

## **Transnational histories of collective action on HIV/AIDS in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s: Introduction**

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In 1992, the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) was formally launched in Berlin. It was the brainchild of two key HIV/AIDS<sup>2</sup> campaigning organizations in Germany and the UK, the German group Deutsche Aidshilfe and their British counterparts from the Terrence Higgins Trust.<sup>3</sup> EATG is a transnational organization that promotes HIV treatment, which has been expanding to include members from Central Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, and Central Asia.

The cross-border connections manifest in this story highlight the approach taken in this special issue: to rethink the place of HIV/AIDS campaigns more widely within transnational histories of collective action. Such action pertained to HIV prevention, treatment and destigmatization of marginalized social groups facing HIV-related bias. Simultaneously, this

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<sup>1</sup> Names in alphabetical order.

<sup>2</sup> HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus, whereas AIDS for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of an HIV infection. While those two terms should not be used interchangeably, as not every person with HIV will develop AIDS, many of the initiatives this special issue analyzes addressed both. To capture this breadth, we refer to “HIV/AIDS” in the introduction, and each article clarifies when campaigners engaged with HIV, AIDS, or both. On the correct use of the terms “HIV” and “AIDS”, see: Mercy Shibemba, “What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?”, aidsmap, December 2023, available [here](#) (last accessed: 23 July 2024). On using the term “HIV/AIDS” to refer to the range of medical conditions that campaigners addressed, see, for instance: George J. Severs, Radical Acts: HIV/AIDS Activism in Late Twentieth Century England, (London: Bloomsbury, 2024), 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaos Papadogiannis, Rachel Love, Terry Anderson, Trajectories: AIDS Activism in Western Europe (St Andrews, 2022): 15. This is a research-based comic, available online [here](#) (last accessed: 14 June 2024).

collection of articles shows the critical link between such campaigns and sexuality: those campaigns not only stressed various safer sex patterns but also engaged with the impact of public discussions on sexual norms and challenged AIDS-related stigma often assigned to the sexual lives of diverse individuals in terms of sexual orientation, gender, race, and profession. The special issue, thus, echoes the call of Jeffrey Weeks to situate the history of HIV/AIDS in a history of sexuality, given that “AIDS was identified at a particular moment in that history, when values and behavior were in a period of unprecedented flux, and when sex-related issues came close to the top of the political agenda”.<sup>4</sup>

The special issue contains seven articles, authored by Somak Biswas, Christophe Broqua, Siobhán Hearne, Laura Kelly, Rachel Love, Maja Lukanc, and Nikolaos Papadogiannis. Those written by Broqua, Lukanc, and Love also build on sociological, anthropological, and/or comparative literary methods. The collection’s approach echoes Patricia Clavin’s argument that transnational and global histories of Europe can nuance analyses of place, time, and manner in existing histories of the continent.<sup>5</sup> With regard to “place”, we note Clavin’s argument that global and transnational approaches have allowed historians to “re-map Europe’s relationship with the world” and the wide array of connections within Europe.<sup>6</sup> Concerning “manner”, Clavin has encouraged historical research to explore

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, “AIDS and the regulation of sexuality”, in: Virginia Berridge, Philip Strong (eds.), AIDS and Contemporary History. Cambridge Studies in the History of Medicine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993):17-36.

<sup>5</sup> Patricia Clavin, “Time, manner, place: writing modern European history in global, transnational and international contexts”, European History Quarterly 40.4 (2010): 624–40. On a global history of Europe approach, see also: Tara Zahra, “Migration, Mobility and the Making of a Global Europe”, Contemporary European History 31.1 (2022): 142-154; David Motadel, “Globaliser l’Europe”, Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales, 76.4 (2021): 645-667. The bibliography mentioned is indicative.

<sup>6</sup> Clavin, “Time”, 632-36.

whether and how phenomena happening in Europe were, in fact, distinctive from other parts of the globe.<sup>7</sup> The special issue's approach to "manner" is different from Clavin's, as the collection considers how the social backgrounds of the HIV/AIDS campaigners related to their cross-border interactions, and the forms of collective action they developed. Finally, in terms of "time", we echo what Clavin has identified as the potential of transnational history "to reshape or at least blur chronological boundaries and approaches".<sup>8</sup> This introduction elaborates on how a transnational and socio-cultural history approach, on which this special issue is based, helps refine these three parameters in the study of HIV/AIDS campaigning.

Overall, the special issue radically expands the recent focus of relevant scholarship on HIV/AIDS activist encounters across the North Atlantic. The collection highlights underexamined transnational flows between HIV/AIDS campaigners in Northwestern Europe, on the one hand, and Southern Europe, Central Eastern Europe, and South Asia, on the other. Taking an intersectional perspective, it consolidates and enriches recent research that challenges the story of biomedical progress in reactions to HIV/AIDS. In this vein, the collection analyzes HIV/AIDS campaigners from social backgrounds that have been largely neglected in histories of HIV/AIDS collective action, like transgender people, communities of faith, people of color, and citizen's diplomacy. It shows the complex trajectories that the HIV/AIDS collective action of these subjects followed, and how it affected the transnational encounters of those subjects with other HIV/AIDS campaigners. The special issue shows that HIV/AIDS campaigners in Southern and Central Eastern Europe often received selectively in this period ideas and activist patterns stemming from Northwestern Europe and North America. Crucially, however, HIV/AIDS collective action in Southern and Central Eastern Europe was not necessarily less inclusive than relevant action elsewhere on that continent.

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<sup>7</sup> Clavin, "Time", 629-632.

<sup>8</sup> Clavin, "Time", 627-629.

## Place

The special issue illuminates the significance of multi-directional cross-border transfers of people, ideas and knowledge among a range of European actors and organizations engaging with HIV/AIDS. It focuses on Europe by showing connections that emerged between HIV/AIDS campaigners in different parts of the continent in the 1980s and 1990s. Although local and national conditions influenced HIV/AIDS collective action, the latter was also affected to a great extent by cross-border transfers that cut across state socialist regimes and liberal democracies in Europe. Where the state responded relatively late or little, as in the USSR, Italy, or Slovenia in the 1980s, activists looked outward to HIV/AIDS campaigns elsewhere, most prominently in the US, UK, the Federal Republic of Germany, and France. This orientation produced a range of transnational encounters, yet the movements that developed out of such “looking” were distinct: they responded primarily to the local and national contexts they were based in, plugging the gaps of an “absent” or apathetic state. While such cross-border interactions sometimes rested on initiatives sponsored by the European Communities/European Union, they primarily developed outside of the process of integration of European institutions. Thus, the special issue follows the emerging scholarship that calls for carefully analyzing the links between Europeanization from below and Europeanization as a formal integration process.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in line with what James Mark and Maud Bracke have suggested, the collection shows that such interconnectedness was asymmetrical and reproduced concomitant hierarchies, such as between ‘West’ and ‘East’ as well as ‘North’ and

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, Kiran Klaus Patel, “Provincializing the European Union: Co-operation and Integration in a Historical Perspective”, *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 4 (2013): 649-673.

‘South’ in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Simultaneously, the special issue also demonstrates the porosity of cultural boundaries separating different parts of the continent or the continent from other regions. This growing connectivity across Europe overlapped with the significance of transfers of patterns and ideas of HIV/AIDS as well as sexuality from North America. In this process, campaigners in North America and Northwestern Europe often served as role models for their Southern and Central Eastern European counterparts. Simultaneously, such contacts were not unidirectional: sub-regional transfers within East Central Europe and developments at the local and national level were also crucial for HIV/AIDS campaigns in that part of Europe. Finally, building on the new global histories of Europe, the special issue illuminates the significance of campaigners of color as go-betweens for the UK and South Asia, as well as for France and North Africa. In playing this role, those campaigners negotiated, and sometimes even challenged, Eurocentric perceptions of sexuality that underpinned HIV/AIDS campaigns in all those regions.

An emerging scholarship is increasingly addressing transnational connections between HIV/AIDS campaigners in Europe. Earlier historical, anthropological, and sociological research on such collective action HIV/AIDS in European contexts concentrated on developments within the confines of nation-states.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, more recently, transnational

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<sup>10</sup> Maud A. Bracke, & James Mark, “Between Decolonization and the Cold War: Transnational Activism and its Limits in Europe, 1950s–90s”, Journal of Contemporary History 50, no.3 2015, 403–417. On the impact of such prejudice on HIV/AIDS activists, see, for instance: Christopher Ewing, “Highly affected groups: Gay men and racial others in West Germany’s AIDS epidemic, 1981–1992”, Sexualities, 23, no. 1–2 (2020): 201–223.

<sup>11</sup> On histories of AIDS, which have also considered relevant campaigning, and focused on developments within nation-states, see, for example: Virginia Berridge, AIDS in the UK. The Making of Policy, 1981-1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Magdalena Beljan, Rosa Zeiten? Eine Geschichte der Subjektivierung männlicher Homosexualität in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren der BRD (Bielefeld, transcript: 2014): 173-231; Patrick McDonagh, Gay and Lesbian Activism in the Republic of Ireland, 1973-93 (Bloomsbury, 2021)

history and/or sociology approaches to the subject matter have emerged, focusing particularly on intra-European networks. Works on the latter focus on the co-ordination of HIV/AIDS action in Europe through in-person gatherings and/or correspondence of campaigners based in different countries. Relevant research includes the EUROPACH project, based on oral testimonies from European campaigners; Broqua's monograph; a research-based comic authored by Papadogiannis, Love, and Terry Anderson; and Janet Weston and Hannah Elizabeth's edited volume.<sup>12</sup> Building on their contribution to the above-mentioned EUROPACH project, Agata Dziuban, Eugen Januschke, Ulrike Klöppel, Todd Sekuler, and Justyna Struzik have offered a particularly nuanced mapping of transnational interactions of HIV/AIDS campaigners across Europe. They have shown that the "North"/"South" and "East"/"West" divides are malleable.<sup>13</sup> Struzik has also analyzed the intensive collaboration of Polish and Western campaigners after the collapse of the state socialist regime in Poland.<sup>14</sup> Michael Nebeling Petersen, Tobias de Fønss Wung-Sung, Tony Sandset, Bolette Frydendahl Larsen, Kristian Møller, and Mons Bissenbakker have also been working on histories of HIV/AIDS, including relevant campaigning, in Scandinavian countries from a comparative and

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<sup>12</sup> Agata Dziuban, Todd Sekuler, "We are infecting people with activism". Oral Histories of European HIV/AIDS Activists (Krakow: Nomos, 2022); Agata Dziuban & Todd Sekuler, "The temporal regimes of HIV/AIDS activism in Europe: chrono-citizenship, biomedicine and its others", Critical Public Health, 31 no. 1 (2021): 5-16; Papadogiannis, Love, Anderson, Trajectories; Janet Weston, Hannah J. Elizabeth (eds.), Histories of HIV/AIDS in Western Europe. New and regional perspectives (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022); Christophe Broqua, Agir pour ne pas mourir! Act Up, les homosexuels et le sida (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Agata Dziuban, Eugen Januschke, Ulrike Klöppel, Todd Sekuler, and Justyna Struzik, "The European HIV/AIDS Archive: building a queer counter-memory", in Weston, Elizabeth, Histories of HIV/AIDS, 207-08.

<sup>14</sup> Justyna Struzik, "Thick times – transformation, activism and HIV in Poland", European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire 28, no. 4 (2021): 570-587.

transnational perspective.<sup>15</sup> Zülfükar Çetin and Peter-Paul Bänziger have addressed such flows between AIDS campaigners in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Johanna Folland has analyzed transfers across the “Iron Curtain”, showing the connections between East German campaigners and their counterparts in the West.<sup>17</sup> Joana Matias has indicated transnational contacts of leathermen, their perceptions of safer sex, and their significance for a key gay periodical in Portugal.<sup>18</sup> Louie Dean Valencia has highlighted links between EU institutions and campaigners within member countries that address HIV/AIDS.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, an expanding literature situates HIV/AIDS collective action in Europe into its broader transatlantic or even global context. Concerning flows across the North Atlantic, the recent monographs of Jake Newsome and Sébastien Tremblay have analyzed the links between the recuperation of pink triangles<sup>20</sup> and the entangled shaping of gay and HIV/AIDS activism in the USA and West Germany through in-person contact, the exchange of

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Nebeling Petersen, Tobias de Fønss Wung-Sung, Tony Sandset, Bolette Frydendahl Larsen, Kristian Møller, Mons Bissenbakker, “En introduktion til en skandinavisk hiv/aids-historie”, *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* 1 (2023): 7-20. See also the entire special issue that includes this introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Zülfükar Çetin, Peter-Paul Bänziger (eds.), *Aids und HIV in der Türkei. Geschichten und Perspektiven einer emanzipatorischen Gesundheitspolitik* (Giessen: Psychosozial Verlag, 2019), especially the introduction.

<sup>17</sup> Johanna Folland, “Globalizing Socialist Health: Africa, East Germany, and the AIDS Crisis”, PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Joana Matias, “(Safe) sex, leather, and zines: Lisbon’s GayClub and early HIV/AIDS information activism”, *Notches*, 17 October 2023, available [here](#) (last accessed: 19 June 2024).

<sup>19</sup> Louie Dean Valencia, “Imagining Europe, Citizenship, and Research in the Time of HIV/AIDS”, *EuropeNow*, Summer 2020, accessible [here](#) (last accessed: 19 June 2024).

<sup>20</sup> The Nazis had used the latter to identify and persecute people the regime labeled as homosexual men. The gender identities of some of those persecuted people were not necessarily in sync with the labels the Nazi regime used. See Bodie A. Ashton, “The Parallel Lives of Liddy Bacroff: Transgender (Pre)History and the Tyranny of the Archive in Twentieth-Century Germany,” *German History* 42, no 1 (March 2024): 79–100.

correspondence, and object mobility.<sup>21</sup> In-person encounters and the flow of ideas from campaigners in the USA to their counterparts in West Germany and France have also been studied by Kevin-Niklas Breu and Claire Ernst, respectively.<sup>22</sup> Matt Cook has studied the echoes of HIV/AIDS activism in the USA on gay men in the UK.<sup>23</sup> George Severs has examined the connections of HIV/AIDS activists in England with their counterparts in North America, continental Europe, and the Global South.<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously, a growing body of literature is investigating the flows of ideas from campaigners in Europe and, more broadly, the West to the Global South. Such scholarship often takes a “problem-solving” approach: it purports to illuminate what “deficits” exist in the Global South as compared to the West, and how queer and HIV/AIDS campaigns, mainly from the latter, can contribute to HIV/AIDS collective action in the former.<sup>25</sup> A more critical approach to such Western-centrism has also emerged: Tremblay has studied the journeys of pink triangles in the Euro-American world in a reflective manner, calling for a global queer history that will address the history of queer and

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<sup>21</sup> W. Jake Newsome, Pink Triangle Legacies. Coming Out in the Shadow of the Holocaust (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press); Sébastien Tremblay, A Badge of Injury. The Pink Triangle as Global Symbol of Memory (De Gruyter, Oldenbourg: Berlin, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Kevin-Niklas Breu, “Schwule Lebensweisen auf dem Prüfstand: Gesundheitsförderung des bundesdeutschen AIDS-Aktivismus im Spiegel transnationaler Einflüsse”, Revue d’Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 53 issue 2 (2021), 441-464; Claire E. Ernst, “Activisme à l’américaine? The Case of Act Up-Paris”, French Politics and Society 15.4 (1997), 22-31. On HIV/AIDS activists in France and the impact of US American activist patterns on them, see also Broqua, Agir.

<sup>23</sup> Matt Cook, “‘Archives of Feeling’: the AIDS Crisis in Britain 1987”, History Workshop Journal 83, no. 1 (2017): 51–78.

<sup>24</sup> George Severs, Radical Acts, 43-69.

<sup>25</sup> For instance: Timothy Hildebrandt, “Development and Division: the effect of transnational linkages and local politics on LGBT activism in China”, Journal of Contemporary China 21, no. 77 (2012): 845-862.



HIV/AIDS activism across the world and the significance of symbols other than the pink triangle for campaigns beyond the West.<sup>26</sup> Such a global queer history will subvert the condition he labels as “homosynchronism,” which is prevalent in the West, which desires to “save ‘non-European’ queers allegedly trapped in the premodern abroad while fearing and demonizing racialized queers domestically.”<sup>27</sup>

The special issue helps diversify the study of transnational and global connections of HIV/AIDS campaigners in Europe. It shines a light on hitherto underexamined transfers. In demonstrating activist connections between London and the Republic of Ireland, Kelly, in her article for this collection, responds to what Daryl Leeworthy has argued: namely, that due to the “methodological nationalism” of British and Irish LGBT historiography, fields of scholarship that have tended to react primarily to circumstances in their respective national contexts and urban settings, the persistence of international and transnational dimensions has been neglected’.<sup>28</sup> Papadogiannis analyzes why HIV/AIDS activism in Athens should be considered within its wider Western context. A couple of articles explore so far neglected transfers among HIV/AIDS activists between Northwestern and Central Eastern Europe. Lukanc analyzes how ideas moved from northwestern Europe to Socialist Slovenia. Hearne’s article shows the significance of transatlantic and intra-European transfers, but also flows across the borders of various Soviet republics, for HIV/AIDS activism in the USSR. Such transnational all-Union contacts within the USSR and its successor states manifest that the communication of HIV/AIDS campaigners in Europe was not necessarily based on the

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<sup>26</sup> Tremblay, Badge, 249-255.

<sup>27</sup> Tremblay, Badge, 224. On global connections between HIV/AIDS activists in Europe and Central Asia, see: Dziuban, Januschke, Klöppel, Sekuler, and Struzik, “The European HIV/AIDS Archive”, 207-08.

<sup>28</sup> Daryl Leeworthy, “Rainbow crossings: Gay Irish migrants and LGBT politics in 1980s London”, Studi Irlandesi: a journal of Irish studies 10, no.10 (2020): 79-99, here 81.

diffusion of ideas on HIV/AIDS, AIDS, and sexuality from the “West” to the “East” of the continent. Even in the cases where local campaigners mainly relied on ideas that first emerged in Northwestern Europe, like in Italy (Love), Ljubljana (Lukanc), and Athens (Papadogiannis), this reception was selective and filtered through developments at the local and the national level. Moreover, “West”-“East” encounters of HIV/AIDS campaigners in Europe could be mutually constitutive. As Lukanc implies in her article, the interaction of activists from Northwestern Europe and Socialist Slovenia could be a reciprocal process involving mutual reflection on the challenges facing both. Such interconnections merit further research in the history of HIV/AIDS collective action.

To investigate cross-border flows among HIV/AIDS campaigners across Europe, some contributors to this special issue have confronted a methodological conundrum: the imbalance regarding primary sources available on HIV/AIDS collective action in several Southern and Central Eastern European contexts compared to the Northwest. For instance, archives in the UK and Germany, like that of the Bishopsgate Institute in London and the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, store many primary sources on HIV/AIDS campaigners in the UK and the Federal Republic of Germany and their transnational connections. By contrast, efforts to create an archive of HIV/AIDS history in Greece are ongoing, while sources stored in Russia are currently not accessible to researchers based in the European Union. Authors like Hearne and Papadogiannis have briefly reflected on the impact of such imbalances in capturing the nature of transnational flows involving HIV/AIDS campaigners in the former USSR and Greece. Simultaneously, they have been creative to help address these disparities, either by using an ad hoc archive based on material accessible online (Hearne) or co-produce a relevant archival

collection (Papadogiannis).<sup>29</sup> Of course, such archival imbalances have not disappeared, and need to be seriously considered in future research on the subject.

Besides the multi-directionality of cross-border transfers, the special issue also illuminates understudied aspects of their complex mechanics. The above-mentioned scholarship on reactions to HIV/AIDS stresses the in-person coordination of transatlantic and intra-European campaigns. By contrast, this special issue helps recalibrate the study of HIV/AIDS collective action in Europe by showing the diversity of transnational flows involved. Several articles move beyond the well-studied HIV/AIDS collective action in the large urban centers in Northwestern Europe to show the -limited role of in-person contact and more complex cross-border interactions that shaped HIV/AIDS activism in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s (Hearne), Slovenia in the late 1980s-early 1990s (Lukanc), Italy in 1983-1993 (Love) and Athens in the 1980s-1990s (Papadogiannis). Papadogiannis shows that ACT UP Athens was inspired by texts of other ACT UP groups without engaging in protests happening simultaneously in various countries or even liaising with other ACT UP branches to coordinate their action. Lukanc demonstrates that, while a group called “AIDS-Help” was established in Slovenia in 1989, there is no documented communication between it and its namesakes in West Germany and Austria. Hearne sheds light on the fact that in-person contact between HIV/AIDS activists in the USSR and the West only emerged in the 1990s.

Similarly, the special issue addresses the complex role of translated texts in facilitating transnational encounters in those Southern and Central Eastern European contexts in the absence of in-person interaction. Lukanc, for instance, studies a Canadian leaflet on safer sex

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<sup>29</sup> See also effort of Dimitris Papanikolaou and the HIV/AIDS charity Positive Voice to create a history of the AIDS archive in Greece: <https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/hiv-aids-in-greece-a-political-archive>, accessed 24 June 2024.

practices, which was only partially translated by Slovenian HIV/AIDS activists, who chose to keep its cover in English. Love and Lukanc, building on historical research and comparative literary approaches in the case of the former, also show how memory can further complicate the analysis of the transfers of translated texts: Italian and Slovenian activists recall reading extensively material from Northwestern Europe without always being able to specify which of those texts influenced them most and to reconstruct the exact transnational points of contact. Thus, despite their significance, cross-border transfers of ideas and people in HIV/AIDS collective action in Europe are not always legible as they get rendered in diffuse ways.

While testifying to the significance of Europe, and flows across the North Atlantic, as a context for HIV/AIDS collective action, the collection also outlines the importance of migrant campaigners and campaigners of color and their links to the Global South. In his article for the special issue, Biswas demonstrates in his article how the rhetoric and practice of the Naz project, an HIV/AIDS service organization in London, addressed the intersections of race and mobility embodied by people of South Asian, and, later, Middle Eastern, North African and Latin American descent. Biswas also outlines the beginnings of the global connections of Naz in the 1990s, which developed contacts with organizations in South Asia and migrant HIV/AIDS activists in Western Europe. Broqua highlights in his article a hitherto understudied factor: the influence of Black Feminist texts that appeared in the USA on the intersectional approach to HIV/AIDS collective action that migrant activists developed in France. Moreover, Broqua shows that the migrant HIV/AIDS activist organization in Paris entitled Migrants Against AIDS collaborated with organizations that aimed to be active both in France and North Africa, such as the Federation of Tunisians for Citizenship on both Shores. Such contacts could be real or aspirational. Broqua illuminates the under-studied efforts of Migrants against AIDS to mobilize people from a post-colonial community of people across Africa, equating survival

from colonization with survival from AIDS. However, this effort remained mostly an aim rather than a reality.

## Manner

The special issue posits that transnational and intersectional approaches to collective action on HIV/AIDS complement and nuance each other and need to be used conjointly. It shows how socio-cultural backgrounds of HIV/AIDS campaigners inflected cross-border transfers. Moreover, campaigners from various marginalized groups often turned to transnational coalitions to resist the power asymmetries they experienced at the local and national levels. A transnational and intersectional approach to the subject matter echoes Margot Canaday's appeal that historians engaging in cross-cultural work do not magnify the omissions in the study of the sexuality of specific social groups that exist in histories of specific nation-states or regions.<sup>30</sup> Thus, this collection engages with a conceptual conundrum: how to consider the visibility of HIV/AIDS campaigners who were white gay cisgender men and often played leading roles in relevant collective action and simultaneously take an inclusive and intersectional approach in carefully analyzing the under-researched role of campaigners from other socio-cultural backgrounds.

Recently, historical and sociological works by Dziuban, Sekuler, George Severs, Elizabeth, and Weston have explored the perspectives of various social groups in HIV/AIDS campaigns: sex workers, drug users, mothers with HIV/AIDS, nurses, prisoners, and prison workers.<sup>31</sup> There is emerging research on hemophiliac "patient organizations" engaging with

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<sup>30</sup> Margot Canaday, "Thinking Sex in the Transnational Turn: An Introduction", The American Historical Review 114, no. 5 (December 2009): 1250–1257.

<sup>31</sup> Weston, Elizabeth, Histories of HIV/AIDS; Dziuban, Sekuler, "We are infecting people"; George Severs, Radical Acts. On mothers with HIV, see: Hannah J. Elizabeth, "Recovering mothers' experiences of HIV/AIDS

HIV-related issues in the UK.<sup>32</sup> Relevant scholarship includes a growing number of works on heterosexual and lesbian women as a target group, but also members of HIV/AIDS campaigning groups.<sup>33</sup> There has been limited research on transgender women who sold sex in

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health activism in Edinburgh, 1983-2000”, in: Weston, Elizabeth, Histories of HIV/AIDS, 164-191. Emerging research on sex workers and HIV/AIDS campaigns in the UK and Italy includes the following unpublished papers, both presented at the Queer History Conference on 12 June 2024: Giulia Sbaffi, “Migrant Sex Workers and AIDS: Italy 1990”, and Lola Dickinson, “Sex Work, Queerness and HIV/AIDS in Thatcherite Britain”. On the restrictions of sex workers in getting involved in public debates on HIV in Norway, see: Ketil Slagstad, Det ligger i blodet. Epidemien som forandret Norge (Oslo: Forlaget Press, 2023). On civil society groups aiming to address and engage women in HIV/AIDS campaigns, see also Caroline Rusterholz, Responsible Pleasure. The Brook Advisory Centres and Youth Sexuality in Postwar Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024). The study of HIV/AIDS activists in the USA who were women has also been attracting increasing attention. See, for instance: Emma Day, In Her Hands. Women's Fight against AIDS in the United States (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2023); on a collaborative project including women who live with HIV in Chicago, and, among others, their responses to activism, see: Jennifer Brier (2018) “I’m Still Surviving”: Oral Histories of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago, The Oral History Review 45, no. 1 (2018): 68-83.

<sup>32</sup> Virginia Berridge, “AIDS and the Rise of the Patient? Activist Organization and HIV/AIDS in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s”, Medizin, Gesellschaft, und Geschichte: Jahrbuch des Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin der Robert Bosch Stiftung 21 (2002): 109-123.

<sup>33</sup> For instance: Robin Gorna, Vamps, Virgins and Victims. How Can Women Fight AIDS? (New York: Cassell, 1996); Hannah Elizabeth, “‘The Wild Women of the West (Midlands)’: how LesBeWell imagined queer women’s health and its obstacles in the 1990s through the pages of Dykenosis”, Contemporary British History 37, no. 3 (2023): 309-338; Sabine Hark, Koalitionen des Überlebens. Queere Bündnispolitiken im 21. Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017). On lesbian activism and HIV in the USA, see, for instance: Emma Day, In Her Hands: Women’s Fight against AIDS in the United States (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023), 97–132; Ann Cvetkovich, An Archive of Feelings. Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 156-204; Deborah B. Gould, Moving Politics. Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 156-157, 186-187, 193, 258-260, 342-344.

Greece and engaged in HIV/AIDS collective action.<sup>34</sup> There is some, yet still very limited, research on HIV/AIDS campaigners belonging to religious and spiritual communities, such as American Reform Jewish ones and Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities in England.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, a very welcome development is the emergence of research projects drawing on history, anthropology, and sociology, which study migrants and/or people of color involved in HIV/AIDS campaigns across Europe.<sup>36</sup> Those projects dovetail with the increasing reflection of people of color in academia and, more broadly, public discussions on their collective action, at least in the UK.<sup>37</sup> Such works addressing campaigners from various social backgrounds have been producing nuanced analyses of intersectional relationships in HIV/AIDS collective action. For instance, Christopher Ewing shows how racist and anti-racist queer politics have

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<sup>34</sup> Theodosios Gkeltis, “I proslipsi tou HIV/AIDS apo tous omofylofilous aktivistes tis dekaetias tou 1980”, unpublished conference paper, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Elazar Ben-Lulu, “Who will say Kaddish for me”? The American Reform Jewish response to HIV/AIDS”, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 20, no. 1 (2021): 70-94; George Severs, “Reticence and the Queer Past”, Oral History 48, No. 1 (Spring 2020): 45-56; Severs, Radical Acts, 123-151.

<sup>36</sup> See the following works: Christopher Ewing, “Highly affected groups: Gay men and racial others in West Germany’s AIDS epidemic, 1981–1992”, Sexualities 23, issues 1-2 (2020): 201-223; Christopher Ewing, The Color of Desire. The Queer Politics of Race in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1970 (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2024); Tremblay, Badge; Severs, Radical Acts, 140-44; Rageshri Dhairyawan, Unheard. The Medical Practice of Silencing (Trapeze: London, 2024). Moreover, see the following research projects which consider HIV/AIDS activists of color: Caroline Rusterholz, “Race and Sexual and Reproductive Health Charities in Postwar Britain, 1960s-2020s”; Sue Lemos, “‘Pioneers of Our Own Future’: Historicizing the ‘Black Lesbian and Gay Movement’ in Late Twentieth Century Britain”; Somak Biswas, “How the AIDS crisis reshaped British border practices in relation to African and South Asian mobilities”; Jesse van Amelsvoort, A.G.M. Mellink, “50 Years of Hiv/aids in the Netherlands”; Michael Nebeling (PI), “The cultural history of AIDS in Denmark”.

<sup>37</sup> Angelina Namiba, Charity Nyirenda, Memory Sachikonye, Rebecca Mbewe, Winnie Ssanyu Sseruma, Our Stories Told By Us (London: ZZUK Press, 2023).

informed each other in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1970. In this vein, sex tourism and involvement in international organizations often helped reinforce among white gay men a feeling of ‘Western’ superiority over other regions of the world in West Germany in the 1980s, which left its imprint on HIV/AIDS campaigns. Simultaneously, however, transnational feminist publishing facilitated anti-racist coalitions involving queer of color campaigners, white lesbian feminists, and HIV/AIDS campaigners.<sup>38</sup> The book edited by Angelina Namiba, Charity Nyirenda, Memory Sachikonye, Rebecca Mbewe, Winnie Ssanyu Sseruma outlines similar intersectional coalitions and tensions.<sup>39</sup>

While it does not neglect the role of cisgender gay men in HIV/AIDS activism, the special issue also draws on and helps expand this diversifying research on HIV/AIDS collective action. It investigates how several subjects that have only recently begun to be examined in the history of HIV/AIDS helped convey and recontextualize HIV/AIDS campaigning while contributing to pluralizing perceptions of HIV/AIDS, safer sex, and sexual pleasure. Such subjects include migrants and postmigrants, queer and heterosexual, middle-class and working-class (Biswas, Broqua, Kelly); members of faith communities (Kelly);

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<sup>38</sup> Ewing, Color, 85-119.

<sup>39</sup> Namiba, Nyirenda, Sachikonye, Mbewe, Ssanyu Sseruma, Our Stories. On black HIV/AIDS campaigners in England, see also: Alvaro Martinez-Lacabe, “The PrEP response in England: enabling collective action through public health and PrEP commodity activism”, Critical Public Health 31, no 2 (2021): 226-234. On “fragile” cross-racial HIV/AIDS coalitions in the USA, see Karma R. Chávez, The Borders of AIDS. Race, Quarantine & Resistance (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2021); Cvetkovich, Archive, 118-155; Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore Kerr, We Are Having this Conversation Now. The Times of AIDS Cultural Production (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2022). On intersectional approaches to HIV/AIDS activism in several contexts of the Global North and South, see, for instance: Jaime García-Iglesias, Maurice Nagington and Peter Aggleton (eds.), Viral Times. Reflections on the COVID-19 and HIV Pandemics (London/New York: Routledge, 2024).



lesbian women (Hearne, Lukanc, Papadogiannis); and sex workers (Biswas, Papadogiannis). Moreover, and crucially, the special issue sheds light on a transgender man and a gender-fluid person participating in HIV/AIDS campaigns (Papadogiannis), encompassing a social group that is almost totally absent from relevant scholarship. The collection also illuminates neglected sociopolitical groups in HIV/AIDS collective action: citizen diplomacy in the USSR (Hearne) and the student structures in Socialist Slovenia (Lukanc).<sup>40</sup>

Although, as the previous section of the introduction shows, campaigners in Southern, as well as Central and Eastern Europe, were often on the receiving end of HIV/AIDS collective action in Northwestern Europe, the special issue argues that intersectional encounters in the latter were not necessarily more inclusive than in the rest of the continent. Broqua and Papadogiannis help enrich the study of race relations among the radical ACT UP activists. While research so far has outlined collaboration and conflicts between white individuals and people of color within ACT UP New York, Broqua and Papadogiannis demonstrate the prevalence of the former in the ACT UP chapters of Paris and Athens, respectively.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Papadogiannis complements works like that of Tremblay and Broqua, which show or imply trans erasures in ACT UP branches in West Germany and France.<sup>42</sup> Papadogiannis studies an HIV/AIDS coalition in Athens involving cisgender gays and lesbians, cisgender heterosexual individuals, and transgender people. He shows that transgender activists played an important role in selectively receiving ideas and protest patterns developed by HIV/AIDS campaigners elsewhere in the West.

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<sup>40</sup> On citizen diplomacy in the USSR, see also: Siobhán Hearne, “AIDS and the End of the Soviet Union,” Past & Present (2025).

<sup>41</sup> On ACT UP New York, see: Gould, Moving. Tremblay has also observed the predominance of symbols of white activists in the ACT UP chapters in West Germany. See: Tremblay, Badge.

<sup>42</sup> Tremblay, Badge; Broqua, Agir.

Building on recent approaches to transnational and global history, the special issue also shows that cross-border transfers of ideas among HIV/AIDS campaigners sometimes conveyed conservative norms that magnified social hierarchies.<sup>43</sup> In the study of HIV/AIDS coalitions, and while sometimes carefully analyzing conflicts within them, the works mentioned in footnotes 6-20 tend to emphasize transnational flows of symbols and ideas that were meant to be empowering for people experiencing HIV/AIDS-related stigma. By contrast, Hearne shows that the shaping of citizen diplomacy as a subject of HIV/AIDS activism in the USSR with transnational connections rested on a range of influences, which also entailed morally conservative approaches to sexuality. Similarly, Biswas and Kelly demonstrate how migrant HIV/AIDS campaigners in London sometimes reproduced hegemonic perceptions of race and social class in their country of origin and/or the receiving society. Thus, cross-border transfers were not necessarily harbingers of social justice and equity at the local and national levels.

## Time

The collection's transnational and intersectional approach helps illuminate the complex trajectories that collective action on AIDS followed in the 1980s and 1990s.

Public health scholarship and policy work are often embedded in a narrative centered on biomedical progress in treating HIV/AIDS. Key tenets of this narrative are that biomedical solutions have transformed HIV from a "death sentence" to a manageable "chronic" disease; and that the "end of AIDS" can be achieved by 2030.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, public health research

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<sup>43</sup> For example: Richard Drayton, David Motadel, "Discussion: the futures of global history", Journal of Global History 13, no. 1 (2018):1-21.

<sup>44</sup> For instance: Srdan Matic, Jeffrey Z. Lazarus, and Martin C. Donoghoe (eds.), HIV/AIDS in Europe: moving from death sentence to chronic disease management (Copenhagen: World Health Organization Europe, 2006).

On the "end of AIDS" mission, see: "New report from UNAIDS shows that AIDS can be ended by 2030 and

nuances, to an extent, this argument by showing how parameters beyond biomedicine, namely social, cultural, economic, and political barriers, restrict the access of several seropositive people to relevant treatment.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, works on HIV/AIDS in the humanities and social sciences have been increasingly delineating more nuanced narratives. The latter appreciate biomedical progress but also consider in more depth than the aforementioned research how the trajectories of HIV prevention and treatment, as well as of the wellbeing of people with HIV/AIDS, are complicated by sociopolitical conditions. Such research also shows how significant the role of campaigners is in addressing HIV.<sup>46</sup> In this vein, historical and sociological research has, thus, demonstrated the curved path that universal access to HIV treatment has followed due to the advent of neoliberalism and the concomitant absence or withdrawal of welfare states.<sup>47</sup> A concomitant issue in research on sociopolitical reactions to HIV/AIDS is whether the 1980s increasingly witnessed liberal, cooperative politics towards HIV/AIDS instead of restrictive

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outlines the path to get there”, 13 July 2023, accessible here:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2023/july/unaids-global-aids-update> (last accessed: 18 June 2024).

<sup>45</sup> Matic, Lazarus, Donoghoe, HIV/AIDS in Europe.

<sup>46</sup> On the significance of biological and social character of AIDS, see, for instance: Charles E. Rosenberg, Explaining Epidemics and other Studies in the History of Medicine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Lukas Engelman has recently proposed visual history as a means of achieving a synthesis of perspectives, medical and activist ones, while reflecting critically on the narratives that these perspectives underpin. See: Lukas Engelman, Mapping AIDS. Visual Histories of an Enduring Epidemic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>47</sup> For example, see: Dziuban & Sekuler, “The temporal regimes”.

ones. Günter Frankenberg has advocated this argument regarding West Germany.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the ‘increasingly liberal HIV politics’ thesis has been refined by other works showing that AIDS-related restrictions remained, for instance, in drug use.<sup>49</sup> Virginia Berridge shows that “consensus over a liberal response” to HIV/AIDS was also difficult regarding drug policy in the UK in 1987-1989.<sup>50</sup>

The study of HIV/AIDS has also often resulted in complex narratives of sexuality in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. A testament to this is the recent work of Dagmar Herzog: Herzog has shown that despite the initial “efflorescence” of homophobia in debates around AIDS, relevant discussions have gradually witnessed an erosion of “simplistic assumptions about the differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals”.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Herzog opines that HIV/AIDS accentuated the changing approach to sex in Europe as a “site of difficulty” rather than an “exciting force”.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, Jennifer Evans has recently challenged a post-1945 narrative in Germany that “emphasizes progress” and privileges white cisgender gay men. Evans has offered instead a more complex trajectory marked by “moments of radical

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<sup>48</sup> Günter Frankenberg, “Germany: The Uneasy Triumph of Pragmatism”, in: David Kirp and Ronald Bayer, Industrialized Democracies: Passions, Politics, and Policies (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press): 99-133.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Reichert, Die Kapsel: Aids in der Bundesrepublik (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2018). On limits to state investment in prevention, see: Adrian Lehne, “HIV/AIDS, Kondome und das Recht auf sichere Sexualität”, Kritische Justiz 53 (2000): 468-474.

<sup>50</sup> Berridge, AIDS, 156-157. On the variety and complexities of HIV and AIDS policies in the Global North in general, see: Peter Baldwin, Disease and Democracy. The Industrialized World Faces AIDS (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Dagmar Herzog, Sexuality in Europe. A Twentieth-Century History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 182-183.

<sup>52</sup> Herzog, Sexuality, 174.

potential in coalition-building practices” involving a wide array of groups, like transgender and/or racialized individuals, in HIV/AIDS collective action.<sup>53</sup> Overall, state-of-the-art scholarship regarding sociopolitical approaches to HIV/AIDS in Europe embraces what Benno Gammerl has depicted for West Germany as the “contradictory simultaneity of stigmatization, emancipation and normalization”.<sup>54</sup>

The collection builds on existing scholarship to show how intersectional encounters in HIV/AIDS coalitions and their links to geopolitical developments invite a nuanced periodization in the study of HIV/AIDS collective action. Most of the articles in the special issue situate the starting point of their analysis in the 1980s, when safer sex campaigns first emerged in Europe. Nevertheless, other turning points affected HIV/AIDS collective action. Cold War dynamics had left their imprint on such campaigns in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Hearne and Lukanc discern the end of the Cold War as a catalyst for intensifying interaction between HIV/AIDS campaigners in the USSR and Socialist Slovenia, such as queer campaigners, and their counterparts in the West. In this vein, they echo Struzik’s similar argument about Poland and Dziuban’s and Sekuler’s analysis of Europe in general.<sup>55</sup>

Simultaneously, in shedding light on so far neglected research intersectional HIV/AIDS coalitions and their transnational dimensions, the special issue helps nuance how trajectories of HIV/AIDS and gay activism relate to each other. It refines a powerful argument in this history, which Broqua has articulated in his previous work. According to this argument, gay activism was the impetus that shaped the course of HIV/AIDS activism in the regions where

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<sup>53</sup> Jennifer V. Evans, The Queer Art of History. Queer Kinship After Fascism (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2023): 8, 11, 13, 21, 150, 168.

<sup>54</sup> Benno Gammerl, anders fühlen: Schwules und lesbisches Leben in der Bundesrepublik. Eine Emotionsgeschichte (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2021): 276.

<sup>55</sup> Struzik, “Thick times”; Dziuban & Sekuler, ‘The temporal regimes’.

the latter adopted its more radical forms, namely in Europe, North America, and South Africa.<sup>56</sup> However, articles in this special issue, such as by Hearne, show that this sequence does not apply to parts of Europe, such as the USSR, where transnational citizen diplomacy rather than gay activism introduced HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Similarly, several articles in the special issue demonstrate the underexamined significance of interracial interactions in further nuancing the periodization of HIV/AIDS coalitions in Europe. The 1990s witnessed the understudied onset of HIV/AIDS activism in London and Paris involving diverse people of color. The border regimes in the EU became stricter in the 1990s, accompanied by a sharpening racialization of migrant and refugee populations of color. As a result, people from these social groups, especially those living in precarity, were often neglected in HIV prevention and treatment initiatives, both state-sponsored and grassroots. Quite tellingly, according to Biswas, under the 1996 Immigration and Asylum Act, UK hospitals were asked to verify the immigration status of all HIV/AIDS hospital patients before they could access special healthcare. Thus, for campaigners in the UK addressing people of color, the 1990s was the beginning rather than the end of their efforts to achieve inclusive HIV/AIDS campaigns in this respect. Biswas and Broqua indicate the hitherto under-researched significance of this turning point for migrant campaigners and campaigners of color in France and the UK and their transnational and intersectional collaborations. The appearance of HIV/AIDS campaigns striving for diversity in 1990s London was also fertile ground for HIV/AIDS campaigners targeting racism against a subgroup of white people, namely the Irish, as Kelly demonstrates.

The special issue extends to varying points in the 1990s to accommodate the diverse trajectories that HIV/AIDS campaigners from different social backgrounds pursued in their

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<sup>56</sup> Christophe Broqua, "AIDS Activism from North to Global", in: David Paternotte, Manon Tremblay (eds.), The Ashgate Research Companion to Lesbian and Gay Activism (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2015): 59-72.

local, national and transnational campaigns. Intersectional bias within HIV/AIDS coalitions and/or funding issues undermined or even brought to an end some of the campaigns in question. For instance, the coalition developed by Irish activists in London was short-lived and ceased functioning in 1996. In line with emerging scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, as mentioned above in this section, the ending point of the collection is not merely the biomedical developments around 1996. Parameters, like the increasing importance of South African campaigners for HIV/AIDS collective action in the Global North, especially after the International AIDS conference in 2000 in Durban, and the intensification of HIV/AIDS-related sex workers' rights collective action in the mid-to-late 1990s in several parts of Europe, as Luca Stevenson and Dziuban have shown recently merit a separate special issue on the subject matter extending to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>57</sup>

### Key concepts

The special issue approaches sexuality as a cultural construct and analyzes the various regulations and norms linked to it in debates around HIV/AIDS. It echoes Robert Nye's definition of sexuality, which encompasses 'a set of attitudes and practices, desires and inhibitions'.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the collection conceptualizes collective action/campaigning in a way that contains contentious collective action, often labeled in scholarship and public debates as

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<sup>57</sup> On the impact of HIV/AIDS campaigns in South Africa on global health diplomacy, see: Mandisa Mbali, South African AIDS Activism and Global Health Politics (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Luca Stevenson and Agata Dziuban, "Silent no more: self-determination and organization of sex workers in Europe", in: Synnøve Jahnsen, Hendrik Wagenaar (eds.), Assessing Prostitution Policies in Europe (London and New York: Routledge, 2018): 376-392.

<sup>58</sup> Robert A. Nye, "Sexuality", in: Teresa A. Meade and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, A Companion to Gender History (Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2006): 23.

activism but also as non-contentious voluntary action.<sup>59</sup> The special issue thus considers a wide array of campaigners, ranging from NGOs to radical activists. Simultaneously, the special issue shows that the boundaries between more moderate and more radical HIV/AIDS campaigns were far from fixed and, indeed, often fluid. Therefore, it highlights the heterogeneity and the interconnectedness within collective action on HIV/AIDS. In any case, and in sync with what Ayaz Qureshi argues about Pakistan, it does not treat campaigning groups as quintessentially participatory ones, but, instead, explores the manner of their operation and the degree to which the latter reinforced social hierarchies.<sup>60</sup> Finally, it deploys ‘transnational’ to understand how the nation-state as the ‘natural’ organizing entity was being transcended. The transnational approach taken in this special issue helps capture relations between HIV/AIDS campaigners beyond the borders of nation-states but also the diverse vectors of relevant cross-border transfers: people, ideas, mobilities, networks, discourses, and communities. In line with the fine-grained approach of Sonja Levsen and Kiran Klaus Patel to transnational flows and political activism in the 1970s, the special issue investigates various types of such transfers: “imagined belonging and solidarity”; “knowledge circulation”; and “social experience and concrete political action”.<sup>61</sup> The articles explore, as mentioned above, how those cross-border interactions were filtered through the social backgrounds of HIV/AIDS campaigners, and had the potential both to shore up and challenge social hierarchies in the contexts where those

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<sup>59</sup> On contentious collective action, see, for instance: Sidney G. Tarrow, Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 9.

<sup>60</sup> Ayaz Qureshi, AIDS in Pakistan. Bureaucracy, Public Goods and NGOs (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), especially 125-149.

<sup>61</sup> Sonja Levsen and Kiran Klaus Patel, “Introduction: Imagined transnationalism? Mapping transnational spaces of political activism in Europe’s long 1970s”, in: Sonja Levsen and Kiran Klaus Patel (eds.), Beyond Transnationalism. Mapping the Spatial Contours of Political Activism in Europe’s Long 1970s (London/New York: Routledge, 2023), 9-10.



subjects were active. While highlighting transnational flows, the collection also considers seriously the particularities of the nation-states in question. For instance, in Slovenia, gay activists negotiated with the socialist state and its welfare structures; in Britain, minority ethnic activists engaged with the neoliberal state and its regime of market-driven voluntarization. The special issue also highlights the significance of specific subnational, local contexts, like that of London and Athens, and the translocal connections between them for HIV/AIDS campaigners. Overall, it shows how the transnational, national and local levels interacted with one another.<sup>62</sup>

#### A reflexive, collaborative approach

The transnational and intersectional approach of the collection builds on reflection on the lineup of the authors, and their interaction with the guest editors. To study the cross-border interactions of HIV/AIDS campaigners across Europe, and the texts they published in several countries and numerous languages, the special issue includes authors proficient, among others, in English, Hindi, Russian, Italian, Slovenian, French, Greek, and German. Furthermore, the collection's effort to critically reflect on geopolitical and social hierarchies in the transnational connectivities of HIV/AIDS campaigners dovetails with the diversity of the collection's authors. The authors are based in academic environments in the USA, Northwestern Europe, and Central Eastern Europe. They are also from various social backgrounds concerning gender, race, and sexual orientation. To ensure such diversity is reflected in the special issue's content, the collection builds on a 'reciprocal review' approach: while the guest editors reviewed all articles; all authors offered their feedback on the introduction.

#### Future avenues

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<sup>62</sup> On transnational history and the national and local level of analysis, there is an enormous body of literature.

See, for instance: Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 2-3, 9.

We acknowledge that the special issue is not in any way exhaustive when it comes to indexing transnational and intersectional approaches to HIV/AIDS collective action. A particularly fruitful avenue for further research would be to consider the significance of Global South HIV/AIDS campaigns for Europe. This aim would help decenter the history of HIV/AIDS collective action in the latter. For instance, recent research has pointed out the links between the Socialist Bloc and the Global South during the Cold War.<sup>63</sup> The question of whether such links also facilitated networks of HIV/AIDS campaigners in the aftermath of the Cold War merits analysis.

A transnational and socio-cultural history of HIV/AIDS collective action may also benefit from and help enrich emerging histories of subordinated social groups. A case in point is transgender HIV/AIDS campaigners. While the special issue and previous research have addressed transgender men and women, future studies could build on and contribute to the diversifying ways in which gender transitioning has been approached recently in history, anthropology, and sociology. Research on gender transitioning across the globe has been increasingly studying transgender people of color, and/or individuals who exhibited non-binary articulations of transness.<sup>64</sup> The issue of whether transgender people who varied in terms of race and gender identity engaged in HIV/AIDS collective action at the local, national, and transnational levels, is worthwhile to investigate.

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<sup>63</sup> For instance: Daniel Laqua, “The politics of transnational student mobility: youth, education and activism in Ghana, 1957–1966”, *Social History* 48, no. 1, 2023: 87-113; James Mark, Paul Betts (co-ordinators of a collective of authors), *Socialism Goes Global. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

<sup>64</sup> On transgender people of color, see, for instance: Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura (eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader 2* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013). On non-binary articulations of transness, see, for example: Ben Vincent, *Non-binary genders: navigating communities, identities and healthcare* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020); Howard Chiang, *Transtopia in the Sinophone Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

Another dimension that warrants further analysis is race. Whereas previous research and this collection address the links between race, sexual orientation, and social class in HIV/AIDS collective action, there are more intersectional dimensions of relevant campaigners of color that merit to be investigated. A key example is the expanding research on Black feminism in the 1980s and 1990s in Europe and its transnational connections.<sup>65</sup> The approach of Black feminist networks to HIV/AIDS in contexts other than Paris, as analyzed by Broqua in this special issue, is an important topic awaiting to be explored. Similarly, and in line with the Disability Critical Race Theory, there needs to be research on the collective action of disabled people of color towards HIV/AIDS in Europe and across the world.<sup>66</sup> The impact of reactions to HIV/AIDS and neoliberalism on disabled people and any potential local, national, and transnational campaigns regarding their sociopolitical and economic conditions require further examination as well.<sup>67</sup> Equally important would be a comprehensive analysis of HIV/AIDS campaigns involving and addressing transgender people of color in Europe as well as people of color who engage in queer practices without embracing queer identities.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Tiffany N. Florvil, Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020).

<sup>66</sup> On Disability Critical Race Studies, see, for instance: Annamma, Subini Ancy, David Connor, and Beth Ferri, “Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the Intersections of Race and Dis/ability,” Race Ethnicity and Education 16, no. 1, 2013: 1-31.

<sup>67</sup> An example of a work exploring disabled people in general in relation to HIV/AIDS and neoliberalism, focusing on the USA, is Ally Day, The Political Economy of Stigma: HIV, Memoir, Medicine, and Crip Positionalities (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2021). See also the ongoing project of Kateřina Kolářová on the intersections of disability, race, sexuality, and post-socialism in Czechia. The project is entitled “Biological Citizenship and Chronic Embodiments, the politics of HIV and AIDS in the Postsocialist Czech Republic”.

<sup>68</sup> On the argument that sex and sexuality should not “collapse” into identitarian claims, see: Chase Ledín, “Fugitive publics: sex, sexuality, and science communication”, Journal of Science Communication 23, no. 4

These are but a few indicative topics. We very much hope this special issue will encourage further research on these lines and more.

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**Acknowledgements:** This is a pre-copyedited version of an article accepted for publication in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* following peer review. The definitive publisher-authenticated version is available through the University of Texas Press. This article stems from research that Papadogiannis and Biswas have conducted: in the context of the AHRC-funded project “Transnational Sexual Health Activism and Aids in Western Europe, 1980s-1990s”, led by Papadogiannis (project reference: AH/V013955/1) and the Wellcome Trust-funded project “Border Panic: AIDS, Immigration and Asylum in the UK, 1985-2005”, led by Biswas (grant reference: G121878). For the purpose of open access, we have applied a Creative Commons attribution (CC BY) license to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising. We would like to thank Ishita Pande, Nick Syrett, and Maggie Ross for their feedback on an earlier version of this article.

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(2024), accessible here: [Ledin | Fugitive publics: sex, sexuality, and science communication | Journal of Science Communication \(sissa.it\)](#) (last accessed: 20 June 2024).