ambassadors who had joined Pride marches differentiated clearly between Pride parades and other sorts of demonstrations. For instance, one ambassador contended: “Well, it depends now what is a demonstration. I mean, if you for example consider a pride parade a demonstration, then yes. But if there would be some kind of a political demonstration against standing government, then no, that’s not why I’m here for” (Amb\_BG\_1). According to this view, which was shared by several ambassadors, Pride parades are non-political demonstrations or simply “public events” (Amb\_BG\_9). Although some scholars claim a depoliticization of Pride parades in Western societies (e.g. Gruszczynska 2009), others have stressed the persistence of political motives for joining Pride parades (Peterson et al. 2018)

In line with this argument, the ambassadors portrayed the engagement as a neutral enactment of what their sending country stands for. This was clearly set apart from interfering in domestic politics of the host state by taking political stances. One ambassador explained the difference in the following way:

I cannot go around in Denmark and say I support *venstre* [a Danish party] or the labor party. That’s not something I should do. But when it comes to promote our own values as a progressive Western European country, then I can go out and state my opinion. (Amb\_DK\_10)

However, by branding a state as LGBT+ supportive and siding with the group of “modern” states, this is constitutive of the state’s international identity and in turn a political statement.

Yet, another fraction of ambassadors legitimized the engagement by explicitly placing support for LGBT+ rights in a broader human rights and EU value frame. Participating in Pride parades is “just one concrete way of influencing on behalf of human rights issues” (Amb\_BG\_1).

According to this view, ambassadors can act as “influencers” or “defenders” of universal human rights. When it comes to democratic values, the concept of internal affairs becomes obsolete, according to the ambassadors.

Internal affairs, that’s a concept that stretches fairly widely and is used more or less at discretion by the person. It can be used as a defensive term by some for any point of view you might take. But then again, it’s not as difficult as it looks. I think again, the red line is the defense, protection and promotion of values of democracy, transparency, liberalism, inclusiveness and so forth. (Amb\_BG\_5)

Similarly, especially ambassadors from EU member states explained their engagement as means to stand up not only for values important to the sending state, but also to defend EU values. As such, LGBT+ rights are regarded as a matter that exceeds the confinements of internal affairs of individual member states. Referencing to the legal framework on which the EU is built, ambassadors see it as their obligation to confront governments that do not follow common rules.

And the European Union is a very special case of course, because within the European Union, we have a set of values and also legal rules, which apply to all of the EU member states. They cover the protection and promotion of the rights of people with a LGBTI background and it is normal and justified, and I think it’s even mandatory for other member states to, well let’s call it, challenge a member state of the European Union, which does not support, does not keep, does not implement these common values and legal obligations to which the member state has voluntarily subscribed. (Amb\_DK\_10)

These positions decisively diverge from the diplomacy literature and the conceptualization of ambassadors as smooth operators in all aspects of their work. When it comes to defending and standing up for democratic values and legal rules of the EU, ambassadors see themselves in the responsibility to influence as “active agents as foreign representatives” (Amb\_BG\_1) that do not shy away from confrontation with the host government. In this sense, ambassadors ascribe a more active and confrontational role to their position. The ambassadors were in agreement that if these values were under attack, “then you have to speak up by all means for the defense of that, if not actually, you are not representing your country and the values your country is cherishing” (Amb\_BG\_5). In this view, engagement for LGBT+ rights, but not always participation in Pride parades, is a diplomatic responsibility for ambassadors of LGBT+ friendly states, certainly legitimizing the engagement in EU states where LGBT+ rights are regressing.

Ambassadors in both sites of the study, however, cautioned that the engagement for LGBT+ rights and Pride parades has to be adapted to local circumstances and modified accordingly. In this regard, several ambassadors highlighted the need “to do what’s natural” (Amb\_DK\_6) and “to know what your means and what they are not” (Amb\_BG\_1) in the country where one is posted. Consequently, there is no blueprint for how to engage. Certainly, in LGBT+-unfriendly contexts outside the EU, the ambassadors observed that publicly engaging might do more harm than good. As one ambassador elaborated:

I would say, sometimes for example the image of foreign ambassadors on the stage can send a negative image, because, you know, it conveys an image that the outside forces are imposing a set of values on a country. So, I think we always have to very careful. We always have to ensure that we are working with local organizations and that we are guided by them and that what we do will be of assistance. (Amb\_BG\_9)

Quite aware of the respective LGBT+ rights situation, ambassadors in Sofia and Copenhagen ascribed different importance and meaning to their engagement. In Bulgaria, almost all interviewed ambassadors referred to LGBT+ rights as part of human rights as a priority of their work. While LGBT+ rights are legally acknowledged in Bulgaria, the ambassadors felt compelled to demonstrate that “particularly in Europe there is widespread support for equality for LGBT+ persons” (Amb\_BG\_9). Showing support by engaging in Pride parades and hosting events was explicitly used to increase the visibility of and attention towards LGBT+ issues. One ambassador observed:

Well it’s just because I think the LGBT community in Bulgaria is under some kind of pressure. I mean, it’s not that accepted here like in [name of sending country] for instance, so I think whatever we can do to support, we will do it. They think it is important to have the support of ambassadors because it gives a certain kind of legitimacy to their cause (Amb\_BG\_7).

Moreover, due to the status of LGBT+ rights in Bulgaria, the ambassadors seemed to be aware of potential controversies their engagement might evoke, but, as exemplified by one ambassador, dismissed any criticism: “Of course it is a controversial issue in Bulgaria, but it has not been directed towards me. No one has said that we shouldn’t engage in this area” (Amb\_BG\_2).

In Copenhagen, however, the ambassadors assessed the situation differently. In the words of one ambassador, “Denmark is a frontrunner when it comes to LGBT rights and the promotion and protection of the rights of this group that we don’t see a need to participate” (Amb\_DK\_10). LGBT+ rights promotion, and participating in Pride events was thus not seen as a priority since it wouldn’t “have given them anything additional” (Amb\_DK\_6). According to the ambassadors, it is rather “elsewhere the work needs to be done” (Amb\_DK\_10). Yet, they also expressed their general willingness to consider certain requests, if they were to be approached by pride organizers or LGBT+ rights organizations. While the ambassadors did not see an urgent need to engage more extensively in these issues, they assessed that the engagement is “[...] easy, you know, in Denmark it’s not controversial, so the LGBT community will very much agree with what I say, because, you know, we are on the same page. It’s not a controversial thing.” (Amb\_DK\_4) The engagement was rather discussed by some in terms of rainbow-washing, since “all kinds of institutions and organizations are participating in the parade” (Amb\_DK\_6) in Copenhagen.

## Conclusions

In this concluding section, the main results of this thesis are summarized and perspectives for future research are discussed. The thesis aimed to study how frontline diplomats engage in Pride parades in the host country as well as to examine how this engagement correlates with traditionally conceptualized norms within diplomacy literature. By developing a theoretical framework of the ideal-typical ambassador relating to three sets of norms, based on literature on diplomacy, I have sought to tease out congruencies as well as modifications of diplomatic norms in practice, in the diplomatic engagement in Pride parades. Based on observations from previous literature, that the environment in which LGBT+ rights are promoted is increasingly polarized (Rohrich 2015) and that the participation of ambassadors in Pride parades might take on different meanings, I chose to focus on ambassadors' engagement in the generally LGBT+-friendly context of Denmark and generally LGBT+-unfriendly context of Bulgaria. To answer the research questions, interviews with ambassadors posted in both cities have been conducted and their social media communication on Pride has been examined.

The first research question aimed to provide an overview of which states' ambassadors participated in both cities in Pride parades in 2019 and 2021. In short, the mapping showed that ambassadors from mostly Western countries engaged in all four Pride events that were under examination and further, that ambassadors did not participate on their own, but always engaged as a group.

The second research question targeted the forms of participation – following the analytical framework – in terms of a) non-verbal interactions, b) verbal communication and c) visual appearance. Descriptively outlining the actions that ambassadors conduct as part of their engagement in Pride served as a basis to assess the compliance of these actions with diplomatic norms. As for a) non-verbal interactions, ambassadors in both capitals make use of soft power engagement, that is organizing events on their own in conjunction with Pride. These interactions are assumed to comply with diplomatic norms. Moreover, some ambassadors participate in the actual Pride marches. In light of diplomatic norms these marches are not given settings for ambassadorial presence, yet ambassadors adhere to the diplomatic ideal in terms of a smooth style of participation by smiling, waving and walking rather quietly with other ambassadors and embassy personnel. With regards to b) verbal communication on Pride, ambassadors in Copenhagen and Sofia express themselves on the issue on social media. Both in terms of content and style, this kind of communication was found to be compatible with the diplomatic ideal of communication. The posts are written with uplifting and non-abrasive vocabulary and are limited to convey basic information. Thirdly c), when participating in Pride marches, ambassadors deploy a more colorful and casual attire than what is considered standard and further decorate themselves with Pride accessories. In this regard, ambassadors transgress

diplomatic norms. Yet, by following gendered appearance standards and adhering to an overall conservative appearance in the context of Pride, ambassadors simultaneously embody norms central to the ideal-typical ambassador.

The third research question aimed to identify how ambassadors themselves account for and explain this type of diplomatic engagement in relation to norms of diplomacy. The analysis revealed that ambassadors see the engagement as a means to draw attention to the situation of LGBT+ people and to manifest their support for the community. At the same time, Pride parades serve as an opportunity to advance the sending state's position and brand it abroad as LGBT+ supportive. Despite diverging views among the ambassadors on the participation in Pride marches, the engagement was presented as a broader endorsement of human rights and compliance with EU values and laws. Especially in contexts within the EU, where the rights of LGBT+ people do not fully comply with EU regulations, the ambassadors legitimized the engagement as a defense of democratic human rights and EU values.

The fourth research question targeted differences in the ambassadorial engagement between the sites of study and thus different LGBT+ rights contexts. This question has been discussed in relation to all three previous questions. To sum up the differences, it can be concluded that diplomatic engagement was overall more extensive in Sofia. As shown in the mapping, this is reflected numerically in a larger number of ambassadors participating. Here, the ambassadors participated as one collective group, which served to emphasize the diplomatic support as a broad alliance of foreign representatives, whereas in Copenhagen the participation is staged by two separate groups of states. Moreover, in terms of non-verbal interactions and verbal communication more ambassadors frequented additional measures in Bulgaria. In 2021, the ambassadors contributed a segment to the official Pride program, in which a group of ambassadors went on stage before the march. The diplomatic support is further centrally displayed since ambassadors usually march in front parts of the parade, whereas ambassadors in Copenhagen are placed in the middle. In addition, the ambassadors posted to Bulgaria published a statement of support in 2019 and sent digital greetings to Sofia Pride in 2021, which ambassadors in Copenhagen did not. Although ambassadors enact diplomatic norms by being broad and non-confrontational in these messages, these measures signify a larger deviation from the ideal type. With regards to ambassadors' views on engagement, these differed in terms of the importance they ascribe to the engagement. Since LGBT+ rights are supported and the Pride is widely established, ambassadors in Denmark did not see the participation as a priority or a need to engage in additional ways. In contrast, in Sofia the ambassadors emphasized Pride as an opportunity to draw attention to the situation of the LGBT+ community and viewed it as important to demonstrate their support.

Overall, the results show that literature on diplomacy does not fully capture what ambassadors actually do. The engagement in Pride is presented as a common practice that follows established patterns over time. Ambassadors do not only simply act as smooth operators that facilitate non-confrontational state relations, but when it comes to standing up for LGBT+ rights within in the EU, they transgress scripted practice of diplomacy, especially to challenge governments which do not fully comply with EU regulations. The engagement is thus, against dominant perceptions, not restricted by the notion of intervening in internal affairs, since within the EU, these rights transcend the confinement of domestic matters.

The analysis of ambassadors' engagement in Pride parades in Sofia and Copenhagen presents a special case since LGBT+ rights are legally anchored in the common framework of the EU. Future research could thus contribute to a more nuanced conception of the phenomenon by broadening the geographical scope to areas outside the EU, e.g. to South America and examine if and how ambassadors engage in the generally LGBT+ friendly state of Uruguay the rather LGBT+ unfriendly context of Paraguay. An examination of how ambassadors engage in LGBT+ rights and Pride parades seems to be particularly relevant for places where LGBT+ rights are not grounded by law and opposed by governments. In these contexts, ambassadors may need to calibrate their actions more carefully and navigate claims of imposing Western values when supporting LGBT+ rights.

By developing an ideal-typical ambassador the thesis provided a theoretical framework that can be applied on other clashes between theory and practice. In this regard, future research could focus on incidents, where ambassadors not only clash with the host nation, but with their sending state. For instance, under the Trump administration US embassies around the world were prohibited to hoist the rainbow flag at the flagpole. Yet, several ambassadors found ways to circumvent the ban by displaying the flags in other parts of the embassy (BBC 2019). Connected to this, further research is needed on collective actions of ambassadors, when engaging in contentious or traditional domestic issues. As this study shows, joint public actions by ambassadors are rather uncommon. Nevertheless, in some cases, ambassadors do join forces. A systematic analysis of the reasons behind such actions and what patterns of collaboration are chosen would be an interesting topic to explore.

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## Appendix 1: Letter of Request

Dear Ambassador (NAME),

I hope this email finds you safe and well.

My name is Kristina Gurok and I am a master's student in European Studies at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. I am currently writing my master's thesis about changing forms of diplomatic engagements in host societies, with some focus on embassies' (non-)participation in Pride parades. My thesis is part of a research program on Gender and Diplomacy, <https://gendip.gu.se/>, at the University of Gothenburg, led by Professor Ann Towns.

Would you be willing and able to grant me a research interview on these themes? The interview would take about 40 minutes and would be conducted over Skype (or a videolink of your preference). The answers to my questions would be anonymized - I will simply list the names of the interviewees at the end. Professor Towns, Associate Professor Katarzyna Jezierska and I will have access to the material from the interviews, as we might jointly turn the thesis into an academic article.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my thesis supervisor, Professor Ann Towns (e-mail address).

I would be so very grateful and look forward to hearing from you!

Best regards,  
Kristina Gurok  
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide

### Aim and Structure of the Interview

I am writing my master's thesis in European Studies with the Gender and Diplomacy (GenDip) research program at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The interview will take about 40 minutes and questions will deal with general diplomatic forms of engagements in host societies, with some focus on if and how ambassadors express support for LGBT+ rights. Specifically, I'm interested in the Copenhagen/ Sofia Pride parade in 2019 and 2021 and your view on this form of diplomatic engagement.

### Informed Consent Agreement

Your participation is of course voluntary, and you have the right not to answer a question or to withdraw from participation at any point. Anonymized extracts from the interview will be used in the analysis section of my thesis and potentially in other academic publications directed by Professor Ann Towns, principal investigator of the GenDip program.

For the sake of transparency and credibility of research – is it ok to record the interview? I will need to use anonymized quotes in the thesis, and a list of interviewees will be provided. Names will be detached from direct quotes.

- Do you have any questions before we start?

### Warm-up Question

1. Before your posting to Sofia/Copenhagen, you were posted to XX. How does working in Sofia/Copenhagen compare to XX?

### Theme 1: General Engagement

2. As an ambassador you obviously meet a lot of different people and groups from the host civil society. Ambassadors are clearly very busy – how do you decide with what groups to meet?
3. Are there any groups you would NOT meet with? Why? Is there ever a dilemma about whom to meet?
4. I imagine meetings with some actors might be seen as controversial. For instance, can you meet with advocacy and political groups? All kinds?
5. Are you aware of any controversies here in Copenhagen/Sofia where the government has reacted negatively to ambassadors meeting with civil society actors? (Can you describe?)
6. Are those interactions somehow steered from home or is it your discretion as an ambassador to decide with whom to meet?

### Theme 2: LGBT+ and Engagement in Pride parades, incl. verbal communication

7. While meeting the various groups you mentioned before you appear in many different venues – are there some kind of venues where you would NOT want to be seen as an ambassador?
  - For instance – can you participate in demonstrations? (All kinds of demonstrations?)
  - Can you sign petitions? (All kinds of petitions?)
8. Is the Pride parade something that you and your embassy have engaged in while in Copenhagen/Sofia? Why, why not?
9. (For ambassadors that have not engaged): Do you meet with other civil society organizations working for gender equality on other occasions?



- Where do you meet these groups?
  - And what kinds of meetings are those?
  - How do you decide where and how to interact with these groups?
  - Can you develop a bit how that decision was made?
10. (For ambassadors in CPH): In a few other countries, e.g. Poland, Czech Republic and Bulgaria, ambassadors have issued a joint statement in which they publicly declare their support for LGBT+ rights. Do you know if there is something similar here in Copenhagen?
- Why do you think that is?
  - Is that something you would consider signing as well?
11. (For ambassadors in SOF): I saw that you signed / did not sign the Statement of Support and/ or send a video of support to Sofia Pride (in 2019). Why/why not?
- Can you tell me how that statement was organized?
  - Have you signed a similar statement before?
  - Is making a statement as a group of ambassadors something you do in other areas of your work too?
  - From what I've read it has caused some heated discussions and controversial reactions. Why do you think this was the case?
  - Is taking a position on politicized issues an unusual thing to do for an ambassador?
12. Did you engage in any other actions or events related to the Pride parade besides signing the statement/ joining the parade to raise awareness of the situation of LGBT people?
13. Do you fly the rainbow flag at the embassy premise? Why, Why not?
14. Have you initiated or organized any of the events on your own? (With whom?)
15. Did you talk with local media or write about supporting LGBT rights on social media?
16. Do you have instructions from headquarters saying what to do with regards to Pride parades?

### **Theme 3: Non-verbal interaction at the Parade**

17. Were you in contact with the Pride organizers before?
18. Did you coordinate your participation in the parade with other ambassadors? (With whom?)
19. With whom were you marching?
20. Were you marching as a group of ambassadors or separately?
21. Where were you placed in the parade?
22. Did you walk the whole march?
23. Do you remember what kind of things you were doing while walking? (Chanting? Holding signs?)
24. Did you bring a flag?

### **Theme 4: Visual appearance at the Parade**

25. Do you remember how you were dressed when you were at the Parade?
26. Is that different from what you would normally wear in public? In what way?
27. Did you think about and plan beforehand the way you would look at the parade?
28. Could people recognize you in the parade as the ambassador of your sending country? How?

### **Theme 5: Views on the Role of Ambassador**

29. Some government officials have argued that showing support for the LGBT+ community is a form of political meddling in the internal affairs to the host state. What is your view on this claim?

### **Ending questions**

30. Is there something else you want to add?

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate!

## Appendix 3: List of Interviews

Aud Kolberg – Ambassador of Norway to Denmark, 2017-2021; interview July 9 2021

Helga Hauksdóttir – Ambassador of Iceland to Denmark, Bulgaria, Turkey and Romania, 2019-present; interview July 5 2021

Janine Finck – Ambassador of Luxembourg to Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway, 2017-2021; interview June 22 2021

Katarina Rangnitt – non-resident Ambassador of Sweden to Bulgaria, 2020-present; interview July 6 2021

Kristiina Kuvaja-Xanthopoulos – Ambassador of Finland to Bulgaria, 2020-present; interview July 8 2021

Martina Feeney – Ambassador of Ireland to Bulgaria, Armenia and Georgia, 2020-present; interview September 14 2021

Michiel Maertens – Ambassador of Belgium to Denmark, 2020-present; interview June 29 2021

Rob Zaagman – Ambassador of The Netherlands to Denmark, 2019-present; interview July 19 2021

Ronald Dofing – non-resident Ambassador of Luxembourg to Bulgaria, 2017-present; interview June 28 2021

Søren Jacobsen – Ambassador of Denmark to Bulgaria, 2017-2021; interview June 23 2021

## Appendix 4: Diplomatic Participation and Non-Participation in Pride Parades

**Table 2:** *Diplomatic Participation and Non-Participation in Sofia Pride in 2019 and 2021*

Diplomatic Mission accredited to Bulgaria	Participation in Sofia Pride 2019	Participation in Sofia Pride 2021
1. Afghanistan	-	-
2. Albania	-	-
3. Algeria	-	-
4. Andorra ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
5. Angola ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
6. Argentina	-	-
7. Armenia	-	-
8. Australia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
9. Austria	+++	+++
10. Azerbaijan	-	-
11. Bahrain ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
12. Bangladesh ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
13. Barbados ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
14. Belarus	-	-
15. Belgium	+++	-
16. Benin ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
17. Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-
18. Brazil	+++	-
19. Burkina Faso ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
20. Burundi ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
21. Cambodia	-	-
22. Cameroon ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
23. Canada ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
24. Cape Verde ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
25. Chad ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
26. Chile ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
27. China	-	-

28. Colombia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
29. Congo, Democratic Republic ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
30. Côte d'Ivoire ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
31. Croatia	+++	-
32. Cuba	-	-
33. Cyprus	-	-
34. Czech Republic	-	-
35. Denmark	+++	+++
36. Dominican Republic ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
37. Ecuador ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
38. Egypt	-	-
39. El Salvador ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
40. Equatorial Guinea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
41. Eritrea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
42. Estonia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
43. Ethiopia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
44. Finland	+++	+++
45. France	+++	+++
46. Georgia	-	-
47. Germany	+++	+++
48. Ghana ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
49. Greece	-	-
50. Guatemala ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
51. Guinea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
52. Guinea-Bissau ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
53. Guyana ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
54. Holy See	-	-
55. Hungary	-	-
56. Iceland ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
57. India	-	-
58. Indonesia	-	-
59. Iran	-	-
60. Iraq	-	-
61. Ireland	+++	+++

62. Israel	+++	-
63. Italy	-	+++
64. Jamaica ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
65. Japan	-	-
66. Jordan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
67. Kazakhstan	-	-
68. Kenya ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
69. Korea, Democratic People's Republic	-	-
70. Korea, Republic	-	-
71. Kosovo	-	-
72. Kuwait	-	-
73. Kyrgyzstan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
74. Laos ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
75. Latvia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
76. Lebanon	-	-
77. Lesotho ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
78. Libya	-	-
79. Lithuania ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
80. Luxembourg ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
81. Madagascar ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
82. Malawi ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
83. Malaysia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
84. Mali ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
85. Malta ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
86. Mauritania ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
87. Mexico ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
88. Moldova	-	-
89. Mongolia	-	-
90. Montenegro	-	-
91. Morocco	-	-
92. Myanmar ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
93. Namibia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
94. Nepal ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
95. Netherlands	+++	+++

96. New Zealand ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
97. Nicaragua ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
98. Niger ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
99. Nigeria ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
100. North Macedonia	-	-
101. Norway ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
102. Oman ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
103. Pakistan	-	-
104. Palestine	-	-
105. Panama ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
106. Paraguay ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
107. Peru ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
108. Philippines ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
109. Poland	-	-
110. Portugal	-	+++
111. Qatar	-	-
112. Romania	-	-
113. Russian Federation	-	-
114. Rwanda ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
115. San Marino ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
116. Saudi Arabia	-	-
117. Serbia	-	-
118. Seychelles ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
119. Sierra Leone ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
120. Singapore ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
121. Slovakia	-	-
122. Slovenia	+++	-
123. Somalia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
124. South Africa	+++	+++
125. Sovereign Order of Malta	-	-
126. Spain	+++	+++
127. Sri Lanka ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
128. Sweden ( <i>non-resident</i> )	+++	+++
129. Switzerland	-	+++
130. Syria	-	-

131. Tanzania ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
132. Thailand ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
133. Togo ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
134. Tunisia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
135. Turkey	-	-
136. Turkmenistan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
137. Uganda ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
138. Ukraine	-	-
139. United Arab Emirates	-	-
140. United Kingdom	+++	+++
141. United States of America	+++	+++
142. Uruguay ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
143. Uzbekistan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
144. Venezuela ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
145. Viet Nam	-	-
146. Yemen	-	-
147. Zambia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-

**Table 3: Diplomatic Participation and Non-Participation in Copenhagen Pride in 2019 and 2021**

<b>Diplomatic Mission accredited to Denmark</b>	<b>Participation in Copenhagen Pride 2019</b>	<b>Participation in Copenhagen World Pride 2021</b>
1. Afghanistan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
2. Albania	-	-
3. Algeria	-	-
4. Andorra ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
5. Angola ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
6. Argentina	-	-
7. Armenia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
8. Australia	+++	+++
9. Austria	-	-
10. Azerbaijan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
11. Bahrain ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-



12. Bangladesh	-	-
13. Barbados ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
14. Belarus ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
15. Belgium	-	-
16. Belize ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
17. Benin	-	-
18. Bhutan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
19. Bolivia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
20. Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-
21. Botswana ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
22. Brazil	-	-
23. Brunei Darussalam ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
24. Bulgaria	-	-
25. Burkina Faso	-	-
26. Burundi ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
27. Cambodia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
28. Cameroon ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
29. Canada	+++	+++
30. Central African Republic ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
31. Chad ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
32. Chile	-	-
33. China	-	-
34. Colombia	-	-
35. Comoros ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
36. Congo, Democratic Republic of ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
37. Congo, Republic of ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
38. Costa Rica ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
39. Côte d'Ivoire	-	-
40. Croatia	-	-
41. Cuba	-	-
42. Cyprus	-	-
43. Czech Republic	-	-
44. Djibouti ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-

45. Dominican Republic ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
46. Ecuador ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
47. Egypt	-	-
48. El Salvador ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
49. Equatorial Guinea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
50. Eritrea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
51. Estonia	-	-
52. Eswatini ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
53. Ethiopia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
54. Fiji ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
55. Finland	+++	+++
56. France	-	-
57. Gabon ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
58. Gambia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
59. Georgia	-	-
60. Germany	-	-
61. Ghana	-	-
62. Greece	-	-
63. Grenada ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
64. Guatemala ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
65. Guinea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
66. Guinea-Bissau ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
67. Guyana ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
68. Holy See ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
69. Honduras ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
70. Hungary	-	-
71. Iceland	+++	+++
72. India	-	-
73. Indonesia	-	-
74. Iran	-	-
75. Iraq	-	-
76. Ireland	-	-
77. Israel	-	-
78. Italy	-	-
79. Jamaica ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-

80. Japan	-	-
81. Jordan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
82. Kazakhstan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
83. Kenya ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
84. Korea, Democratic People's Republic ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
85. Korea, Republic of	-	-
86. Kosovo ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
87. Kuwait ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
88. Kyrgyzstan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
89. Laos ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
90. Latvia	-	-
91. Lebanon ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
92. Lesotho ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
93. Liberia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
94. Libya	-	-
95. Lithuania	-	-
96. Luxembourg	-	-
97. Madagascar ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
98. Malawi ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
99. Malaysia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
100. Maldives ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
101. Mali ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
102. Malta ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
103. Mauritania ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
104. Mauritius ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
105. Mexico	-	-
106. Moldova ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
107. Mongolia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
108. Montenegro ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
109. Morocco	-	-
110. Mozambique ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
111. Myanmar ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
112. Namibia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
113. Nepal	-	-

114. Netherlands	-	-
115. New Zealand ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
116. Nicaragua ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
117. Niger	-	-
118. Nigeria ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
119. North Macedonia	-	-
120. Norway	+++	+++
121. Oman ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
122. Pakistan	-	-
123. Panama ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
124. Papua New Guinea ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
125. Paraguay ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
126. Peru ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
127. Philippines	-	-
128. Poland	-	-
129. Portugal	-	-
130. Qatar ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
131. Romania	-	-
132. Russian Federation	-	-
133. Rwanda ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
134. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
135. San Marino ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
136. Sao Tome and Principe ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
137. Saudi Arabia	-	-
138. Senegal ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
139. Serbia	-	-
140. Seychelles ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
141. Sierra Leone ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
142. Singapore ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
143. Slovakia	-	-
144. Slovenia	-	-
145. South Africa	-	-
146. South Sudan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-

147. Spain	-	-
148. Sri Lanka ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
149. Sudan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
150. Sweden	+++	+++
151. Switzerland	-	-
152. Syria ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
153. Tanzania ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
154. Thailand	-	-
155. Togo ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
156. Tonga ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
157. Trinidad and Tobago ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
158. Tunisia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
159. Turkey	-	-
160. Turkmenistan ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
161. Uganda	-	-
162. Ukraine	-	-
163. United Arab Emirates	-	-
164. United Kingdom	+++	+++
165. United States of America	+++	+++
166. Uruguay ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
167. Venezuela ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
168. Viet Nam	-	-
169. Yemen ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
170. Zambia ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-
171. Zimbabwe ( <i>non-resident</i> )	-	-